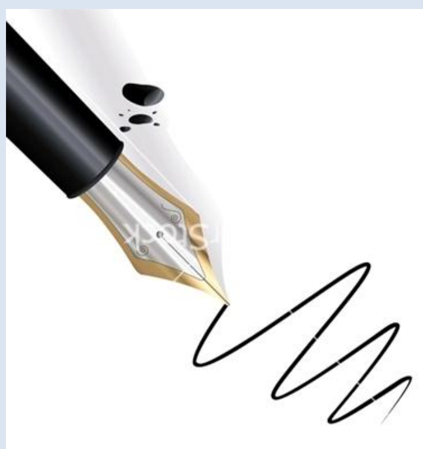
सत्यमेव जयते

भारत सरकार

Government of India

परमाणु ऊर्जा विभाग

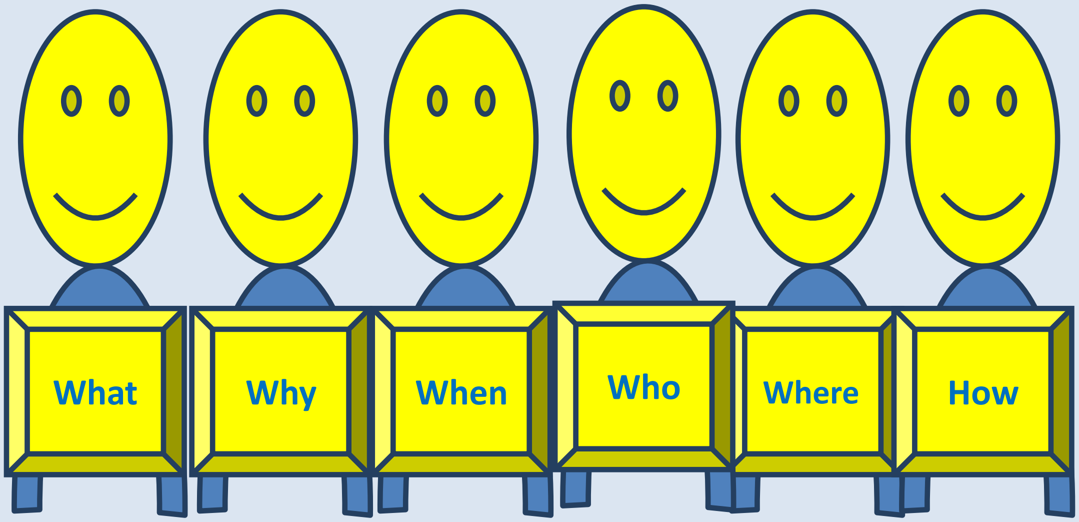
Department of Atomic Energy



Hand Book on Report Writing

Administrative Training Institute,
'0' Floor, V S Bhavan, Anushakti Nagar, Mumbai – 400094.
http://ati.dae.gov.in

REPORT WRITING



"I Keep Six Honest Serving Men"

I KEEP six honest serving-men
(They taught me all I knew);
Their names are What and Why and When
And How and Where and Who.....

(by Rudyard Kipling – The Elephant's Child)

डॉ.सी.बी.एस.वेंकटरमण, आई ए एस
Dr. C.B.S. VENKATARAMANA, IAS
विशेष सचिव
SPECIAL SECRETARY

भारत सरकार
परमाणु ऊर्जा विभाग
अणुशक्ति भवन,
छत्रपति शिवाजी महाराज मार्ग,
मुंबई - 400 001.
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY
ANUSHAKTI BHAVAN,
CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI MAHARAJ MARG,
MUMBAI - 400 001.

FOREWORD

A report not only serves many administrative requirements but also provides consolidated, factual and an up-to-date information about a particular matter or subject for use in various context. The information contained in the report needs to be both authentic and well-organized so that it is useful in decision making in the related areas.

To prepare a professional report, it is important for the author to possess the requisite skills of writing in a logical, cohesive and well-structured manner. Language and style also play a very important role in this regard. This is in addition to the technical and professional knowledge in the specific area.

This Handbook on Report Writing is an attempt to facilitate report writing in a scientific and systematic manner by such officials in the Department of Atomic Energy, who are required from time to time to prepare various types of reports. This handbook contains tips and tools for helping the officials to write good quality reports in a conceptually clear, lucid and well-organized manner. It is hoped that this will facilitate the officers in the Department in improving the quality of their report writing. In order to take forward this mission, the Administrative Training Institute (ATI) contemplates organising a series of workshops to ensure that all officers concerned in the department get fully acquainted with this important work as also hone their skills.

I take this opportunity to compliment Smt. Savithri S Mani, Director, ATI, DAE; Shri S.C. Sen, retired Deputy Secretary, Government of India & Training Consultant and the entire ATI team for their contributions in bringing out this Handbook on Report Writing.

Suggestions for improvement in the Handbook, if any, are welcome and may be forwarded to Director, ATI, DAE - e-mail dirati.dae@gov.in.

30/9/15

(Dr. C.B.S. Venkataramana)
Special Secretary

Date :

दूरभाष / TELEPHONE 022-22022615 (O); फैक्स 022-2284 6213 / 2204 8476 ई-मेल / E-mail : ss@dae.gov.in
वेब / Web : www.dae.gov.in

CONTENTS

Section – 1

1 Essentials of a Report: General Attributes

1.1 Background

A 'Report' is a statement of facts and can be oral report or written report. It can also be a simple or routine report or a complex report. Reports play a very important role for an organization. Reports are generally written by an individual or a group of persons after they have studied something. The broad objectives of any report should therefore be narrating what has been observed, a threadbare analysis of the observations and conclusions arising out of such analysis. A report is then submitted for the consideration of the higher authorities, their decision and action. Thus a 'Report' is an upward communication. In this Section we shall be discussing the essential ingredients that make a good 'Report'.

