

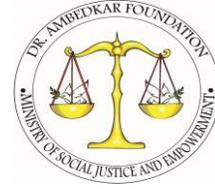
**Report  
On**

**Ten Days Research Methodology Workshop  
(27<sup>th</sup> Nov. to 6<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2019)**

**Theme: *Researching Disadvantaged Status in India***

**Organized by:**

**Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Tezpur University (Assam)  
In Collaboration with ICSSR, New Delhi**



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**Introduction:**

The concept of ‘disadvantaged’ albeit new is well acknowledged globally to comprehend social as well as economic stratification in the context. As a result, numerous researches on such an idea are being carried out across the disciplines of social sciences and humanities. Therefore, it becomes imperative for scholars to become oriented towards ontology, epistemology, and methodology of doing research on disadvantaged status in India (perspectives from caste, tribe, religion, gender, religious minorities, and persons with disability).

**Duration and Purpose of the course**

After receiving approval and collaborative grant from ICSSR, New Delhi a ten-day research methodology workshop (national level) was organized on the theme ‘Researching Disadvantaged Status in India’ at Tezpur University from 27<sup>th</sup> November to 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019. The workshop was conducted by Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Tezpur University in collaboration with Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi. This workshop was an attempt to orient/hone research aptitude among the scholars working in the area of disadvantaged status. Also, considering the importance of inter-disciplinarity in comprehension of dynamic nature of a social reality the workshop meant to provide orientation of different disciplines in comprehending this aspect of social reality in India.

**Focus of the course**

Therefore, course (for the workshop) was designed by the coordinators (Prof. K. Kikhi- Chair Professor & Dr. D. R. Gautam- Research Officer, Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Tezpur University) to achieve above mentioned aim. In tune with the primary aim, objectives of the workshop were devised as:

- a) To facilitate scholars in their exploration of disadvantaged status in India
- b) To provide exposure towards ontology, epistemology and methodology of doing research on disadvantaged status in social sciences and humanities
- c) To orient scholars towards utilization of relevant concepts related to study caste, tribe, gender, religious minorities, and persons with disability

- d) Disseminating information about sole/blended usage and analysis of quantitative and qualitative information/data
- e) Exposing scholars to the field – doing empirical research
- f) To enable scholars in their report writing – reviewing and writing the results and analysis.

### **Selection of the Participants and Resource Persons**

With an aim to have diverse participation from the nation, wide circulation of the advertisement (inviting applications) was made through esteemed Economic & Political Weekly Journal (vol. LIV no 43 dated 26<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2019) (see annexure A) apart from request mails to different academic institutions. However, due to clash of timing (first week of December) with the UGC-NET/JRF examination, the applications were below our expectations and were largely restricted to few national institutions. In total, there were thirty eight (38) applications for the course from different institutions of the country, while one application came from Bangladesh which was not entertained in the wake of national workshop. All applicants were (in the web notification) instructed to apply through email with application form and necessary enclosures (copy of application form, see annexure B). These applications were further shortlisted to the given strength (of twenty) along with few waitlisted candidates. Such a screening happened through a dedicated committee (which is also a local advisory committee for Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Tezpur University whose composition is Prof. P. K. Das (Dean, SH&SS), Prof. C. K. Sharma (Head, Dept. of Social Work), Prof. Debabrata Das (Dept. of Management Studies, & Director, Centre for Open & Distance Learning, TU), Prof. D.P. Nath (Head, Dept. of Cultural Studies), and Prof. K. Kikhi (Dept. of Sociology, & Chair Professor, Dr. Ambedkar Chair, TU) (see annexure C) where priority was assigned to the research in similar theme. As a result, twenty one scholars (including local scholars from Tezpur University) were finalized who agreed and became successful part of this ten-day exercise. Diversity of participants could be gauged from different academic institutions with which participants were associated. These included institutions like Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Guwahati, Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya, Wardha, Berhampur University, Odisha, Gauhati University, Guwahati, and Assam University, Silchar apart from Tezpur University itself (see annexure D). In order to understand the distribution of the participants, it may be noted that total number of applications from outside the state category were fifteen (15) of which ten (10) were shortlisted/waitlisted though due to clash of engagements only five students turned up. In case of within the state category, there were six applications. All of them were either shortlisted or waitlisted and have finally attended the workshop. From the university, there were seventeen applications of which seven applications were rejected due to technical or other reasons as different theme of doctoral research.

As far as resource persons were concerned, we've attempted to bring experts (as per guidelines of ICSSR) in the area of research methodology pertaining to identified disadvantaged communities. This was communicated through our application which was further refined in the light of guidance received from ICSSR, New Delhi. The resource persons were the one with expertise in the respective fields and associated with some eminent institutions including National Institute of Education Planning & Administration (NIEPA), New Delhi, University of Delhi, Delhi, Indian Institution of Technology (IIT), Guwahati, Manipur University, Imphal, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh, Gauhati University, Guwahati, and Tezpur University . The list with detailed information about resource persons was shared as an enclosure with our application which finally got approved from ICSSR. However, in the wake of non-availability of some of the

resource persons for the workshop few changes in the list were made such that quality doesn't get compromised. Reflection about quality of the resource persons could be gauged from the feedback forms of the participants towards resource persons. Due to certain financial limitation this workshop was organized as a collaborative exercise where expenditure on one resource person was borne by Dr. Ambedkar Chair. There were fifteen resource persons (5- outside state, 5- within state, and 5- local resource persons) to be supported by ICSSR, New Delhi out of which one (outside state), and two (within state) could not make it. Apart from this, few local resource persons in the wake of end of autumn semester were either not available or available for one session. Therefore, accordingly replacements were done through additional local resource persons without creating any financial implication for the total expenditure towards grant from ICSSR.

