

Soft Skills
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Lecture - 26
Types of Business Writing Part II

Welcome back to NPTEL online lectures on Soft Skills. In the previous lecture we talked about the types of business writing where we discussed how to write a memo a letter report a circular, what are the processes involved in the writing and drafting of these documents. In this lecture we are going to talk about some more business documents and we will see how they differ how they vary from other forms of writing. Imagine yourself going to attend the meeting. On most of these situations you rather wonder why there is a series of meetings every now and then.

Now, before you go to meeting you would like to know what will happen in the meeting, what actually will be transacted in the meeting. Moreover sometimes you may receive a phone call from a friend of yours who will be asking you did not you go to attend the meeting you are now confused as to where the meeting was, what was the agenda of the meeting. Now for all this and for your facility you actually want to know beforehand about a meeting because whenever any meeting is planned it is planned well in advance sometimes you may also be asked to conduct a meeting in your professional settings. But then the question is how to make people aware of the meeting. For that we are going to talk about a very important segment of communication especially of written communication which is called notice agenda and minutes.

Now what exactly do we mean by a notice and why should we give people a notice when you are planning a meeting all you plan is who will be the people who will participate in the meeting where should the meeting be held, what time should be decided and how people should be made available you know you do a lot of brainstorming before you finalize that you are going to conduct a meeting.

Now, before you conduct a meeting you want people to know and for that a notice is required. Now notice is actually a sort of pre information for the meeting that you are going to conduct. Now the question is since you have decided you want people to know the venue you want to know the time you also want to know why as a participant in the

meeting you are required. Now all these you have to decide if you are either a secretary who is going to conduct the meeting and for that you are going to circulate first a notice. Now how to draft a notice you know nowadays in a digital edge when people are so smart, so fluent in terms of communication but when it comes to written communication they at times fume they at times wonder they at times will very hesitant, but when their acts to write a notice they start thinking how should they write should they not send an email, but when you send an email and when you write a notice these are two different things this notice can also be sent through an email. Now what is to be written in the notice? The utmost important is who is circulating the notice people would like to know who is circulating the notice what will happen in the meeting and where the meeting is likely to take place.

Now look at this notice which has been written by the secretary and imagine yourself to be in the position of the secretary and think of drafting a notice like this. You see here are that the name of the organization as in other forms of our business communication comes in the top middle and then remember that when you want to conduct a meeting please think of a suitable day and time. You know if a meeting is to take place tomorrow it is not worthy to inform people today you know all of us are busy as I said, but then all of us have pre-occupations pre-assignments, also that is why when you decide for a meeting take some time please inform the people well in advance say 4 days 5 days in advance unless and until it is so urgent.

When it is urgent naturally you can call a meeting urgently, but meetings of general nature, meetings of routine nature they can be conducted and for that the notice has to come well in advance. So, on the day when you are going to give the notice please mention the day when meeting is to take place, do mention the venue, do mention the time and if you really want to know people if you really want that people should come prepared please it is customary to provide the agenda. Now here the language is very you know of a general nature it is very simple remember. If this is a meeting which actually has or which has already been conducted earlier also it is one more meeting naturally you should know the number of the meeting. For example, if nine meetings in a particular a regard have already been conducted and if it is 10th meeting so please mention the 10th meeting.

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Notice, Agenda and Minutes
JACKSONS LTD
RIMJHIM ENCLAVE, SAHIBABAD-234076

19th July, 2016

The tenth meeting of the Board of Directors will be held as per the following schedule:

Date: 23rd July, 2016
Day: Saturday
Time : 3.45 PM
Venue: Board Room, Piyush Hotel, Sahhibabad.

The agenda is attached.

Atanu Kumar
Secretary

To: The members , Board of Directors

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Now, have a look at this notice when you write the notice just after the name of the organization write notice and then you start. The 10th meeting of the board of directors of the board of governors or the executive committee members will be held at for the following schedule know. And there you can mention the date day time and you should also mention if you are going to attach the agenda please write the agenda is attached and add secretary you should write your name and if possible if you are going to circulate it through sometimes we can circulate it even through mails, but if you want to circulate it in hard copies though in the days to come it will be out of fashion fine, but then if you are going to circulate it in hard copies please put your signature. So, notice is the first step in the meeting, but then when the meeting takes place because of the every communication in business dealings is important.