1.2 Essential Ingredients:

A report is looked upon in high esteem as it is either prepared by an expert in the field or after thorough study of the matter in great detail. Therefore, it is natural that the 'Report' has at least the following ingredients:

a) A Report should be logical, sequential and honest – it should not only be fair but should establish that fairness has been observed throughout the process of enquiry and report;
b) It should be factual, supported by figures and documents;
c) It should be cogent, clear and accurate;
d) It should be brief, look small and have a catchy title;
e) It should be coherent. Different sections of the Report should appear to be leading from one to another;
f) It should have proper linking and references for the material used and included;
g) No personal opinions should be included, nor should there be any loose statement;
h) The recommendations should not be utopian. In other words those should be practicable and implementable;
i) The report should not deviate from the given mandate;
j) It must have a specific format;
k) It should appear to be aimed at people with a specific interest in the area covered by the report

1.3 Summary:

The person or persons submitting the Report have no control over the availability of time with the Reader, or his mood or fatigue at the time of reading the report. So the report has to be ready for all conditions. Obviously therefore, it cannot afford to be unappealing in the least. And that underscores the need for ensuring that the ingredients discussed in the preceding paragraph are not lost sight of.

Section – 2

2 Types of Reports

2.1 Background:

In the earlier section we have seen that a 'Report' can be oral report or written report. It can also be a simple or routine report or a complex or a detailed report. It means that there can be and there are several types of 'Reports'. Each type of Report will have its own characteristics, purpose and target client. However, in Government we are concerned with the regularly prescribed reports and some special reports that are generated for certain specific purpose. In this section we shall enumerate different types of reports that are commonly used in Government Departments.

2.2 Types of Reports:

Randomly considered there are various types of reports such as Status Reports, Survey Reports, Sales Reports, Enquiry Reports, Assessment Reports, Statutory Reports, Appraisal Reports, Technical Reports, Analytical Reports, Feasibility Reports, Annual Reports, and Charge Reports etc. However, in Govt. it is not necessary that all these reports would be generated by all the Departments.

The reports which are prescribed; which are required to be submitted in a prescribed proforma on prescribed dates or at prescribed periodicity, may be called routine reports. On the other hand when a special situation and problem arises, a person or a group of persons are appointed to investigate and study the issue and prepare a report. Such reports may be called special reports. The following Table gives an idea of types of reports:

Types of Reports	
Routine	Special

Progress Report Inspection Report Performance Appraisal report Periodical Reports Daily Action Report or Daily Diary Annual Report Charge Report Technical Reports	Investigation Report Feasibility Report Survey Report Project Report Inquest Report or Panchnama Incident Report or Accident Report Action Taken Report

2.3 Summary:

We have so far seen what actually a Report is, which essential ingredients it must have and the nomenclature of different types of Reports. We shall hereafter take up the content of the Report, how it should be developed systematically so that it becomes acceptable to the Management.

<u>Section – 3</u>

3 FORMATTING OF A REPORT – IDENTIFICATION

3.1 Background:

With a view to discussing the contents of a Report, how it should be developed systematically so that it becomes acceptable to the Management; nothing but a disciplined approach is called for. Therefore, what is of utmost importance is that a Report must follow a specific format. In this Section as well as in a few succeeding sections we shall discuss "Formatting of a Report" in as much detail as possible. 'Formatting of a Report' ensures that various components of a Report are included in a logical, cohesive and aesthetic sequence so that it becomes easy for the reader to comprehend. In fact this comprehension by the reader (in particular the authority which has to act upon the recommendations in the Report) means that the Report should be (a) Readable (b) Retrievable (c) Knowledgeable and (d) Acceptable. We have already considered the 'Readability' part in Section 1. Now we take up the next i.e. it should be retrievable.

3.2 Identification:

The Reader should have the facility to reach to the bottom of any material used in it. For that purpose unless proper identification of what has been included in the Report is done, further progress would be hampered and the Reader would hesitate to read further. The following would constitute identification:

a) Cover Page: This happens to be first thing that attracts the attention of the Reader. As such it has to be attractive and appealing. It should normally contain the title of the report, Name of the Organization, Composition of the Team and the date of submission of the Report.
b) Title: Title should be short – not more than 5-6 words. It should be catchy and not a narrative sentence. However, it should represent the contents completely and clearly. In order to make it catchy, gimmickry of words and phrases should not be resorted to. For example, a report on misappropriation of funds should state as such and not "Robbing Peter to pay Paul".
c) Forwarding Letter: This is a communication from the team along with which the Report is formally submitted to the authority that entrusted the work of preparing it.
d) Authority: This refers to the authorization to prepare the report. It should be referred to in the forwarding letter and a copy of the communication giving the mandate should form part of the Annexures.
e) Table of Contents: In case the report is of a routine nature and is short (not exceeding 5-6 pages), no table of contents would be necessary. However, for longer reports a 'Table of Contents' indicating all items, including Appendices and Annexures, etc. along with page numbers needs to be added to guide the reader.
f) Glossary of Terms: If some words peculiar to the subject under study, or the organization have been used, it would be useful to include a 'Glossary of Terms' to facilitate understanding.
g) Bibliography: It's a list of references, sources from where substantial material has been drawn into the Report. This can be done by means of footnotes at the appropriate places or in a separate section in the Report.

3.3 Summary:

Once the elements of identification as discussed in the preceding paragraph are in place, the reader is assured that all parts of the Report are easily accessible. Immediately then a curiosity arises about the contents of the Report. To satiate this curiosity, we need to go to the next section where we shall discuss "Synopsis".

Section – 4

4 Formatting of a Report – Synopsis

4.1 Background:

As the name suggests, 'Synopsis' in a Report consolidates all important points at one place. It should tell us broadly what is contained in the Report. It helps the Reader to get acquainted with the entire contents of the report at a glance; it can even be called a 'Mini Report'. It should be brief – usually not more than one or two pages. It is a self-contained unit, comprehensive and contains sketchy details. It is also termed as "Executive Summary" or "Abstract" of the Report. It is written after the full Report is written, though it is placed at the beginning of the Report.