### **The Course Content and the Faculty**

The content of the course was meticulously designed to do justice to the theme of the course and for providing specific orientation to the research scholars working in the area of disadvantaged communities. As the workshop/course was largely meant to disseminate information pertaining to the qualitative social science research, the content and the reading material was in sync with the said objective. A hard copy of the material as well as program schedule with detailed timetable and respective resource persons were given to all participants for their ready reference and gradual consumption (copy of the material and program schedule enclosed). There were certain changes made in the program schedule to accommodate genuine concerns of the resource persons, and some practical difficulties. However, the design and genuine intention of the course (as given by ICSSR) was given the priority and total number of sessions (technical and interaction) didn't change for the course. Details of the sessions conducted during the course can be seen as under. However, it may be noted down that few research papers were discussed by few resource persons as Prof. D. P. Nath, Prof. N. Sukumar, Prof. Tulsi Patel, and Dr. Sarmistha Das whose details are included as a part of report on their respective sessions. Regarding case studies discussed, Prof. Sashmi Nayak had discussed a case study of a village to promote the farmers in one of the regions in Odisha. In the technical session on library and e-resources by Dr. Mukesh Saikia, Tezpur University online library catalogue including subscribed and freely available e-resources was discussed and necessary information was disseminated to the research scholars. Regarding analytical tools, Prof. Apurba Das has deliberated information on geospatial mapping tools and their usage for the social research apart from giving information about their general usage. Also, Prof. Amit Kumar Choudhury has elaborately explained about statistical tools along with their usage in research.

### **The Course (Research Methodology Workshop):**

**Day One: 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

#### **Session 1: Exploring the disadvantaged status in social sciences**

**Resource Person: Prof. R. Govinda**

As per our previously announced schedule, the workshop began on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019 sharp at 9.15 a.m. with a welcome address by Prof. Kedilezo Kikhi (Chair Professor, Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Tezpur University) who welcomed everyone to the opening session of 10 days long Research Methodology Workshop. At the outset he explained the motive behind conducting this workshop after explaining its unique feature of being theme specific. As a rationale of choosing 'disadvantaged status in India' as the theme, he mentioned that even after seven decades of

independence such a reality continues without much alteration, and therefore need for doing such a social research is very much there. Prof. Kikhi pointed that disadvantaged groups as SCs, STs, Minorities, Women, PWDs, etc. are basically marginalized through a complex process of relegation, denial and deprivation of basic rights and thus inequality gets reproduced and largely appears to be legitimate. He specified the criterion for selection of twenty participants where he told that the selection of participants was purely based on their current topic of research which fell under the rubric of the theme of the workshop.

He concluded his speech by highlighting the relevance of chair and the activities undertaken under it. The chair has 5 main objectives

- Teaching and research
- Research projects - currently three running projects
- Building library
- Organizing public lectures, panel discussion, recently conducted 3<sup>rd</sup> Ambedkar Memorial Lecture where Prof. Uma Chakravarti delivered the lecture
- Awareness program - under which essay competition, medical health camp (recently in collaboration with Department of Social Work organised a health camp in the Harijan Colony of Tezpur)

With that he gave a brief profile of Prof. R. Govinda, the keynote speaker and thanked Prof. P.K. Das (Dean, SH&SS, TU) for chairing the session.

Prof. Govinda started his talk by saying that Ambedkar never thought that he would be made part of the drafting team of Constitution of independent India. Due to his discriminated social position, he was forced to think if this opportunity bestowed upon him would liberate (given the authority) or chain him (silence him). Such thought appeared as his struggle was not only against colonial rule but was for a reform within the country as well.

Pointing towards the theme of 'researching disadvantaged status in India' he mentioned that as a social scientist it's important to reflect on how do we engage with the disadvantaged? Then highlighting Prof. Kikhi's opening remarks, he mentioned that disadvantaged is in the context of development. After about 200 years of colonial subjugation, we adopted the constitutional democracy with a universal suffrage. It is important as most developed country at that time failed to achieve universal suffrage. He doesn't claim that we haven't developed, back then when British left India, the literacy rate was about 14 and now this had been increased subsequently. In spite of all these we have not been able to work towards an egalitarian society. There might be arguments regarding the time frame, some might argue that 75 years were not long, then how long should one wait to achieve the goals of the preamble. The position of India is paradoxical as on one side India is featured among the very few countries that had been able to launch their own satellites into the space, while the same country is featured as having the largest population living under extreme poverty, largest illiterate, malnourished children in the world, to name a few.



Amartya Sen wrote that we live in a world of unprecedented opulence of kind and yet we live in a world with deprivation and oppression. This was written more than 20 years back but still very relevant. As an instance, if we take any newspaper we'd witness two stories of extremity on the same page, i.e. one would see the mention of an Indian breaking into the world's richest men while on the other we see extreme destitution, who takes his own life. The level of inequality is more today than yesterday. The problem lies in the fact that India is very diverse (linguistically, culturally, and religiously) but there is another layer to it which makes it hierarchal. So the position of India's development is paradoxical. He states that the quotes from the Constitution seem that it has been written today.

Later, he emphasis that there is huge amount of data base collected on disadvantaged, backward classes, economically weaker section but did it really help to achieve the underline mandate of the Constitution that was to receive the equality in all spheres. So he urged the current scholars and upcoming scholars to move beyond categorization of terminology. Prof. Govinda said that the part of the problem is not questioning. We need to ask ourselves, why we want to study this disadvantaged area. We all are caught up with the paradigm of research and facilitating research which are adding to the already existing literature so we have to move beyond science paradigm and work towards transformative agenda. The goal is to change the existing reality, the lens need to be changed. When engaged with disadvantaged groups, one should not run away from ethical question. Though there are challenges before a social science researcher, do not restrict the research only to empirical data collection rather it should be ethical. He ended his talk by urging everyone present in the room to be a responsible social researcher, not an empirical explorer but an ethical explorer.

The first session of the day ended with the vote of thanks by Dr. D.R. Gautam.

## **Session Two: Problematizing perspectives: learning from cultural studies**

### **Resource Person: Prof. D. P. Nath**

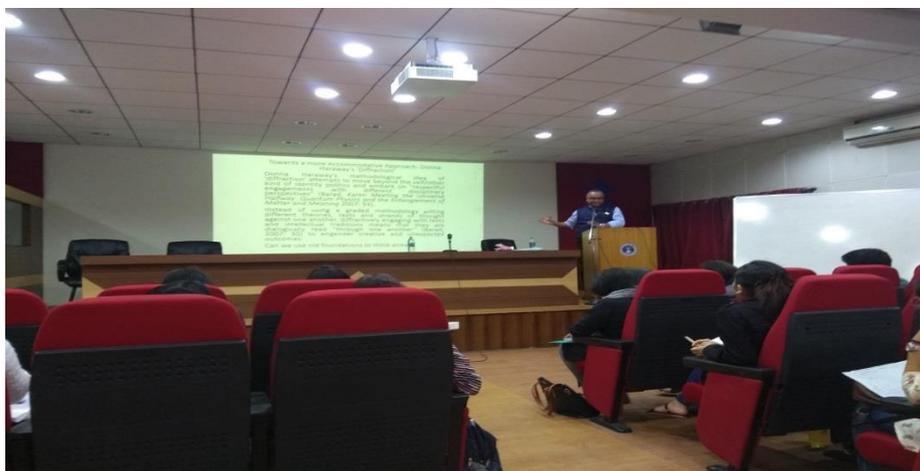
“Can problematizing be a methodological tool?” questions the speaker. Prof. D.P. Nath then goes on to state that problematizing does not mean just reading existing literature. He laments the fact that review of literature merely ends up as a gap spotting exercise. It is rather asking fundamental questions about presumptions that we all have been conditioned to adhere to. He rejects the notion that ideas are commonsensical, stating that common sense is highly political. Therefore, reading needs to be carried out dialogically. This does not imply that one should disregard another's view, instead one need to relook at it through the lens of the other from the already

existing ontological reality. The speaker then vouches for the need of inter-disciplinarity disavowing that inter-disciplinarity is not merely a fad but a much-needed compulsion. Quoting Nietzsche, he avers that more the perspectives we bring in, the clearer would be the object of our analysis allowing multiple perspectives to explain a reality, hence methodological tools need to cut across disciplinary boundaries. Moving on, he asserts that the domain of cultural studies is largely premised on inter-disciplinarity. He then calls attention to the work of David Morley who in his seminal, *Nationwide* (1980) combined three core dimensions of social reality - lived experiences, texts/discourses and the social context, thereby making all learning contextual and relational. He even goes on to say that processes of meaning making in history are also contextual. Speaking of history of social science perspectives, he traces it to the emergence and proliferation of social movements in the 1960s which saw the rise of three intellectual strands of thought-

- The humanist school which rendered agency to man as a creative entity
- The structuralist school which presupposed man as a product of societal structures
- The Neo Marxist school of thought which upheld the idea of transformative justice

D.P. Nath then furthers that 'cultural studies' as a disciplinary enterprise is a celebration of multiplicity of perspectives even though in the initial stages, this was informed by a hint of positivism, i.e. the idea of one singular truth as achievable like natural sciences. Drawing on Jean Baudrillard, Nath claims that all forms of reality are but mediated realities, therefore a postmodernist tendency. However, he eschews employing postmodernist orientation and gravitates towards the humanist approach. He then declares that life has become a reflection of hyper-reality, as existing outside of human existence, out with the human mind, referring to the Cartesian position. Nath then speaks of the dichotomy of cultural insider versus cultural outsider, supporting that to undertake any form of research exercise it is rewarding to be an insider, as one is familiar with the linguistic discourse that prevails therein.

Further, Nath speaking on representational politics mentions D. O. Donoghue and his proposition of visual arts-based approach wherein we cling on to the idea of an assemblage of reality and the idea of progress is modelled vis-à-vis moving towards 'alternative realities'. Nath also brings up the Margaret Mead - Derek Freeman Debate and avers that universalizing and essentializing tendencies are problematic and hence gives cautionary warning against employing any approach premised on biological determinism or essentialism. He therefore proposes the following functionalities that any form of research should seek - truthfulness, self-reflexivity, polyvocality, awareness of historicity and sensitivity to the local context.



Prof. Nath points out Donna Haraway's conceptualization of graded methodology in her path breaking Diffraction Theory which espouses 'strong objectivity'. Haraway (2004) deploys a graded methodology whereby texts, theories and strands of thought are positioned against one another, diffractively engaging with one another and the exercise of intellectual reading becomes dialogical, i.e. reading through one another (Barad, 2004:3) thus engendering creative, unexpected and transgressive outcomes. This enables the social science researcher to move beyond mere pursuit of causality behind any social reality or event. One needs to hence learn from multiple perspectives and not merely position oneself against the other. The process of othering therefore is not out with any inadequacies. Donna Haraway states Nath, successfully reconciles humanism and post-modernist orientations accommodating multiple possibilities of 'strong objectivity'. Nath ends stating that in spite of the pervasiveness of a multitude of methodological lenses, he still supports the possibility of the humanist standpoint, although critiqued as teleological and positivist, as having the potential to 'change the society for better' and 'this is why I call myself a traditionalist in that sense', he therefore concludes.

### **Session Three: Discourse on the disadvantaged: concept and its philosophy**

#### **Resource Person: Prof. R. Govinda**

Prof. Govinda said that in the context of the terminologies- oppressed, weaker, marginalised, and backward - used interchangeably for the disadvantaged. He gave the example of SCs, STs being used monolithically and put under one basket. But, in the context of research literature he said these terminologies create confusion, as these descriptor constructs have acquired an identity of their own and in research the usage of these explanators is problematic. He spoke about the alternatives - disability, deprivation and discrimination- of disadvantaged in research.

He says, in research one should analytically understand what it means 'being' disadvantaged rather than analysing a category as disadvantaged which has been given by government. An individual experience varying degrees of disadvantages and a researcher ought to understand the essence of human condition. He further states that 'being disadvantaged' as a human condition is multi-dimensional. It deprives people of their entitlements. He explained by citing the example of 'woman' as a disadvantaged group. A woman of an upper caste may be disadvantageous in a different way from that of a lower caste. Disadvantageous positions are therefore, interactive and not uni-dimensional.



Disadvantaged is a human condition which is surrounded by a social condition. He stressed that disadvantaged has to be determined empirically and be established. And that something which is derived on empirical observation should be a norm. He cited the example of ‘disability as disadvantaged’, that it is an empirically derived norm. In field while studying the disadvantaged, a researcher should use the already available norms in order to determine the disadvantaged.

Further, he said about ‘discrimination as disadvantaged’. Discrimination creates disadvantages in human beings in subtle way and it therefore often skips a researcher’s thinking. Discrimination simply means treating someone with inequality and it therefore, is an important framework to be considered in research. Discrimination includes deprivation and this is the reason why it is an important framework. Discrimination has violence attached to it and it creates a kind of disadvantage which is deeper than that of deprivation.

He ends by saying that all disadvantaged are embedded in a power asymmetry which creates discrimination. It can operate anywhere - family, community and so forth. This power asymmetry is unequal and is institutionalised.

#### **Session Four: Interaction Session**

##### **Movie Screening ‘Ek Ruka Hua Faisla’**

As a part of interaction session, movie screening was done with an aim to relate with the various aspects of researching social reality of disadvantaged status in India. The movie selected was ‘ek ruka hua faisla’ which was an attempt to reveal underlying subtle aspects of ascriptions in otherwise normal course of development. The movie was followed by a round of discussion among the participants in the presence of resource person, and organisers.

#### **Day Two: 28<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

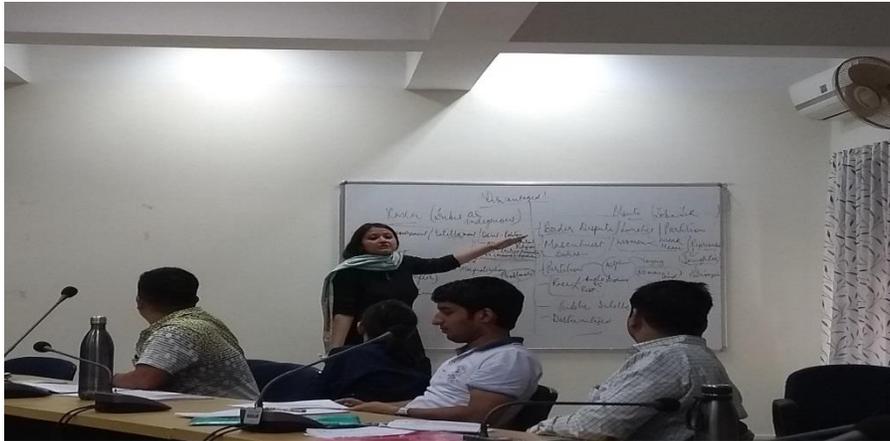
##### **Session One: Reviewing literature and formulating research questions**

###### **Resource Person: Dr. Sarmistha Das**

The first session of the second day was started at 9:15 am with Sarmistha Das as the resource person on the topic ‘Reviewing literature and formulating research questions’. She divided her lecture into two parts. The first half was on a brief overview of literature review and the other half the participants were made to do an exercise (hand on experience).

She started by mentioning that ‘review of literature’ is a significant and inevitable part of any research. She said it is often confused with survey of literature. To add clarity, she pointed that

survey of literature is the summary of literature while review is not a simple summary of literature but an explanation to how it is connected to the research that we are doing. It is a critical and in depth analysis of the previously done researches in the selected area of study. In this exercise, the approaches and others' view are analysed to understand and address the issues that have been discussed hitherto.



Taking forward the discussion she asked the participants, how do we ensure that our work is different from the work that had been done? Making the point, she said that we do it through literature which is available. Therefore, it is an essential and important component of research. It is crucial as it helps in the formulation of concepts, theories and thereby helps in identifying our research problem(s).

This is done after reviewing the existing literature on a selected theme with an intention to identify some gaps which necessitates or rationalise the doing/need of a new research. How do we identify the gaps in research then becomes another logical engagement for a researcher. The gaps, as mentioned by Dr. Sarmistha Das gets identified when the new facets (including methods) of the researched reality is juxtaposed with previously done research.

How do we formulate research questions? Formulation of research questions is connected to the literature review. Based on the findings, the gaps and lacunas and identifying the areas where the existing work do not address some of the points in the existing area that is how we try to formulate research question.

After the presentation was given the participants were divided into two groups and were made to review 'Toba Tek Singh' a story written by Saadat Hasan Manto and an article 'Tribes as Indigenous People of India' written by Virginius Xaxa after which a discussion was taken place on what was written there in the given story and research article. For the gain of participants this exercise was dialogically conducted and the questions (on the given texts) were enumerated and made scholars to think differently (as per the research objectives) for the same text.

## **Session Two: Development of research proposal**

### **Resource Person: Dr. Amiya Kumar Das**

In this session, Dr. Das has effectively covered the steps involved in the design of research proposal. He began the session by asking the fundamental question with regard to the meaning of research, the need to do research and the meaning of research proposal. To the question which he put before the participants, he received a wide array of response such as - research means critical inquiry, researcher conducts research to bring forth the social reality before the wider audience,

and research proposal means an idea or proposal to do something. According to him, the foremost important thing in the development of research proposal is thinking and questioning. To make it clear he referred to Rene Descartes known quote – “I think therefore I am”. For a researcher, thinking, asking, reading, and writing is a continuous process and cannot be kept in an isolated manner. The more one engages in intensive reading the better it results in consumption and articulation.

Next, he shifts the attention of the participants to understand the subtle difference between abstract, synopsis and research proposal. The difference between abstract and synopsis is a matter of technical difference and both of them consist of three steps – introduction, main body and conclusion. Having said this it is incorrect to use the term synopsis and research proposal simultaneously. Because synopsis is usually submitted before the submission of thesis and research proposal is submitted before the beginning of research and it excludes any final outcome of the research work.



Research proposal has different sections and they are interrelated. For instance, research questions must be related to statement of the problem in general and research objectives in specific. There is the section of reviewing of literature where the researcher identifies the gap in the existing work and provides justification as to how the new work is a departure from the previous work. Statement of the problem must reflect the context of the proposed study. Moving further, he advised the researcher to avoid using terms loosely in their study. In addition to this, he cautioned the researcher that they must be clear in defining the concept that they are using in the research. For example, different theorists have defined the concept of empowerment, now it is the task of researcher to define how they are looking into the concept in their respective field. In order to do a research, the researcher must understand the ‘why’ aspect of research. Because the reflexivity of the researcher in understanding the ‘why’ aspect helps him/ her in better comprehending the positionality and ability of the researcher to define and analyse the prevailing events.

Last but not the least, he suggested few tips to avoid while preparing a research proposal which are – improper and incorrect citation, improper theoretical and conceptual framework, irrelevant research questions and using loose argument. For the successful publication of any research work he suggested the future researcher to see the Scopus index of a journal, its ISSN number and time and again warned the researcher not to fall into the trap of predatory journals.

### **Session Three: Interaction Session**

#### **Distribution of topic for the research proposal (Hand on training exercise)**

The third session was a dedicated interaction session where an essential exercise was given for the participants to get the real gain of this workshop. The exercise came in the form of developing and presenting the research proposal on selected themes (any one). Eight themes were identified and given to the participants on their volition. The themes were:

1. Comprehending marginalization in the wake of globalization
2. Silent exclusion in the diversified Indian classrooms
3. Multiple disadvantages: context of Indian women
4. Everyday challenges of not being heterosexual in India
5. We too are assets albeit with differing abilities: case of persons with disabilities
6. India as a nation: perspectives about differing realities of minorities
7. Assertion ensuing chaos and hence empowerment
8. Tribes in the development of India: exploration about different challenges



Out of these themes, each participant has to choose one for the development of proposal and present the same on ninth day, i.e. 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

### **Session Four: Comprehending social disadvantage: perspective from below**

#### **Resource Person: Prof. N. Sukumar**

The lecture for the session was delivered by Dr. Narayana Sukumar from Delhi University. The theme of the workshop being ‘social disadvantage’ the session was intended to acquaint the participants with the idea of being marginalized as understood from below. The speaker, Dr. Sukumar from his own experience highlighted the complexities as well as advantages of researching by looking at one’s own history. The speaker laid emphasis on one’s positionality as a researcher when it comes to understanding ‘marginalization’. Besides, there is a need to make research more inter-diciplinary and come out of narrow diciplinary boundaries.

An important element of the session was to understand the construction of the ‘self’ and to see oneself in the construction of self and the other. How one react to the other self, forms an important element in any research.

The speaker began by showing the image of a stick, the holder of which was known as ‘Thoti’ in Telugu. The significance of the stick lies in the fact that it gave an identity to the community

who holds it. It was their 'marker' - a symbol which not just gave them an identity but also gave them a permanent status even after the 'Thoti' no longer exist physically. It has been a well-established practice in caste society that the notion of 'evil' and 'ugly' is always associated with the lower caste and the formerly untouchables. Drawing from his own experience, the speaker threw light on the fact how his 'Dalitness' was emphasised even when he had many other identities. There is interplay of nature, symbol and language in the construction of 'Other' and the hegemonised in power-relations.

According to the speaker a good researcher has to look at oneself as a subject to see the 'hegemonisation' of self in real life. This self, engages in multiple settings - classroom, office, festivals etc. In creating 'other' the mechanism of space, symbol, gender, ethnic identity etc. becomes very important and there is an attempt to self-actualize oneself by the researcher. How do we understand the question of self-actualization in the process of negotiating self, is a major research agenda according to the speaker. This makes one look beyond the traditional methodology of research. Research can be based on 'experiential epistemology'.

One has to connect policies to the life world by making sequence of actual events if one has to understand the real world. The speaker talks about the consequences of belonging to a particular caste in his life chances of what he is in the present times. He finds an everyday negotiation of the caste when it comes to everyday life in the construction of one's image and creation of hegemony. In the meantime, hierarchy is valorized in order to give it continuity.

The session went a long way in highlighting the need to look at 'self' when it comes to research in social sciences. Such an approach will pave way to new avenues of research in the social history of individuals and society in the years to come. The session also paid attention to the need to transcend disciplinary boundaries if one has to explore new phenomenon.

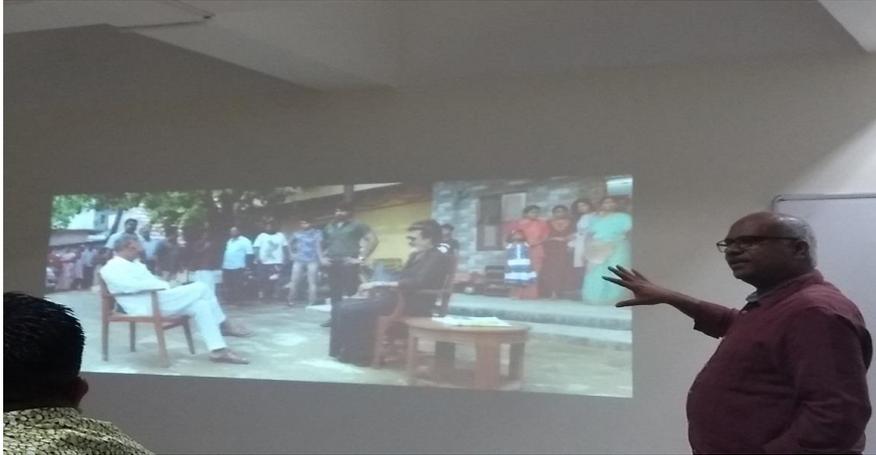
### **Day Three: 29<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

#### **Session One: Equity - reflection on caste**

##### **Resource Person: Prof. N. Sukumar**

The third day of the session started with a brief note of resource person background, welcome address by Prof Kedilezo Kikhi and offering of gomosaa/gomochaa.

As a continuation of the first session, Prof. N. Sukumar dealt in large with the question of equality amongst the disadvantaged groups through the medium of a Bollywood movie 'KAALA' in which characters are drawn from various castes. He also highlighted how equality is negotiated with the power structures in society. From labour class to big corporate, everyone in the society negotiates with the power structure to create spaces in the society and caste, gender and class is not an exceptional to this phenomena. Land is seen as an important asset for any one especially in context of caste division society like India.



Research is not just reading but also to generate new forms of interpretations in social science and so is creative research to generate new ideas. A researcher needs to be value free though all are prejudiced in some way or other way and hence the need of good observations is necessary. Further he viewed that deconstructing any issues will always enrich ones knowledge for a good research. Prof. Sukumar also opined that movies can be good example to justify how a research must be done. Substantiating his views he said that mainland Indian films are almost same since there is the role different character. According him every movie portrays women as some kind of commodity where the question of disadvantaged section is amply visible. This popular culture of male dominant society can be seen any type of mainland Indian movies which does actually sync perfectly with caste, gender and class. Mainstream popular culture cannot accept the kind of movies which deviates from traditional and cultural beliefs thus making limited spaces in the society for disadvantaged sections of society.

As a social science researcher, popular culture of accommodative spirits should be injected into minds of today's generation since class consciousness is something which is the natural embodiment in every person in every society.

Professor Sukumar referred to the episodes from movie the KAALA where labour class is portrayed with the colour black and women as expected to be docile as far as possible and self-consciousness being the popular culture in today's generation. The notion of how and why do you see the hidden meanings in a movie is the key to a good researching added Professor Sukumar.

The session ended with a small gist of all the lectures and vote of thanks by Dr. D.R. Gautam, from Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Tezpur University.

## **Session Two: Depicting disadvantaged status – minority communities**

### **Resource Person: Prof. M. C. Arunkumar**

In the beginning Prof. Arunkumar discussed briefly on minority, class, and tribe who comprises and categorised differently within Northeast India. He stated minority in Manipur are basically Muslims and relative tribes, whereas Non-Manipuri is known as 'Mayangs'. Manipur population in divided into two parts: based on caste and Muslims dominants (Pangals and Bangladeshi). He described Pangals are the prisoner captured during British rule. The resource person also highlights new minorities in Manipur were Bengali, Marwari, and Teli. Mostly, Bengalis were meant for administration purposes who were known as 'Babu' holding a good position for e.g. clerk, teacher, officers, etc.



Another discussion taken up by resource person was on the entire political policies, administration, and social tensions were at the hands of the local people. The sub-categorisation problem related within the state becomes more inherent factor in Manipur. Moreover, people were basically divided on the linguistic aspect.

Adding to the above statement Prof. Arunkumar further discusses on import and export process in Morrey which started for trade and commerce purpose. He also mention that Islam are the marginalized among population in Manipur. The session ended with vote of thanks rendered by Dr. D.R. Gautam, Research Officer, Tezpur University, Assam.

### **Session Three: LGBTO – Newer dimension of social disadvantage**

#### **Resource Person: Prof. M. C. Arunkumar**

The resource person begun the session with discussing patrilineal and matrilineal societies and he mentioned that the Garo and Khasi tribes are the only matrilineal societies in India. He talked about the power structures in society and how men have more power than women in every aspect of life. He says that if we add sex with power then we have what he calls the gender or sexual stratification. He talks about how our society is entrenched in gender binaries and how any other gender identity has no place in a society like ours. He also talked about the aspect of sexual orientation and how the acronym LGBT is related to sexual orientation. He explained the fundamentals of what is LGBT? He also addressed the debate as to whether sexual orientation is an individual's choice or not.

He also focussed on the transgender identity and how it is associated more with gender identity then with sexual orientation. He says that transgender is for example a male who has transformed into a female; he is biologically a male but identifies himself as a woman and loves or is sexually attracted to a man. Dr. Arunkumar mentioned how the Supreme Court is silent about sexual orientation; he said that according to the law if a man behaving like a woman likes to have sex with a man, then his sexual orientation also comes under the category of unnatural sex, e.g. sodomy. He also talked about how in a patriarchal society maleness or the act of being a man is always preferred. He said that when a male child is born it is celebrated but if the same child a few years later down the line would start having feminine traits or behave like a female then he would be shunned. And if a girl child was to be born, there wouldn't be much celebration because in our society a make child is preferred but if the same girl child grows up and starts behaving like a man then according to Prof. Arunkumar that is often accepted in the society. According to Prof. Arunkumar, in India, transgender or the men who behave like women are only present in some public spaces like fashion, dance, bar dancers etc. where as women who behave like men can be found in administrative jobs, etc.

He talks about the social and romantic lives of transgender and says that transgender women often fall in love with men, who are their lovers. The lovers behave like a man and are most probably bisexuals and

they have a relationship, he says that trouble comes in this relationship when the man who doesn't have feminine traits and is bisexual leaves the transgender woman to have a socially accepted relationship. He says that transgender cannot express the betrayal and hurt they feel since there is nobody to hear their plight due to which depression rate and suicidal rates amongst transgenders is very high. Prof. Arunkumar raised a question, why do we have sex? The participants answered for reproduction and another participant said that sex is a basic need just like food or water.

He went on to say that a person being gay, or a lesbian is in reference to his or hers sexual partner. He then explained the basic categories of what it is to be a gay person, a lesbian and a bisexual. He then talks about sexual fantasies and whether it is natural and unnatural to have fantasies. He says that lesbian identity is only possible if one partner behaves like a man and the other behaves like a woman.

The session ended with some discussion in the form of questions and responses for the participants.

#### **Session Four: Interaction Session**

The session was utilized for discussion amongst participants and with the resource person, Prof. M.C. Arunkumar.

#### **Day Four: 30<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

#### **Session One & Session Two: Gender in social research – tracing debates from feminists to queer perspectives**

##### **Resource Person: Dr. Sawmya Ray**

The session started with a short introduction of the speaker. After that, Dr. Sawmya Ray began to discuss the concept of feminism and its historical trajectory. While talking about feminism, she also introduced 'what is methodology' and 'what is method'. In her understanding, methodology is the combination of ideas, approaches, and mindset in which we work, whereas method is an encompassment within methodology. Moving further, she started exploring the images when we say the word 'being a feminist' in a very interesting way. She started narrating her life experiences and put forward the point that these days, people perceive feminism or feminist with some negative connotation. But in principle, feminism means equality between all genders. Then she started explaining more about feminist methodology and how earlier approaches to research treated women issues. She mentioned the 'gender blindness in society' and how it reflected in research, methodologies like scientific methodology, which claims to do objective research and maintains a neutral position, but in reality, it is biased. It altogether rejects the existence of gender differences in society. Whereas, methodologies like subaltern, feminist, etc., always being criticized by mainstream research for being biased to specific sections of society, but these approaches at least do include certain sections of society which were earlier not represented. There is no harm in such forms of biases if it can give a voice to the unheard and suppressed ones.

In her lecture, she discussed the journey of feminist methodology that treated "women as a homogenous category" to recognizing intersectionality within them. In this regard, one can situate the queer methodology, which questioned heteronormativity. Queer politics argued that research methods are entirely gender blind. All significant approaches like Marxist, Critical theory and even Feminist approach also based on heteronormative terms. They questioned the idea of defining concepts and argued that queer should not be regarded as a standard concept because it's fluid in nature.

The next point in the discussion is the role of emotion in research methodology approaches. Here, she argued that traditional methods did not recognize the presence of emotion in research

activities. They were in favor of detaching emotions from research. Feminist methodology questioned the missing of emotion in research as one cannot forget or separate his/her experiences and emotion from research. The reason behind this is the sheer presence of human emotion while one is interacting or observing its respondents as described by feminist methodology. Queer methodology moved one step ahead and argued that researchers might develop serious relation with the respondents. Then how is it possible to have research without emotion.



Dr. Ray, in this session, extensively discussed the epistemological positions within feminism. There are three positions, namely - feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint theory, and feminist postmodernism. She first explained the feminist empiricism and argued that this position challenges the andro-centrism and add-women approach as both did not regard the presence of women as an individual category. It called for the inclusion of women both as the research and the researcher. If this is followed, then only one can get a complete picture of women's positionality. She also argued that asking 'Women Question' is also vital to the process of having a significant approach within research methodology. Because if we ask a question again and again, then only it becomes an unavoidable part for our existence. Feminist empiricism believes in these tactics of asking 'Women Question' in every research. She ended the session by suggesting books to read such as Betty Friedman's *Feminine Mystique* and Arile Hochschild's *The Second Shift* for a better understanding of the feminist empiricism position and shift towards feminist standpoint theory.

The second session of the day was started in continuation with the first session titled "Gender in Social Research - Tracing Debates from Feminists to Queer Perspectives – II" by the Resource Person. She stated Feminism as human centric discourse that promotes equality between all genders. Feminist approaches argue that beneath the protective umbrella of objectivity and unbiased approach women are disadvantaged in material and other significant ways. She stated that when 'women question' is regularly asked it becomes a method and this 'women question' is designed to identify the gender implications of rules and practices which might otherwise appear to be neutral or objective. To claim objectivity in neutrality is the problem because there is nothing apolitical about society. There is no aspect of human life that is not political. She explained that what dress you wear and the clothes you pick up and what education you do everything is political in nature as C. Wright Mills writes in *Sociological Imagination* that 'nothing in nature is apolitical'. While explaining the concepts of personal

trouble and public issue she stated that biography is related to personal trouble and also biography is not independent of history and also biography is related to public issue at large and public issue is to be understood through the history. Then the biography and the history leads to a more concrete research than telling that these are individual problems thus establishing relationship between personal trouble and public issue. Feminist methodology is also saying the same thing.

Everything has biography and history to it. There is no social research that does not have background to it and that does not have history to it. When the androcentric research is saying that you are biased then they themselves are biased because by blind to gender they are not taking the structure of gender into account. If you are taking gender into account and the subjective emotional feelings then you are called as biased. So you have to choose which bias you want to. If this is “bias” feminists must insist that it is ‘good’ (or ‘proper’) bias, not ‘bad’.

She explained with the example of dowry system in India. She talked about Standpoint Epistemology adopting the Marxist vision in which science can reflect upon ‘the way the world is’ and work towards human emancipation. For Marxists, it was through struggles in the workplace that the proletariat would generate knowledge. Standpoint feminism sees women as the agents of knowledge. Womens’ status as that of victim – privileges that status – it gives access to understanding about oppression that others cannot have. Pain and subordination provide the oppressed with a motivation for finding out what is wrong, for criticizing accepted interpretations of reality and for developing new and less distorted ways of understanding the world. Researcher’s own location needs to be spelt out for the research to be ‘objective’. The approach was of subjectivity and conscious partiality rather than value neutrality.

She also made some criticism of standpoint epistemology. The Resource person also talked about inter-sectionalities from the perspectives of African-American Feminists. Analysis of gender must occur not apart from but within the contexts of multiple identities. Women who favour patriarchy and live in false consciousness occupy multiple positions being considered as intersection of identity. For example, Black women are double burdened than White women. Queer Methodologies: Queer theory critiques mainstream research methodology on the grounds that it is too sanitized & restricted therefore blind to the myriad complexities of biology, psychology & social structures by itself, & the effects of all these on human life styles & life chances. Queer scholars argue that the so called scientific enquiry ignores, “everything messy and chaotic” that which is not ‘straight’. Judith Butler thus emphasizes that queer methods operate largely beyond theory and in service of the “fundamental issue of how to...make life livable”. To queer scholars, empiricism, means to embrace multiplicity, misalignments, and silences & to understand that gender and sexual orientation are not empirically stable. If, as queer thinking argues, subjects and subjectivities are fluid, unstable and perpetually becoming, how ‘data’ can be gathered from tenuous and fleeting subjects using the standard methods of data collection. She also provided critique of heteronormativity.

The session ended with vote of thanks rendered by Dr. D.R. Gautam, Research Officer, Tezpur University, Assam. He summarized the session and also stated that Feminist and Queer Methods are in evolution stage and are inductive in nature moving towards building theory.

### Session Three: Working with geo-spatial tools

#### Resource Person: Prof. Apurba Das

The session started off with Dr Apurba Kumar Das, Professor from the Department of Environmental Science, Tezpur University talking about how to work with geo spatial tools to the participants in the afternoon session. Prof. K. Kikhi, from Ambedkar Chair, Tezpur University talked briefly of how Prof. Apurba Kumar Das had been so supportive of Ambedkar Chair, Tezpur University.

Prof. Das talked about the relevance of geo spatial tools in contemporary era. The main objective of the talk was to introduce the participants to GIS and remote sensing which has emerged as a powerful tool for geo spatial analysis and finds application across discipline. He then talked about remote sensing, GIS, satellite data, data products, data sources, GIS software packages, map design, case study and some useful information about Survey of India and topographical maps.



He then gave a general definition of remote sensing as the acquisition and recording of information about an object without being in direct contact with that object. Two basic processes are involved: acquisition and analysis. Remote sensing is a technique on interaction of electromagnetic radiation with matter. The elements of data acquisition processes are: energy source or source of EMR (sun or self), propagation of energy form source through the atmospheres, interaction of the energy (EMR) with the earth surface process and transmission/retransmission of energy through the atmosphere. He then defined orbits as the path followed by a satellite and geostationary as which revolves at speeds which match the rotation of the earth so they seem stationary, relative to the earth's surface. He also talked about sun-synchronous/polar as the cover, each area of the world at a constant local time. He spoke about swath as a satellite which revolves around the earth where the sensor sees a certain portion of the earth's surface which is referred as swath.

He also spoke about spectral and temporal resolution. Spectral resolution is the wavelength interval size (discrete segment of the electromagnetic spectrum) and number of intervals that the sensor is measuring. Temporal resolution is a measure of how often the data are obtained for the same area, i.e. how often an area is revisited (by satellite). He next spoke about the two types of sensors: active and passive. Examples of passive sensors are: sun's energy which is reflected (visible) absorbed and re-emitted as thermal infrared wave lengths. Whereas active sensors are those that emit radiation which is reflected and is detected and then measured.

The next area he discussed about is the application of remote sensing which is done in areas like agriculture, forestry, geology, hydrology, land cover and land use, oceans and coastal monitoring, atmosphere monitoring and others like facility management, LULC, Urban Planning, transport, socio economic, unearthing ancient archaeological sites.

Its application in social sciences is mainly related to demographic, settlement study, human health and epidemiology, archaeology and anthropology, hazard and vulnerability study and resource mapping, transportation, international relations, law and policy, land use cover change and sustainability trajectories and urban studies. So, remote sensing data can form core research data, background data, contextual data and supplementary for analysis and cross checking. The data sources are mainly drawn from Bhuvan Indian Geo Platform of ISRO, USGD earth explorer, NASA's Socio- Economic Data and Application Center, UNEP Environmental Data Explorer, Glovis.

Prof. Das then dealt about Geographical Information System. He then defined GIS as a powerful set of tools for collecting, retrieving at will, transforming and displaying spatial data from the real world for a particular set of purpose. The components of GIS are- computer hardware, GIS software and organizational context including skilled manpower. The types of GIS software can be classified as data input and verification, data storage and database management and data output and presentation. Prof. Das then spoke about map designs and maps and their resolution, how accurately the location and shape of map features can be depicted at a given map scale.

The accuracies of map can be divided into two types- absolute accuracy and relative accuracy. Absolute accuracy is the relation between map location and real-world location. Absolute accuracy is important for complex data requirement and engineering-based application. Relative accuracy is the displacement (angle and distance) between two points in the map. It is usually applied by users with simple requirements. The metric properties of map are scale area shape direction bearing distance. Each projection preserves or compromises on approximate basic metric properties in different ways. The sources of map inaccuracy are during projections (from sphere to 2d plain, use of projection and datum (geo referencing framework) cartographic error, drafting error, during digitization registration (RMS error) algorithm precision (rounding of calculation) unaccounted error. Therefore, accurate maps are more expensive.

The next theme he spoke about is symbols in map. Symbolization and arrangement of symbol are crucial process in designing a map. Most common symbols types are point symbols, line symbols and area symbols. Point symbols can be qualitative or quantitative (occurrence, size, volume, etc.). Line symbols can also be qualitative (latitude, longitude, boundaries, coastline, etc.) and quantitative (thickness of the line represents quantitative information. Color can also be used to give important effect. He described map legend as a tool which tells what the symbols used in the map mean. The effectiveness of a map is also defined by cartographic appeal- how a map looks. Appropriate choices of symbol color can make a map easier to interpret. He then concluded the session by presenting some useful information about survey of India topographical maps and also by presenting one of his own case studies of 'Assessing and Mapping Flood Hazard Vulnerability and Risk in The Upper Brahmaputra River Valley Using Stakeholder Knowledge and Multicriteria Evaluation (MCE)' published in the journal, *Flood Risk Management*.

The session ended with a vote of thanks by Prof. Kikhi, Ambedkar Chair, Tezpur University.

## **Session Four: Interaction Session**

This was utilized as an interaction session (between participants and the resource person) to have a better comprehension about the usage of new tool for social science research.

### **Day Five: 1<sup>st</sup> December 2019**

#### **Session One: Persons with disability(ies) – understanding policy analysis**

##### **Resource Person: Prof. D. B. Talukdar**

On the fifth day of the workshop, the first session was started with a welcome speech delivered by Prof. K. Kikhi, Chair Professor, Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Tezpur University (Course Director of ICSSR Sponsored Ten Day Research Methodology Workshop for Doctoral Scholars). The resource person arrived there at the right time. All the participants also joined the resource person to start the session in the fixed time period.

In the beginning, Prof. D.B. Talukdar introduced different conceptions like disabled persons, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), differently abled, etc. She rightly emphasized that we all have some or other form of disabilities in us in our capacity of doing different essential activities of our life itself. Therefore, it is essential to define what we mean by the term ‘Persons with Disabilities’ or ‘differently abled persons’. The resource person tried to explain that while we are saying ‘Persons with Disabilities’ instead of ‘Disabled Persons’; we are trying to put the attention into that particular or specific kind of disability(ies); and not directly into that person who is disabled in some or the other sense. Here, the person having disability is not at the centre point. In the whole session, she variously focused on elaborating different policies dealing with disabilities in India that are been implemented so far in in-depth manner. Prof. