

Report on ICSSR-SRC Workshop on Research Methodology for Ph.D scholars in Social Science in collaboration with Department of Economics, University of Kerala

The Indian Council of Social Science Research-Southern Region Centre, Hyderabad in collaboration with the Department of Economics, University of Kerala organized a seven day workshop on Research Methodology for Ph.D Scholars in Social Sciences during 3rd February to 9th February 2020 at University of Kerala. The workshop was intended to disseminate knowledge relating to the methods and methodology in Social Sciences research for Ph.D scholars from South Indian universities.

The participants included 20 students from different universities outside Kerala, 10 students from different universities within Kerala and 5 students from Kerala University. The students belonged to diverse disciplines including economics, commerce, philosophy, management, history, home science and South Asian studies. Altogether, there were 20 technical sessions which dealt with different aspects of research methodology.

The inaugural function was held on the fore noon of 3rd February. Honourable Pro - Vice Chancellor of University of Kerala, Prof. P. P. Ajayakumar inaugurated the function. Prof. Usha Kiran, Hon. Director of ICSSR SRC was the guest of honour. Prof. Shaji Varkey, Dean, faculty of Social Sciences, University of Kerala presided over the function. The IQAC director Prof. Simon Thattil and Prof. Josekutty, Associate Professor from Department of Political Science offered felicitations for the programme. Dr. Manju S Nair made the welcome address and Vijayasree, Research scholar, proposed the vote of thanks. All the speakers were focusing on the needs for conducting research methodology courses and expressed their concern over the quality degradation in research happening across India. Such workshops, according to them will provide orientation to the students to proceed with their research in a scientific and systematic way.

The first technical session was handled by Prof. Usha Kiran, Hon. Director, ICSSR-SRC. She provided an overall idea about research process starting from selecting the research question, to research design, to data analysis and report writing. It was followed by the technical session handled by Prof. Simon Thattil, Director, IQAC, University of Kerala. The title of the session was framing the research problem and formulation of research hypothesis. Prof. Simon Thattil was able to provide a systematic methodology by which the

researchers can develop their research problem and focus on it. He provided adequate help to the participants by mentioning suitable examples of how one can design a research problem and how a research hypothesis can be formulated.

The next session was by Dr. J. Devika who is Professor from Centre for Development Studies who spoke on the topic Methodological issues in social science research. She was speaking on the quantitative type of methodological issues and the qualitative type of methodological issues and the advantages and disadvantages of these two methods and also on the current trend of using a hybrid methodology or mixed methods where by you combine these two methods

There was also a session on sampling methods handled by Prof. Abdul Salim, Prof. of Economics, University of Kerala. He was focusing on the different types of sampling techniques that the researchers can adopt from random sampling to non-random sampling methods. He was able to convey the participants on the methods by which adequate number of samples can be identified for a particular type of research.

The session on research design was handled by Prof. Simon Thattil, Director of IQAC, University of Kerala. Prof. Thattil also spoke on the relevance of research design and the ways by which a research design has to be formulated on the basis of their research questions.

The session on data collection instruments, particularly on questionnaire and interview schedule was handled by Prof. Kevin, former Pro-Vice Chancellor, University of Kerala. He was focusing on the do's and don'ts while preparing a questionnaire with a suitable example. Qualitative methods in social science research was also given due importance in the workshop. The first session on qualitative methods was handled by Prof. Vinoj Abraham who focused on case study and its possibilities in research.

The ninth and tenth sessions were handled by Sri. Sriram V, Chief librarian, CDS. He was focusing on data sources and how to use the reference software, Zotero. He focused on the different types of data sources and the availability of e-resources. For conducting social science research, the reference software Zotero was downloaded by all the participants and he gave hands on training to use Zotero software. This was followed by two sessions by Prof. Vijayamohan Pillai, Professor from CDS who handled the topics on inferential statistics and formulation and testing of hypothesis. He provided several examples to conduct testing of hypothesis. Many students from commerce, economics and management who had several issues with testing data could get clarifications from Prof. Vijayamohan Pillai.

The 13th session was handled by Dr. Lakshmi Sukumar who focused on gender studies in research methodology. She is an assistant professor of Department of English, University of Kerala, who is also in charge of Centre for Women's Studies of University of Kerala. She was sharing her experience as a gender activist, and how research studies and programmes become more vibrant by incorporating gender studies. Following the session on gender, there were two other sessions again allocated for qualitative research handled by Dr. Jayaseelan Raj. This was focused on phenomenology and ethnographic methods in qualitative research. Many students had the first-hand experience of listening to a class on phenomenology and ethnography. The fifth day was fully reserved for explaining IBM SPSS software and how students can use it for their research purpose. This was handled by Dr. V Nagaraja Naidu, Professor from University college. The relevant tools in SPSS were demonstrated by the Professor with suitable examples. He shared his data with students and students were given hands on experience of how to enter the data and how to do preliminary data analysis. The last sessions on the last day of the programme was handled by Prof. Manju S Nair, the Convenor of the workshop and Professor at Department of Economics. She spoke on quantitative data analysis and on academic writing and the modalities that one has to use while writing a research report. The rules and ways by which academic writing has to be undertaken was specifically mentioned during the session.

Finally, the last session was devoted for the participants to share their experience. The course convenor gave enough time for scholars to share their experience and also to point out the drawbacks of the workshop. Most of the participants had an opinion that this was the most valuable and memorable workshop that they have attended because all the particularities of doing social science research was covered by the workshop right from identifying a research problem, to formulating a research problem, developing a research design, developing a research hypothesis, preparing questionnaire and interview schedule, collecting data, entering it in SPSS, doing data analysis, doing qualitative research including ethnography, case study, phenomenology and finally report writing. All these aspects were covered in the workshop. Also the students gave a suggestion that it would be better if adequate time is given for them to discuss their own research topic with resource persons.

To conclude the research methodology workshop for Ph.D students in social sciences turned out to be a rich experience for the participants, raising their confidence to proceed with scientific research and produce quality output.



Prof. Usha Kiran -Key note address



Prof. Manju S. Nair on the topic Report Writing in Research



Prof. Simon Thattil, Director, IQAC, University of Kerala



Participants of the Workshop