4.2 Broad Content:

The 'Synopsis' or the 'Executive Summary' of a Report should exhibit at one place generally the whole report in the shortest possible form. Yet it must contain the following:

a) Precise Problem: The problem or the matter that has been studied or investigated should be explained in short. However, brevity not at the cost of clarity – it should be able to present the problem fully.
b) Constraints: The areas declared out of bounds or the difficulties experienced or the embargoes put in the process of investigation or study should be outlined in brief.
c) Major Recommendations: All major recommendations contained in different segments of the Report should be listed here so as to enable the authorities to initiate action immediately.
d) Costs & Gains: The costs and gains on account of implementation of the recommendations would no doubt be discussed at the appropriate stage of the Report in detail. However, to provide a bird's eye view, it is necessary that these costs & gains are mentioned here in brief.
e) Areas of further study: During the course of the study or investigation of the problem at hand, if it was justifiably felt that it would be desirable to study some collateral issues which did not strictly came under the mandate; such issues should be listed as areas of further study so that the Manage is apprised of the need and they might consider commissioning of studies in future in those areas.

4.3 Summary:

As is seen from the foregoing discussion, the Synopsis or the Executive Summary is the most crucial part of a long Report. If the Report is brief, say less than 10 pages, there is no need to include a Synopsis or Executive summary. It is actually the most read part of the Report; as such it must be self-contained without much dependence on the detailed report so as to be able to arrive at the decision about any action to be taken. In the next section we shall discuss about the Appendices & Annexures.

Section – 5

5 Formatting of a Report – Appendices & Annexures

5.1 Background:

We are aware that a Report must look small, be attractive and appealing. At the same time we are also aware we need not resort to brevity at the cost of clarity. And clarity demands a thorough discussion in the Report duly supported by evidence. With a view to reconciling these conflicting factors, we find the system of adding 'Appendices & Annexures' to a Report. In this section we shall discuss these immensely useful tools.

5.2 Distinction:

Apparently these two terms look similar and many people use these terms interchangeably. However, that is far from correct.

At times we make a particular statement or refer to a precedent and that needs further lengthy elucidation to make a full impact. If we include that elucidation in to the narrative of the report, it becomes unwieldy and creates a distance between two inter-dependent points resulting in disjointed reading. Therefore, such elucidatory material is separated and put into an Appendix so that the Reader, if he chooses, may have access to that. On the other hand an Annexure contains independent material such as a chart, a page from a journal, a Table used in another Report or a book, etc., that has been used or depended upon while making a point in any section of the Report.

5.3 Usual Appendices & Annexures:

By its very nature of being need based, there cannot be any usual appendix. However, the following must be included as Annexures in any Report:

a) Authority: The communication by which the team or the individual was authorized to conduct the study and prepare a Report should be placed as the first Annexure of the Report.
b) Questionnaire: The questionnaire is a very common tool of data gathering. In case this was used, a blank copy of that should form an Annexure.
c) Any other tool of data gathering: Besides questionnaire if any other tool for data gathering was used, a copy of that also should form an Annexure.
d) Charts, Diagrams, Tables: Any secondary data such as Charts, Graphs, Diagrams, Tables which are available in some source, if used or depended upon to make point in any section of the Report, copies of such documents would form Annexures.

The documents enumerated above are only illustrative. The investigating person or team may decide if any other Annexures would be necessary.

5.4 Summary:

From the foregoing discussion, we find how important and useful the Appendices / Annexures are. In the next section we shall conclude the discussion on formatting BY DWELLING UPON THE 'Summary of Recommendations'.

Section – 6

6 FORMATTINGOF A REPORT: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Background:

This is the most important part of any report. The Reader always wants to check this first. If these are to his/their liking then the Report is read fully to find supporting arguments or evidence so that these recommendations are implemented urgently. In case these are not to his/their liking, even then the Report is read fully to find out the bottlenecks so that those can be removed. So this chapter of the Report has to be written very carefully. All the recommendations are required to be recorded here in a very crisp way, in a particular order.

6.2 Recommendations:

There will be detailed discussion in the Report about the main issue as well as on allied issues cropping up in the process of study or investigation. At each stage after thorough analysis a particular 'recommendation' would be framed by the individual or the group writing the Report. In this way there would be several such 'Recommendations'. All such recommendations would be listed here ad seriatim. If possible these may be divided into two categories of Major Recommendations and Recommendations depending upon their value impact.

6.3 Linking:

Each of the 'recommendations' listed in accordance with preceding paragraph will need to be linked to that portion of the 'Body' of the Report, where the detailed analysis has been recorded providing rationale for it. This linking is done in a very simple way and there is no hard and fast rule about it. A commonly used method is to indicate Chapter No, Paragraph No, and Page No within parenthesis at the end of the 'Recommendation' as shown in the table below:

S.No.	Recommendation (Linkage)
06	The Unit's Library may urgently be shifted to the ground floor hall of the new Annexe Building. (III/04/27)

6.4 Summary:

The importance attached to the 'Recommendations' can be understood from the fact that it is discussed at three places in the Report:

a) In the 'Body' of the report where detailed analysis leading to the 'Recommendation' is recorded.
b) In this chapter on 'Summary of Recommendation; and
c) In the Synopsis or Executive Summary.

<u>Section – 7</u>

7 FORMATTING OF A REPORT: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

7.1 Background:

From the time the authorisation to conduct the study or the investigation is received and fully clarified, till the Report is written and submitted the individual or the team entrusted with the task of preparing the Report has to interact with or seek assistance from many individuals or units to complete his/their task. Obviously once the task is completed one feels like expressing gratitude for the help received. In many cases it may not be a help, it may be not putting any obstacle. In this 'Acknowledgement' section of the Report such gratitude may be expressed.

7.2 Content:

a) Acknowledgments are very important in Theses, Journal Articles, and Reports. There would be many contributors to the work, people who have contributed ideas or materials, or have guided in having access to the resources – all such contributions and help must be acknowledged with thanks here. Besides there would be many persons, units who helped in the work of investigation or preparation – thanks should be recorded for all such persons or units.

b) Normally, the Acknowledgement is not considered to be a part of the Report and as such no page number is assigned. However, it is not a rule and the author (s) may take a decision about it.

c) Positioning of Acknowledgement in the Report – whether it should be placed in the beginning or at the end – is again left at the discretion of the individual or the team submitting the Report.