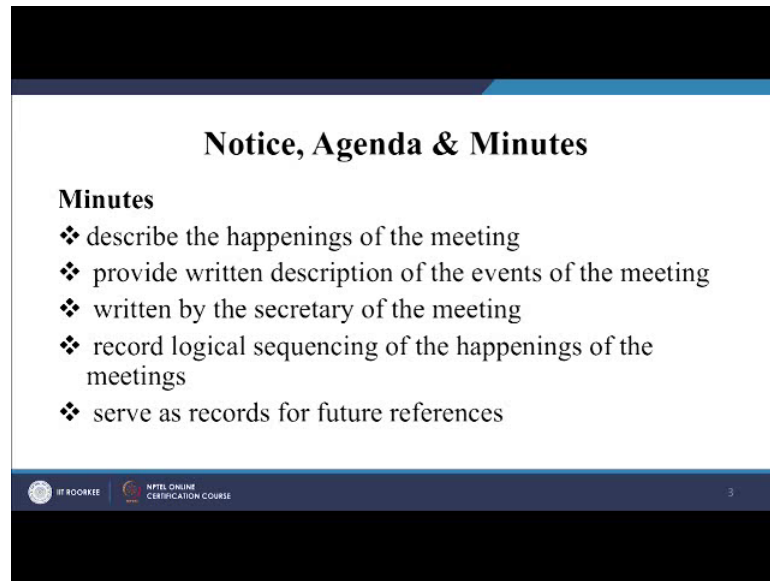
You will find add secretary you have some other functions to perform not only conducting the meeting, but then you are also going to write what happened in the meeting. You know you have you might be hearing a lot about the minutes can we talk about the minutes of the previous meeting you know every now and then the award people saying. Sometimes you know something goes wrong people say no that was not recorded in the minutes I mean when we write a minute we see to it that we are actually recording everything, I mean recording in the sense that the happenings which took place in a meeting have to be recorded and that is actually the task of the secretary and it is the secretary he will write the minutes and secretary will write the minutes after the meeting

that is why when minutes come you will often find minutes do not come the same day they come after a day or two days because when every activity has been discussed now it is for the secretary as well as the chairman because though they will in consultation with each other finalize the minutes and then these minutes will be circulated to all the members.

Sometimes it so happens that a particular member in the meeting did not agree. Now, in such a situation he has every right to write a note of dissent now this note of dissent it is something different that we will discuss, but presently let us see how to write a minute after meeting. Suppose a meeting was called and the meeting was conducted you will find you know since you have given an agenda and in the agenda every item has to have its name as a title and if it is 10th meeting if it is 5th meeting when you are going to provide the items you will write 5.1 I mean 5.1 means the first item of the meeting.

And in every meeting you will find that the first item is the confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting and the last item in every meeting or in every agenda for that matter will be any other matter with the permission of the chair. See in a minute you are not actually going to write everything that took place because sometimes there may be chaotic situations and that is why you might have heard if you have been watching to the live parliament sessions and all, so at times care is taken that it will not taken on record it will not considered this is off the record. Why because the minutes actually they are recorded they serve because you know for future references they help a lot.

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Notice, Agenda & Minutes

Minutes

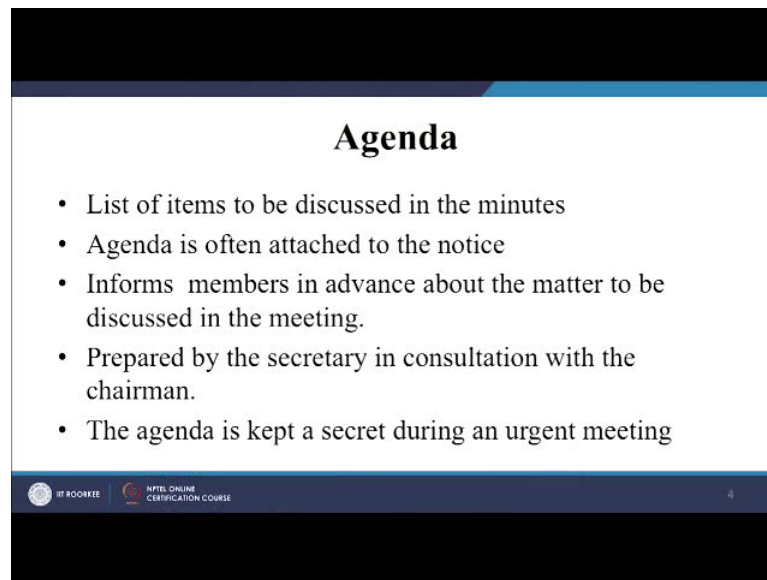
- ❖ describe the happenings of the meeting
- ❖ provide written description of the events of the meeting
- ❖ written by the secretary of the meeting
- ❖ record logical sequencing of the happenings of the meetings
- ❖ serve as records for future references

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So, minutes describe the happening of the meeting as we said and then it is actually a written description of the events of the meeting and it is in a very sequential manner it is duty of the secretary are to announce even though he has already circulated the agenda, but then he will say the first item on the agenda is this and then the discussion follows. And once the discussion comes to a close on a particular agenda then we move on to the next, but then the sequence is maintained we cannot break the sequence the minutes as I said is written by the secretary in consultation with the chairman and it is written in a very sequential manner and its serves as a record for future references.

You know, we in everyday business world we talk about several things and we have different issues and sometimes as I said earlier when you want to promote or launch a new product naturally so many meetings will take place and that have to be brought into the minutes so that people are aware.

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Agenda

- List of items to be discussed in the minutes
- Agenda is often attached to the notice
- Informs members in advance about the matter to be discussed in the meeting.
- Prepared by the secretary in consultation with the chairman.
- The agenda is kept a secret during an urgent meeting

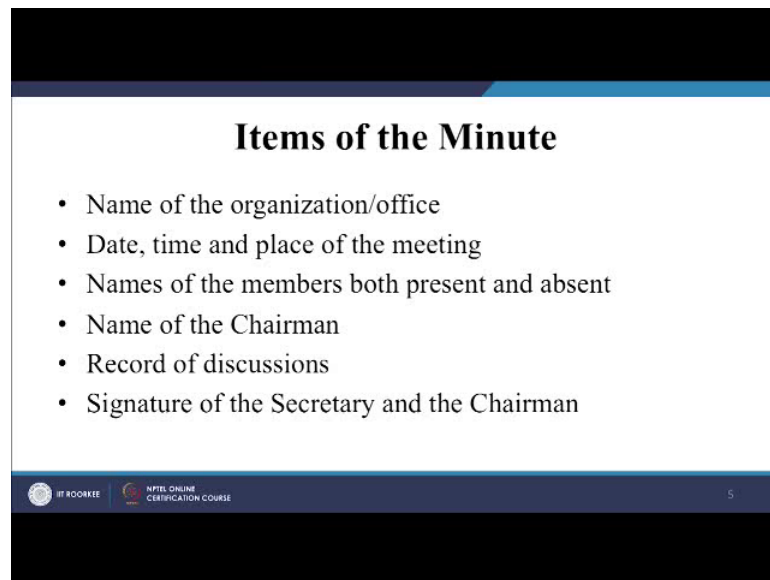
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Now, you might also think of the word agenda the word agenda comes from agendum which actually is a list of items to be discussed in the meeting and the agenda though it is most often attached, but sometimes when a meeting is a very serious nature and you do not want to inform people well in advance.

If it is an urgent meeting naturally there only you know you do not attach the agenda otherwise you attach the agenda so that all the members who are going to attend the meeting they have some pre information they have they are actually prepared they will come prepared they will think they have a lot of you know a time because the notice is served say 5 days in advance 6 days in advance, so they start thinking about that. Naturally it is prepared I mean the agenda is prepared in consultation with the chairman and only in cases of secret meeting these agenda they are actually not expressed or they are not attached.

Now once the meeting is over everything has been discussed now people are waiting whether their views were represented or not whether their views were recorded or not because every member in the meeting they actually want that their ideas their suggestions have to be recorded. So, when you are going to write the minutes you should also understand what are the items of the minute, the first item will always be confirmation of the minutes of the last meeting.

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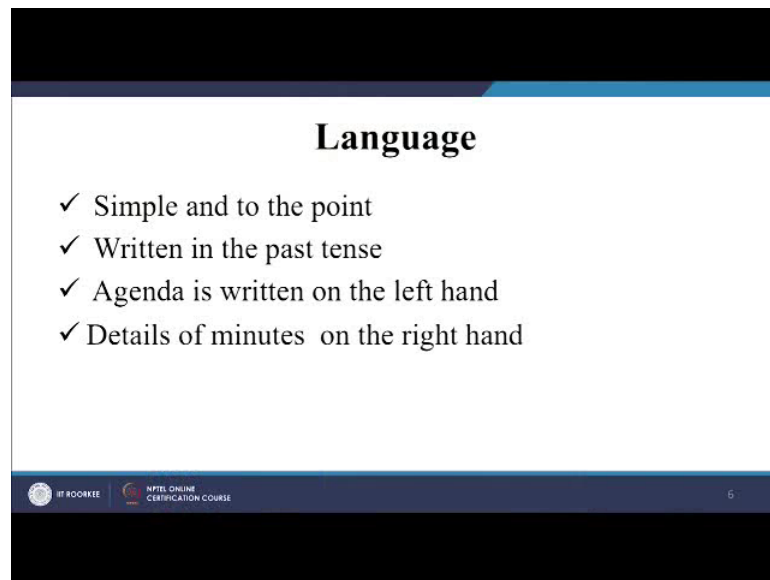
Items of the Minute

- Name of the organization/office
- Date, time and place of the meeting
- Names of the members both present and absent
- Name of the Chairman
- Record of discussions
- Signature of the Secretary and the Chairman

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So, when you are writing an agenda first write the name of the organization if you add secretary you will write that then the date and place of the meeting you will mention that. Then comes the members present and absent not all the members can be present in all the meetings. That is why you have two options the members present and you can also write the members absent. Now this in a way is actually a sort of warning or a sort of reminder to those people who are absent you know it also shows their participation level and that is why when we referred to the meeting and sometimes in future something goes wrong somebody may say I was not a part of that meeting I was not taken into consideration,. But then for all these things you have to be ready that is why we record the minutes and then the signature of the secretary and the chairman comes. Remember when you are going to write the minutes what you are going to do is you are to see the language.

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Language

- ✓ Simple and to the point
- ✓ Written in the past tense
- ✓ Agenda is written on the left hand
- ✓ Details of minutes on the right hand

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What is sort of language you are going to use the language will be of a very familiar nature, not a language that is either very literal or very ornamental it is should actually be according to the understanding of the people and it is should be very specific to the point. The minutes are to be written in the past tense since minutes are written after the meeting hence care has to be taken that they are written in the past tense and when you are writing the agenda there are two ways you can write the agenda the first is that you can write the item on the left hand side and on the right hand side you are going to have the discussion or you can also write it on the top you write the item of the agenda and below that you describe it actually varies from organization to organization the way they practice it in their organization.

And once you have done that you can also check whether you have written the minutes correctly when you write the minutes say to it that in the first sentence or on the top head you will write the name of the organization and then you have to write minutes. Minutes of which meeting you write of fifth meeting held at our board of directors held on such and such and here also you have to mention held I mean venue I mean in board room in committee room in executive room and then you will write the name of the members present and then you will also write the name of the chairman. You know the first name will be that of the chairman and then the members and the secretary will put his signature towards the end. I mean the secretary will also write his name towards the end and those people who are absent their names are written just after the name of the secretary.

We can also have a sample minutes. So, that you can understand how notions how care for correctness care consideration for language and tone has been taken into consideration. You can see this minute this is actually the minute of the tenth meeting, and as I said earlier the first item of the minute will be confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting.

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10.01: Confirmation of the Minutes of the previous meeting
The minutes of Executive Council's meeting held on 23rd July, 2016 were read and approved by the members.

10.02: Chairman's report
The Chairman presented the last year's report. All the members expressed their satisfaction over the organization's performance.

10.03: Provision of laptops to office staff
The request of some senior staff for providing laptops to office staff was discussed. The Chairman expressed the organization's inability to provide laptops to all senior staff at the same time. Ms. Alka Rani proposed that the distribution can be done phase wise in three phases. Shri Brijesh B. Roy seconded the proposal and said that such a bid would prompt the office work and valuable data will be available without adding to the burden of too much paper work.

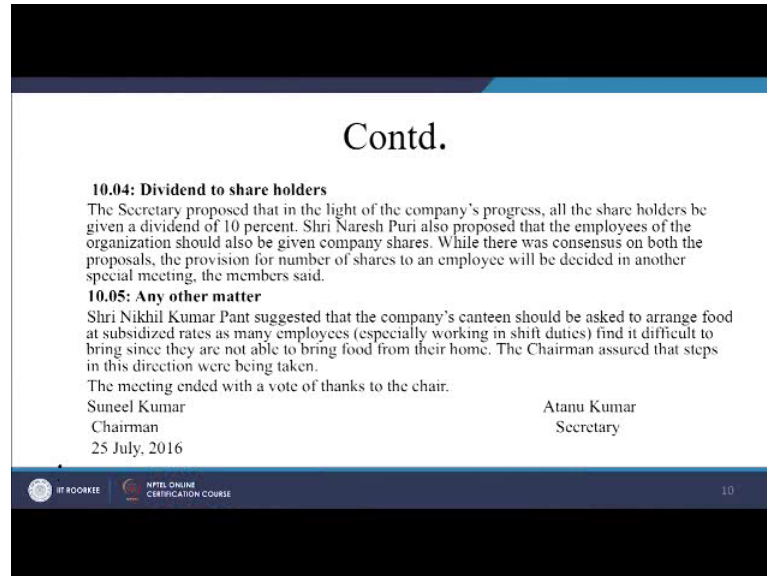
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Now, look at the language in the in the first while discussing the first item it is said the minutes of the executive councils meeting held on such and such were read and approved by the members now were read meaning there by it is written in the past and then the first man the chairman's report this is this is actually the second item that is why will write if it is tenth meeting 10.2 and then we will put the title likewise if it is the say third item will write 10.3 then we will follow 10.4 like that and whatever has been discussed.

Say for example, provision of laptops to office staff I mean this was discussed and again you see look have a look at the language the request of some senior staff for providing laptops to office staff was discussed you will find it is written in the passive was discussed fine. And then you will also see if some members say something or propose something again we say such and such proposed that the distribution can be done in such a way that would prompt the office work and valuable data will be available without adding to the burden of too much paperwork. Now this is how you will also have a consideration for language when you start writing the minutes.

And having I mean come to the end of the minutes and the last item as we have said will be any other matter with the permission of the chair and see the language.

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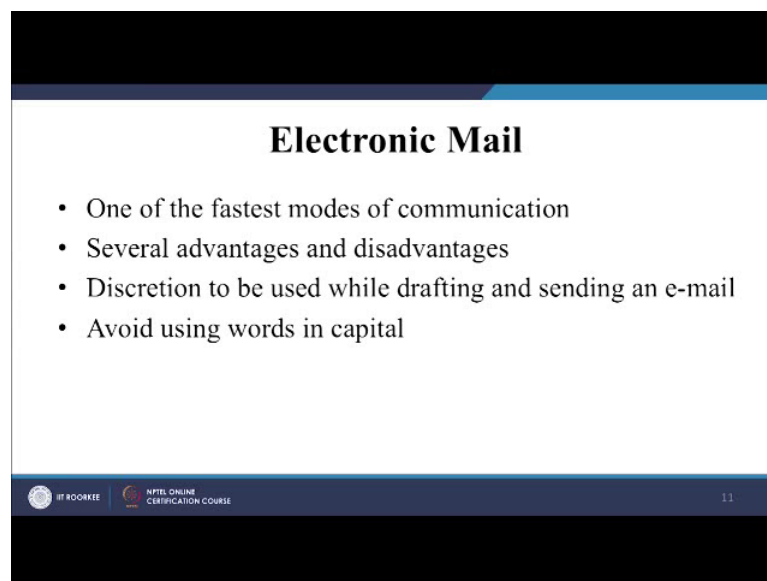
Shri Nikhil Kumar pant suggested that the company's canteen should be asked to arrange I mean this is actually a part of the matter which was not there maybe it was not there in the agenda, but since this gentleman might have asked for it that is why this was also included and having said that you finally, write one line the meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the chair and below that you as the secretary of the meeting will put your signature.

And then the chairman will put his signature the chairman will put his signature on the left and below that the date is written. This is actually one sample minutes in the days to come in an organization you should never think that you may not be given this responsibility of conducting a meeting and writing the minutes. You never know because in organizations you will have to play different roles, so at times you may also have to conduct a meeting and you have to write the minutes that is why it is quite essential you know how a minute can be written in order to help the organization have a smooth flow of communication and help other members know about the happenings.

Now many of you as I said in the beginning you wonder whether do we need a minutes to be written in an electronic edge of course, you need a minute to be written electronic mail is only a medium it is not actually a document minute is a document which will

serve as a record. You can of course, make use of sending this through email, but in many organizations they see to it that even if they are sent through mail unless and until it is signed by all the members the minutes cannot be considered to be authentic because it will serve as a record for future references in the organization. Now we should also have some knowledge about though all of you are familiar with electronic mails, but at times it has been seen that people take electronic mails not that seriously and they consider it still as informal.

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The slide is titled "Electronic Mail" and contains a bulleted list of four points. The slide has a dark blue header and footer. The footer contains the logos for IIT ROORKEE and NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE, along with the number 11.

- One of the fastest modes of communication
- Several advantages and disadvantages
- Discretion to be used while drafting and sending an e-mail
- Avoid using words in capital

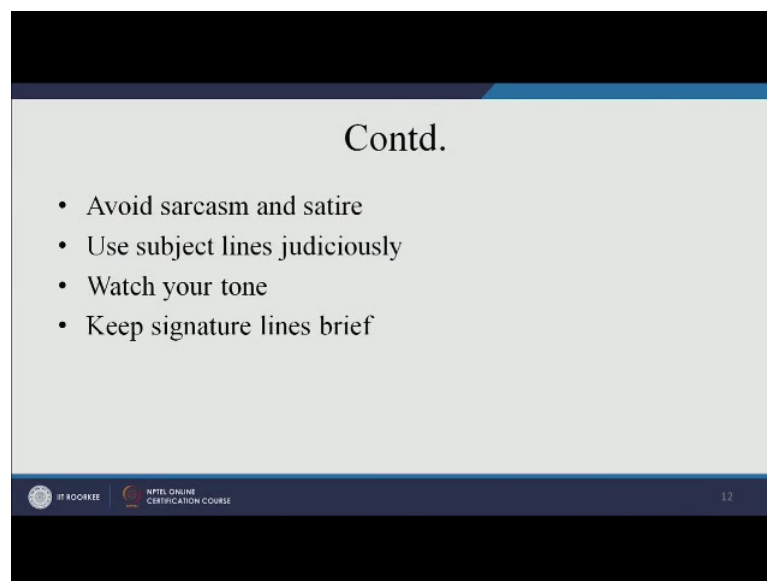
In many organizations they have made even an email or electronic mail official hence while writing an email people have to be very careful. Even though it is the fastest mode of communication its fastness is a blessing though, but then it can be at times a curse also because whenever you write an email you think that it is a fast way, but in that fast way you actually lose so many of the things which could have been taken care of and that is why the result is your regret you regret letter that you could not have sent that email because sometimes you send an email to your boss sometimes you send an email to a higher authority and they actually look at it from their point of view and see how sincere or how careful, how considerate, how courteous you are that is why when you are going to write an email see to it that you have to maintain certain decorums.

The first is you know nowadays every organization is suffering from information load that is also because of electronic mails where we very ruthlessly send our mails and the

cc facility that allows us sometimes that allows our mails to go to those people who are not at all you know concerned with the subject hence you have to care are that these mails go only to specific crowd only to specific people. So, let us try to practice a lot of discretion while writing email. Moreover even when you start email you see if it is written for official purposes see that proper salutation is maintained we might have come across several highs and (Refer Time: 24:18) because of the informality involved in email but then that may actually mar your fortune if you are writing it and thinking it for from the informality part of it.

Avoid using words in capital - do you know my dear friends that when you use capital letters in email it is just like you are shouting. So, never give people the impression that you are shouting in an electronic mail hence try to confine yourself to writing in small letters, but see that even while you are writing in small letters punctuation proper punctuation has to be given a lot of consideration.

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Moreover do not try to make an email longer, you know it has often been seen that people when they are in an outburst of emotion and when they are in a frenzy of some emotional or sentimental moods they actually go on writing a long email this is never approved this is never acceptable. See to it that your email is sort it is specific, it is to the point, it does not have any sarcastic remark or a satirical comment see that your tone is informal, but then depending upon the people whom you are addressing or send this

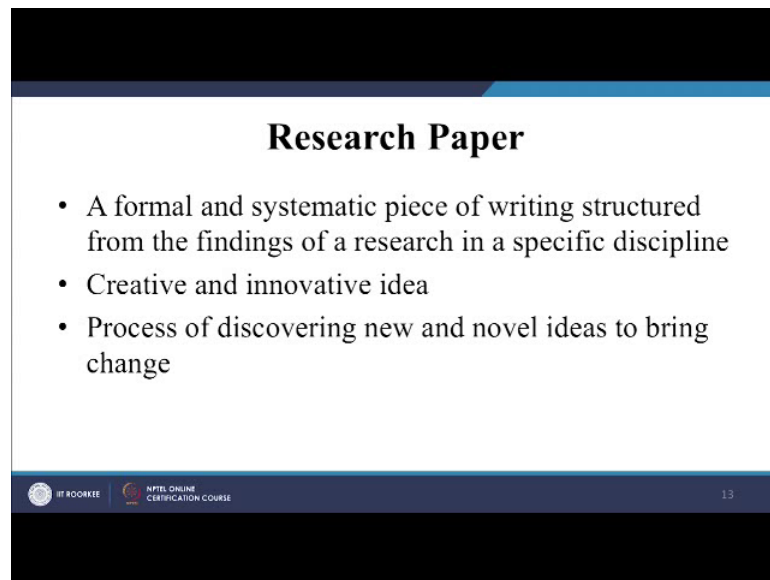
informality may vary. Signature lines have to be kept brief you know people do not have much time to go through your long email if you feel that you have to send them a lot of information you have attachment facility please attach. But while you are attaching it see that you are not detached sometimes people say please find the attachment and the attachment is made missing; that means, you did not bother much to see before sending whether the attachment has been attached or not.

Next to email is of quite relevance and importance, importance is research paper. Now you might be thinking do all of us need to write research paper what is the research paper what is its importance in business organizations you see dear friends that in order to survive in order to succeed in order to compete better and in order to establish your own reputation you need to discover every now and then new things. Every organization for that matter whatever it is dealing in it, it sees to it that quality improves day by day new things come day by day innovations come day by day and for that it is research which is a facility that is why every organization will have a research I mean R and D you know, R and D is very popular in majority of organizations. Now what do they usually do they actually try to work upon something new and they want once they have seen from all angles that it has a some sort of authenticity they are actually going to promote it and launch it in the market.

But before that a lot of research take place. Any new thing that you see today that is because of the result of so many people scientists, doctors then say professors, teachers, so know entrepreneurs a lot of people are involved because they utilize their time in trying to innovate some new ideas in many organizations they have incubation centers also. And they are trying to discover something new it is actually the ideas that have always help mankind and that have always help mankind rule the world. So, what is what is then a research paper when you have some idea.

And you find that you have come across a new finding which can be experimented you actually want to give it a shape in the form of a research paper.

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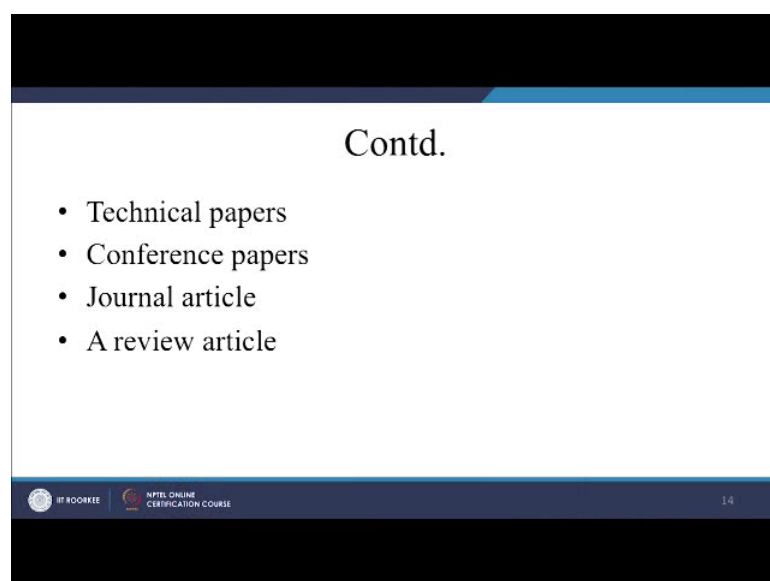
Research Paper

- A formal and systematic piece of writing structured from the findings of a research in a specific discipline
- Creative and innovative idea
- Process of discovering new and novel ideas to bring change

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Now, when you write a research paper there are certain things to do because a research paper of course, is different from theists, it is different from a conference papers, it is different from a term paper, it is different from a technical paper. You ought to know all these. Now especially in the areas of science and in the areas of say computers in the areas of medical professions you will find since too much of technicality is involved you are going to write a technical paper. I mean will have more in detail when we talk about what should be the language of a technical paper when we talk about the style of technical documents and all then we have a conference paper.

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- Technical papers
- Conference papers
- Journal article
- A review article

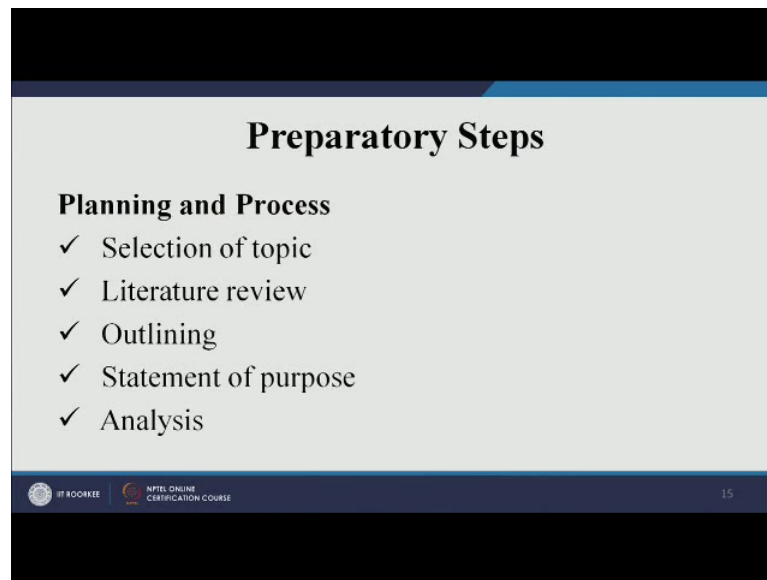
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Suppose, you are a medical practitioner you come across something new which you feel will anyway reduce the burden or in a way reduce or anyway reduce the pressure know now naturally this is a new innovation that you are going to talk about you are going to present it in the form of conference paper where people I mean people from all walks people from your areas people from some other areas I mean interrelated they will listen to your paper. Maybe sometimes they will also provide you some suggestions some pieces of advice which can make your paper better and once you feel that your paper actually suits to the requirements of certain journals keeping into consideration the style, keeping into consideration the presentation, keeping into consideration the new discovery that you have made you can call it a journal paper and you can send it for publication.

Then there is another sort of research which can also which is called a review article suppose a new book has come some new I mean something new in your field has come and you are very much interested in that you would read that and you will examine it from all angles and you will provide a sort of review in order to promote, it in order to make others other people understand that such a new thing has come and such a new idea has come every newer book, every newer film, every new documentary you will find is reviewed, is reviewed by some selected group of people who have that expertise knowledge. And finally, when they have done that and people come to know about it they are circulated and people want to know and then you know it is also a way when you write a review it is also a way to make people aware of something new a new book, a new documentary, a new film.

Now, when you have done all these things first you know you should think how should you start a research I mean everyone wants to undertake a research or carry out the research, but then he has to plan and it is actually the planning and the process that can make your research viable. First is, first you will suppose you are going to write a research paper first is that you will select a topic.

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Preparatory Steps

Planning and Process

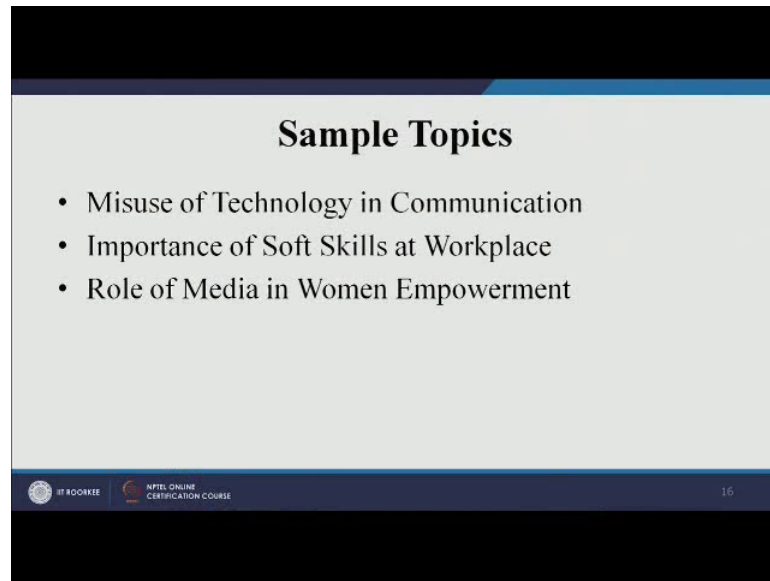
- ✓ Selection of topic
- ✓ Literature review
- ✓ Outlining
- ✓ Statement of purpose
- ✓ Analysis

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So, how will you select a topic? You know it is actually a tragedy that many of us even though are not clear as to what should be the length of the title how many words should there be in the title of a research paper sometimes or the other you actually give it a title which is not a suitable. So, first decide a title once you have decided the title you actually visit the different libraries different resources from where you can gather a lot of material make a lot of literature review and then you make you draft an outline because that will help you to move further in your research and this outline will keep you confined it will not allow you to deviate from your main idea and once you have done that because you know every if you write a research paper people would like to know what is this research paper about hence provide a statement of purpose where you are going to talk about what this paper does because people are interested in a problem. And through your research paper you are going to analyze that problem and provide certain solutions.

Having done that and once you see that your paper is now ready please when you are going to see that it has some amount of curiosity and it will make people aware have a revision. You know revision is the best antidote because it goes to the outside world it is not a question of your reputation it is also a since you are going to add something to the corpus of knowledge it becomes mandatory to revise and revise not only from the point of view of language rather from the point of view of grammar, also from the point of view of some addition deletion whatsoever.

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Now, here you can see there are some topics you know the topic regarding topic, topic has to be very specific it should not be that broad because research is a specific genre. So, it can be a topic like importance of soft skills at workplace. Again if you want to be even more specific you can talk about writing as a mode writing as a quality of soft skills or you can also say role of media in women empowerment you I mean likewise you know this is just one way to let you know and when you are writing the title please see not every word can be written in capitals, it is only you know the main words not even the prepositions and the connectives that also have to be written in the capital letters.

Now much of industry should be put forth while this while finalizing a topic and once you have finalized the topic start your write start your paper and put all your analysis discoveries findings and finally, conclude and when you conclude it is actually I mean decorum says that you also provide evidences which appear in the form of bibliography or references as the practice may be in a particular manual or a journal. We will have more discussion on bibliography and references when we talk about report style and report language.

I hope with all this you might have been in some sort of knowledge about the different sorts of writing that are usually practiced at the workplace and you as a professional, you as a key player will be acquainted with all these nuances. And if you take it sincerely you will find that you too can do what others have done and you will feel yourself not only

satisfied, but you will bring satisfaction to your colleagues and you will also bring credit to your organization.

Thank you very much.