7.3 Specimen:

Report: Report on the Training Information Management of ATI, DAE, Mumbai.

7.4 Acknowledgements:

- We are grateful to Shri XXXX, Additional Secretary, DAE, Mumbai for giving us the opportunity to conduct the Study;
- We are further thankful to Smt. AAA for issuing the "Authority Letter'" promptly and for providing all physical facilities for conducting the Study besides clarifying the task to the ultimate detail;
- Our grateful thanks are due to Shri ABC, Librarian for helping us with books and records;

- We are indeed very obliged to all the members of staff of ATI, DAE for extending all necessary support and assistance;
- Last but not the least; we are thankful to the Security Staff who allowed our frequent entries and exits without any hassle.

7.5 Summary:

In a nut shell "Acknowledgements" is a section that provides a basis for continuity of relations with the Organization and its functionaries. This marks the end of formatting. Next section onwards we shall move into the 'Structuring of the Report'.

Section – 8

8 Structuring the Report - Introduction

8.1 Background:

Structuring for all practical purposes is included in 'Formatting'. However, we are discussing it separately only for the sake of providing due emphasis to the analysis and discussion contained in the report. That we shall cover in four sections, one after the other:

a) Introduction;
b) Methodology;
c) Body; and
d) Costs & Gains.

In this section, we take up 'Introduction' or what in other words may be described as setting the context of the Report.

8.2 Introduction:

In order that the contents of the Report are appreciated by those who are to decide and act upon it, a systematic approach becomes necessary. That is precisely the reason that the context or in other words why this report has been submitted; is required to be spelt out. This can be done if we include the following:

e) Background of the Organization: The details of the Organization such as Name, Location, Type – whether Department or Attached/Subordinate office or Field unit, Life – established long ago or newly formed etc. should be indicated.

f) Structural Set up: Mentioning whether it has a vertical hierarchy or horizontal and whether too many informal organizations exist would help in assessing the working pattern of the Organization.
g) Activities: Broadly the main functions of the organization should be listed with particular emphasis on the function where the problem arose.
h) Dissatisfaction or Problem: In the authorisation, the organisation would have spelt out the problem. Any problem has its root in some dissatisfaction – it could be failure in getting the desired output or maybe a decision has given rise to it among employees. Such dissatisfaction needs to be recorded in short here.
i) People involved: All those functionaries, beneficiaries, or a section of the people in the locality, who are involved or likely to be involved are required to be identified.
j) Aim of Study: Once the aforementioned information becomes available, the aim of the study needs to be drafted, finalized and mentioned.
k) Constraints: The factors that hamper the process of study are known as constraints. Sometimes these could be natural; but sometimes man made. A few examples are given below:
    - You / Team complete the study positively within one week.
    - All data about our field organizations are available in our Library. You/Team shall not contact the field units.
    - During shifting of the Office from A to B building some records were lost. So you / Team will work on the basis of available records.

8.3 Summary:

In this section we considered the factors that prepare the Reader to be able to consider the issue on which the Report has been prepared. We set the bearings. We shall now settle how we should go about the study in the next section.

Section – 9

9 STRUCTURING THE REPORT - METHODOLOGY

9.1 Background:

We have seen in the earlier section on 'Introduction' that the setting of context is complete with the writing of the 'Aim'. With a view to achieving this aim, a systematic approach needs to be adopted at every step of studying or investigating or for even simple reporting. Therefore, a distinct 'Methodology' has to be decided upon and implemented. In this section we shall consider details about it.

9.2 Methodology:

Methodology is nothing but a statement of actions taken. It is actually a brief account of how did we go about doing the job. The inherent goal of this chapter in the report is to establish that tested and recognized methods were adopted thereby lending authenticity to the results obtained.

Basically the 'Methodology' includes different techniques adopted and use of secondary data. In case there is a modification of the terms of reference, the methodology gets affected. Let us delve into it slightly in detail.

9.3 Techniques adopted:

a) For 'Data Gathering' there are several reputed and time-tested techniques such as:

    a) Questionnaires
    b) Meetings
    c) Observation of activities, work, and behavioural patterns
    d) Interrogations
    e) Interviews
    f) Visits to different work places etc.

b) For analysis of gathered data normally 'Critical Examination', 'Brain Storming' 'Comparing' techniques are used.

c) Use of Secondary Data: The data already gathered in the past and stored duly authenticated are known as 'Secondary Data'. This is generally available in Books, Journals, Sectoral Reports, Archives, Internet, Libraries etc.

d) Modification of Terms of Reference: Terms of Reference for undertaking the study and writing the report are contained in the 'Authority' mentioned in the section 3 on 'Identification'. If those terms are so modified that the methodology would need to be changed, this fact needs to be included in the chapter on 'Methodology'.

9.4 Summary:

So what we considered in this section is whatever method was used for data gathering, or for data analysis is recorded in this chapter on 'Methodology' for the benefit of future study groups as well as for lending authenticity to the process of study and report writing. We shall now move to the substantive portion of the Report in the next section.

Section – 10

10 STRUCTURING THE REPORT - BODY

10.1 Background:

Body of a Report, as the name suggests, is its main chapter. After adopting the methodology mentioned in the previous chapter, we are now at a stage where whatever data has been gathered will be analysed and conclusions drawn to frame recommendations. That's a huge task and has to be performed with utmost care so as to be able to achieve the 'Aim' proclaimed in the chapter on 'Introduction'. Right from organizing the material gathered till arriving at proper and justified conclusions – everything would be discussed in this chapter systematically.

10.2 Sequencing:

All the material gathered should be segregated into three categories:

a) Relevant and important with reference to the aim of study;
b) Information which might amplify or substantiate other more important material; and
c) Interesting but not very relevant to the aim of study

The material in the first category will now be analysed and further processed. That in the second category will need to be kept aside for inclusion as Appendix in case of need. Obviously the material in the third category may not be of much use. While including the material in the report, the principles of sequencing such as (a) simple to complex, (b) observation to theory, (c) overview to detail, (d) concrete to abstract etc. would need to be borne in mind.

10.3 Analysis:

The structure of the organization, its set up, the procedure of implementation of decisions followed by it – all would need to be analysed here. Similarly, pertinent principles and laws should be stated and any unfamiliar term should be defined. Analytical diagrams, flow charts should be shown here. One has however to ensure that no deadwood gets added in the process.

Self- supporting text alone should be included. Sentences such as the one given below should be avoided.

> "In view of the reasons given in para 3 of page 12, since the proposal contained in para 6 of page 14 would have a negative bearing on the conclusion drawn in the preceding paragraph, the matter may not be pursued further."

Reasons based on which the conclusions are drawn, should be stated clearly. For this purpose results of 'Critical Examination' and / or 'Brain Storming' must be recorded in detail. It is possible that some alternatives might have been considered but ultimately rejected. Even the discussion leading to such rejection should also be recorded.

10.4Style:

There is a possibility that 'facts' and 'opinions' might get mixed up while recording this chapter. It must be borne in mind that these need to be placed separately, if possible in distinctly different paragraphs. Any complex issue should be explained with the help of known illustrations so that the Reader may relate to it and comprehend.

Paragraphs should not be unduly lengthy. The principle of "Unity of Idea" should be observed and preferably a paragraph should contain one idea. Each paragraph should be numbered uniformly either in a single series from the starting or may also be done chapter wise.

Where a paragraph has to include several allied or offshoot ideas that should be done through sub-paragraphs and those sub-paras should also be systematically numbered. Numbering as Para 2.1.1 in one Chapter and para 3(a)(i) in Chapter 3 makes both reading and referencing difficult. Hence the numbering should be done uniformly. Similarly figures, charts and tables should be numbered and provided with proper explanatory captions.

Formal and rather impersonal language should be used. Jargons, abbreviations and acronyms should be avoided as far as possible. More on this aspect of writing will be discussed in the section on 'Language Construction'.

When discussing or using the findings presented by other people, appropriate references have to be added. In particular, if the findings are unusual or very much at variance with other people's conclusions, an explanation to show the rationale behind the finding should be added lest the reader may assume that a mistake has crept in.

10.5Summary:

In this section we considered how to build up the main chapter of the Report. So our analysis of the data gathered and drawing conclusions out of them to frame recommendations is complete. It is time to expect implementation of the recommendations contained in the Report. However, unless the costs & gains are worked out fully, any degree of clarity in the report would not be of any use for implementing the recommendations. In the next chapter we shall consider in detail all about 'Costs & Gains.'

Section – 11

11 Structuring the Report – Costs & Gains

11.1Background:

It is a common knowledge that unless we are aware of the cost of any product we cannot consider buying it irrespective of its quality or utility. Similarly, the knowledge of costs & gains is a pre-requisite for implementation of any recommendation whatever be its merit or urgency. Now that we have the recommendations and their rationale available in the previous chapter, we shall in this section consider details of "Costs & Gains".

11.2Costs & Gains:

COSTS: In simple terms 'Costs' would mean the amount of money that would be required to implement the recommendation.

However, that is not all. Costs would also include the damage or loss or additional expenditure that may result by not implementing the recommendation. For example; non-implementation of a particular recommendation regarding use of a particular fertilizer may result in loss in the quantity of production of the farm-produce – that would be the tangible cost. But the intangible cost could be the lowering of the fertility of the soil affecting long term production capacity. Or let's say the recommendation is: "DO refresher training for the shop floor workers in safety procedures." Obviously it would involve costs in organizing the training. That would be tangible cost. Now consider the situation where it is decided NOT to train. In that eventuality, all those damages that are taking place and mentioned in the

Report will continue to tackle place, there is a possibility of some accident and/or some large scale pilferage for which costs would be known only after the damage has been done.

GAINS: Simply put, the gains should mean how much revenue would be generated in the process, in what way it would be advantageous to the Organization compared to its competing organizations or how the Organization would be able to garner savings out of the present scale of expenditure etc. etc. Therefore gains can be measured in terms of money gain as well as in terms of other benefits on which a price tag cannot be put immediately. For example: the recommendation is: “Provide gainful employment to the farmers during the lean farming season.” The tangible gain would be – ready manpower would be available for small works thereby generating a good number of man-days. The allied gain or the gain on which price tag cannot be put would be: rise in the level of education of children of the farmers as they would no longer drop out because of lack of flow of money into the family.

11.3Summary:

So we have seen thatworking out “Costs & Gains” is in fact doing a cost-benefit analysis. That completes discussions on almost all aspects of ‘Report Writing’. In the next section we shall consider the nitty-gritty of ‘Language Construction’ that we need to bear in mind while writing a ‘Report’.

Section – 12

12 Report Writing – Language Construction

12.1 Background*:*

It was customary to write Reports in the third person, passive voice, past tense. Even today, this style is preferred by many. More and more, however, the first person, active voice, past tense is becoming the preferred style. Also use of concrete language rather than abstract; and ensuring that no ambiguity creeps in is now the order of the day. Why is this change coming up? It’s for purely a practical reason that the Report must be understood so that the recommendations contained in it can be implemented. Therefore the language used to write the Report should be lucid and easy to understand. In this section we shall discuss various ways and means of constructing our sentences and paragraphs in such manner that any functionary is able to grasp it.

12.2Basic Tenets:

a) Write in the Active Voice. Always choose the active, rather than the passive voice, unless you have a good reason to do otherwise.
    - NO: In place of a black-board, a white-board is being used by us.
    - YES: We use a white-board in place of a black-board.

b) Avoid Nominalizations. Avoid nominalizations unless you have a good reason to do otherwise. A nominalization is a noun derived from a verb or adjective. A noun string can act as a nominalization:
    - NO: Computer center laser printer maintenance is performed monthly.
    - YES: The laser printers in the computer center are maintained monthly.

c) Express Parallel Ideas in Parallel Grammatical Form. Units of equal function should be expressed in equal form. Repetition of the same structure allows the reader to recognize parallel ideas more readily:
    - NO: This type of task can be allotted to the direct recruits or to those who have been promoted recently.
    - YES: This type of task can be allotted to the direct recruits or to the new promotees.

d) Express statements in positive form. The positive form is usually more concise because the negative only implies what we should do by telling us what we shouldn't do.
    - NO: Don't write in the negative.
    - YES: Write in the affirmative.

e) Prune deadwood: Deadwood is material that adds no meaning to the sentence or paragraph. Eliminate all deadwoods to make your writing more concise.
    - Example: It is pertinent to point out at this juncture that………
    - It is now important that ……

I.	Addition:	Moreover, further, furthermore, besides, and, and then, likewise, also, nor, too, again, in addition, equally important, next, first, second, third, in the first place, in the second place, finally, last
II.	Comparison:	Similarly, likewise, in like manner
III.	Contrast:	But, yet, and yet, however, still, nevertheless, on the other hand, on the contrary, even so, notwithstanding, for all that, in contrast to this, at the same time, although this may be true, otherwise

IV.	Place:	Here, beyond, nearby, opposite to, adjacent to, on the opposite side
V.	Purpose:	To this end, for this purpose, with this object
VI.	Result:	Hence, therefore, accordingly, consequently, thus, thereupon, as a result, then
VII.	Summary:	Repetition, exemplification, intensification: to sum up, in brief, on the whole, in sum, in short, as i have said, in other words, that is, to be sure, as has been noted, for example, for instance, in fact, indeed, to tell the truth, in any event
VIII.	Time:	Meanwhile, at length, soon, after a few days, in the meantime, afterward, later, now, in the past

12.3Choice of Words:

Some factors we need to consider in choosing words are their connotation, tone, level of formality and logical relationships between ideas.

f) Connotation. While the dictionary meaning of a word is its denotation, the suggestive implication of a word is its connotation.

g) For example, although “pretty” denotes “having conventionally accepted elements of beauty,” the connotation is generally feminine. Most men would prefer to be called “handsome.”

h) Tone. The tone of a word expresses something about your attitude toward the person or thing being described.

i) Level of Formality. Formal words are no doubt impressive. However, a commonly used ordinary word conveys the meaning better than an impressive word. For example ‘Despite’ would convey better than ‘Not-withstanding’.

j) Logical Relationships. In order to make our writing clear and the transitions between ideas smooth, we need clearly to express the logical relationships between ideas. Some examples:

12.4Blunders:

a) Redundancy: Redundancy is the unnecessary repetition of information. Only the information that would be put use while implementing the recommendations contained in the Report should be included.

b) Verbosity: Too many words or bombastic words should be avoided. For example:
   - Verbose - The autocrat monarch of the day has parabolated to the concavity of the horizon.
   - Simple - The Sun has set.

c) Malapropism: Malapropism refers to wrong words sounding similar to the desirable word. For example:
   - Malapropism: "It is beyond my apprehension."
   - Correct: "It is beyond my comprehension."

12.5 Summary:

The importance of grammar, composition, usage and proper placement of words in properly constructing the sentences and paragraphs, cannot be emphasised enough. The best way to ensure that follies in this aspect do not creep in is to revise the Report preferably by the person who did not write it originally. Keeping these important guidelines in mind hopefully we shall be able to present our Report in written form properly. That as well as the oral presentation part, we shall consider in the next section.

Section – 13

13 STRUCTURING – WRITTEN & ORAL PRESENTATION

13.1 Background:

In Section 3 – "Formatting of a Report – Identification" we have stated that for a 'Report' to be understood properly, it should be (a) Readable (b) Retrievable (c) Knowledgeable and (d) Acceptable. We have in the preceding sections already considered the first three aspects. In this section we shall dwell upon the acceptability part of the report. This acceptability by the Reader namely the authorities, consists of two aspects. First a 'Report' has to be produced in writing – that will be the written presentation and second its salient features need to be presented orally – which would mean oral presentation.

13.2 Written Presentation:

a) Language Construction: The individual or the Team might have done extraordinary work while collecting data, analyzing that incisively and drawing logical self-supporting conclusions; but this mammoth endeavor if not translated into proper language while writing the report, would be of no avail. Therefore what is mentioned in the previous section on ‘Language Construction’ must be borne in mind.

b) Facts and not opinions Report should state facts and facts alone for the simple reason that it has been produced after studying a particular situation, records, people, phenomenon etc. As such normally there should be no scope of any opinion except while formulating recommendations.

c) Source: Any information that is used in the report, its source must be properly cited.

d) Avoid Ambiguity All that is being included in the report has a basis, evidence or secondary data to rely upon. Therefore, ambiguity has no place. It must be reported through concrete terms rather than abstract. The report must own up what it says.

e) Proper Paragraphing: A thumb rule that each paragraph should follow is the unity of idea. One paragraph, if loaded with more than one idea becomes clumsy and divides the attention of the reader. Similarly even with only one idea, if paragraph is gaining larger length, it should be split into sub-paragraphs – each such sub-paragraph containing one sub idea. In fact it should be so planned that the transition from one paragraph to the next is smooth.

f) Para-Numbering: Uniform numbering system for all paras, sub-paras should be adopted throughout the report. Such as 1,2,3… etc. for paragraphs and (a), (b), (c)… etc. or 1.1, 1.2, 1.3… etc. for sub-paras may be used. The intention behind numbering has to be facility for referencing.

g) Heading & Sub-headings: Every paragraph should, as far as possible bear a heading and a sub-para should have a sub-heading. This is, however, not a rule. But it is desirable that for the purpose of quick grasp and retention by the reader, any lengthy text should be divided into ‘Headings & Sub-headings’.

h) Use of Bullets. Bullets no doubt have a decorative value but are extremely difficult to reference. Therefore it is desirable the bullets used only sparingly and that too for catchwords or one-liners.

i) Flow-Charts: Where a particular process, or structure or timeline has to be highlighted, flow charts are of immense value. When more than one flow chart is used these should be numbered in a series. Similarly, for figures, diagrams, etc. also proper separate numbering should be adopted.

13.3 Oral Presentation:

a) Preparation: Whether it's a report by an individual or by a team, preparation for making an oral presentation is a must. After seeking and getting time for oral presentation, the team should meet and discuss the report threadbare, picking up the points to be highlighted during the presentation.

b) Digestible Chunks: Based upon the points to be highlighted, the entire report must be split into digestible chunks. That means each part should be manageable in terms of importance as well as attention span.

c) Each Member's Role: Then each member should be assigned his/her specific role during the presentation. Normally during presentation the roles are: (i) Presentation – in full or in part; (ii) Handling equipment; (iii) Helping the presenter with references and (iv) Handling questions from the authorities.

d) Dry Run: Rather than being over confident, it is advisable that a rehearsal of the entire oral presentation is done beforehand. It would not only increase the level of confidence, but the weak points would also be very clearly known. This would also help in proper planning of the time available for presentation. One more benefit that normally come out of 'Dry Run' is that we can work on probable questions and plan our answers accordingly.

13.4 Summary:

What we discussed in this chapter makes it clear that both written as well as oral presentation have equal contribution to make towards the acceptability of the Report. While written presentation is part & parcel of any Report, the need for oral presentation arises only when the decision making Authority wants it.

Section – 14

14 Incident Report

14.1Background:

An incident report is required to be written when an offence or accident is experienced by a person or a group of people. The incident could be anything from a worker skidding on the shop floor and injuring himself to any violent or illegal behaviour. An incident report needs to include all the essential information about the accident or the offence. The report-writing process begins with fact finding and ends with recommendations for preventing future accidents. In this section, we shall deal with this aspect of 'Report Writing' in some details.

14.2Specific Incidents:

Any incident or accident should qualify for a report to be prepared on it. However, the following specific incidents definitely demand a Report:

- Life threatening Danger
- Fire, Water leaks, Power Outages
- Accidents
- Thefts
- Bomb threats
- Breach of security
- Unwarranted entry, movements or activities

14.3Four Steps:

Writing any incident report involves four basic steps:

a) Finding the Facts:

To prepare for writing an 'Incident Report' we need to have all possible facts. For example:

- Date, time, and specific location of incident
- Names, job titles, and department of employees involved
- Name, age, parentage, address of witnesses

- Events leading up to incident
- Exactly what happened at the moment of the incident
- Environmental conditions (e.g. inadequate lighting, noise, etc.)
- Impact (including persons, equipment, tools, materials etc.)

b) Determining the Sequence of events

Based on the facts, we should be able to determine and describe the sequence of events in detail, including:

- Events leading up to the incident: Was the employee working, using a tool, handling hazardous materials, climbing the shaft, turning a valve etc.?
- Events involved in the incident: Was the employee struck by an object? Any radiation? Any valuables lost? Any sensitive matter compromised?

- Events immediately following the incident: What did the employee do? What did co-workers do? Did they call for help, administer first aid, shut down the equipment?

- The incident should be described on the report in sufficient detail that any reader can clearly picture what happened.

- Creating a diagram to show, in a simple and visually effective manner, the sequence of events related to the incident should be considered. This diagram would form part pf the incident report.

- If possible some photos of the accident scene, which may help readers follow the sequence of events should be taken and included in the Report.

c) Analysis of the Incident

The report should include an in-depth analysis of the causes of the accident.

- What caused it?
  - Unsafe act: Human 'Error', 'Lapse', 'Violation' that occurs immediately prior to the incident.

- Unsafe condition: article, equipment or environment present in a hazardous condition prior to the incident.

- What else influenced?
  - No incident for long – Complacence
  - Ambiguity of task, equipment, procedure.
  - Leadership – Unresponsive,
  - Work Culture – Highly formal,
  - Unclear Communications

d) Recommendations for Corrective Action

Recommendations for corrective action might include immediate corrective action as well as long-term corrective actions such as:

- Employee training on safe work practices
- Preventive maintenance of all equipment to keep them in good operating condition
- Evaluation of job procedures
- Job hazard analysis and employees' training on those hazards
- Engineering changes that make the task safer
- Improving Work Culture
- Better Security Unit – Work unit interface
- Awareness campaign on security requirements

14.4Summary:

Incident Reports are generally generated by the Security Units as it forms part of their work domain. As discussed in this section, these reports serve as an important tool to prevent, safeguard and remedy the damages out of such incidents. These reports also help in designing and innovating mock security drills.

Section – 15

15 Report Writing - Sample Reports

15.1 Background

In the previous sections we have discussed all ingredients of Report Writing in all details such as General Attributes, Types of Reports, Formatting & Structuring of Reports, Language Construction and Written & Oral presentation aspects. More or less that should be all in this Handbook. However, with a view to facilitating report writing further a skeleton of a Sample Report is put across in the succeeding segments of this Section.

15.2 Cover:

I. **Title:** Analysis of Impact of Training Courses conducted by the ATI, Department of XYZ.

II. **Composition of the Study Team:**

1. Director (Admn) (Chairperson);
2. Deputy Director (Coord) (Member),
3. Deputy Controller of Accounts (Member);
4. Assistant Director (Trg) (Member Secretary)

III. **Organization:** Administrative Training Institute (ATI), Department of XYZ, Mumbai.

15.3 Table of Contents:

15.4Forwarding Letter:

A letter addressed to the authority that entrusted the Study, duly signed either by the Member Secretary or by all the Members of the Study Team indicating formal submission of the Report.

15.5Chapter 1 -Synopsis

I. **Problem:** The Administrative Training Institute (ATI) set up under the Department of XYZ has completed ten years of functioning. Since there has been no assessment of the utility of training conducted by the ATI, the Department is finding ……………………..

II. **Major Recommendations:** The Study Team has recommended that the following steps may immediately be taken:

   i. Organize Trainer-training courses for the faculty of ATI on regular basis to equip them ………………

   ii. Involve the line managers in the selection as well as evaluation ………………;

   iii. ……………………………………………………

III. **Costs & Gains:** With a view to implementing the recommendations of the Study Team the Department would need to incur an expenditure of Rs………However, ……………………………………………... The details of 'Costs & Gains' have been worked out and are included in the Chapter on "Costs & Gains".

IV. **Other areas of Study:** The following areas – not included in the mandate for the Team –may also be studied so as to plan comprehensive development of training:

   i. ……….

   ii. ……….

15.6Chapter 2 - Introduction

I. **Background and Structure:** The Administrative Training Institute (ATI) was set up in the year 2005 under the Department of XYZ with the mandate to train its employees numbering approximately 15000………………………………………………………………………………………… ……………………………………………………………………………………………………… ……………………………… The ATI has a flat structure with a Director General at its head and several faculty positions named as Directors, Deputy Directors, Asstt Directors below him. ……………………………………………………………………………………..A copy of the Organization Chart is included at Annex – 2.

II. **Activities & People involved:** The ATI conducts about 50 training courses per year. A copy of the training calendar for each of the last 10 years has been obtained and placed at Annex – 3. The duration of the courses ………………….. There are a total of…..Members offaculty. Besides …………………………………… used as guest faculty for relevant courses. Apart from the officers and members of staff who attend the training courses, ……………….. are also stake holders in the training conducted by the ATI.

III. **Problem Area:** The Administrative Training Institute (ATI) set up under the Department of XYZ has completed ten years of functioning. Since there has been no assessment of the utility of training conducted by the ATI, the Department is finding …………………….In order to analyze the impact of training, the competent authority constituted a Study Team consisting of Director (Admn) (Chairperson); Deputy Director (Coord) (Member), Deputy Controller of Accounts (Member); Assistant Director (Trg) (Member Secretary). The terms of reference of the committee have been enumerated in the Letter No……….. dated……..under which the Study Team has been authorized to conduct the study and submit its report within a period of 90 days.This authority is included as Annex-1.

IV. **Aim of Study:** Keeping the terms of reference in mind, the Study Team will endeavor to match the objectives of training with the transfer of learning generated and assess the overall impact of training on the manpower of the Department XYZ.

V. **Constraints:** No constraints.

15.7Chapter 3 - Methodology

I. **Meetings:**
   i. With Head of Department
   ii. With Stakeholders
      a) Selected participants;
      b) Selected members of Faculty;
      c) Selected Line Managers; and
      d) Heads of Divisions

II. **Questionnaires:** Three questionnaires were used to gather data from different stakeholders. These questionnaires have been included as Annex 4-A,B and C.

III. **Terms of Reference:** The terms of Reference as mentioned in the authority latter (Annex-1) were valid throughout the period of Study and at no stage no modification was done by the competent authority.

IV. **Secondary Data:** No secondary data was available for use by the Study Team.

15.8Chapter 4 - Data Analysis and Conclusions:

I. Discussion on Course-wise Objectives and Transfer of Learning:
   a. Whether those were framed properly in measurable terms;
   b. If not the deficiencies;
   c. Matching the objectives with the feedback obtained from participants;
   d. How the feedback analysis done by ATI was used.
   e. Conclusions & Recommendations

II. Discussion on the response to Questionnaire – Impact of training and Cost Benefit Analysis:
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d. Conclusions & Recommendations

III. Discussion on notes taken during meetings with stake holders– Impact of training and Cost Benefit Analysis:
   a.
   b.

c.
d. Conclusions & Recommendations

15.9Chapter 5 – Costs & Gains:

I. Direct costs and direct savings in terms of money for implementation of the recommendations of the Study Team:
II. Other benefits on which a price tag cannot be put:
   i. Increase in efficiency of Trainers;
   ii. Increase in efficiency of the manpower of the Department
   iii. ....
   iv. ....

15.10 Chapter 6 – Summary of Recommendations:

The following recommendations have been made by the Study Team for implementation by the Department:

S.No.	Recommendation	Reference (Chapter, Para No.)
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

15.11 Acknowledgements

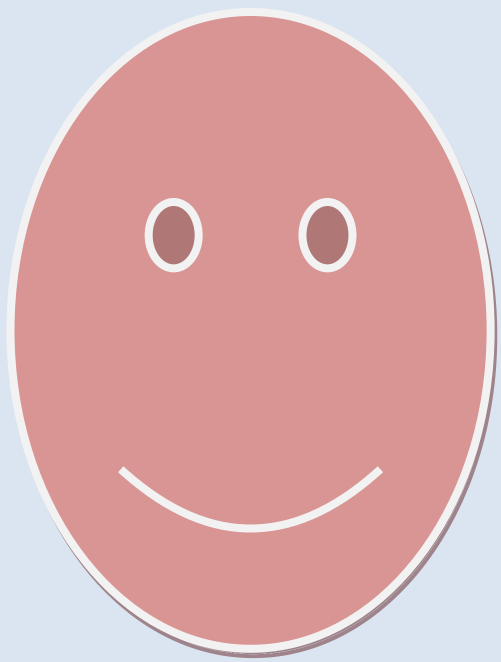
- ⇒ We are grateful to Shri XXX, Addl Secretary and Head of the Department of XYZ for giving us the opportunity to conduct the Study;
- ⇒ We are further thankful to Smt. AAA, DG, ATI for issuing the "Authority Letter'" promptly and for providing all physical facilities for conducting the Study besides clarifying the task in detail;
- ⇒ We thank all Heads of Divisions, Supervisory Officers of the Department of XYZ and Members of Faculty of ATI for filling the questionnaires and rendering all help required;
- ⇒ Our grateful thanks are due to Shri ABC, Librarian for helping us with books and records;
- ⇒ We are indeed very obliged to all the members of staff of ATI, for extending all necessary support and assistance;
- ⇒ Last but not the least; we are thankful to the Security Staff who allowed our frequent entries and exits without any hassle.

15.12 Annexures

The following documents were generated and have been attached as Annex:

Annex No.	Heading	Reference (Chapter, Para No.)
1.	Authority Letter No…… dated…..	Ch.2Para III
2.	Organization Chart	Ch. 2 Para I
3.	…………….	……
4.	…………….	……
5.	…………….	……

THANK YOU



****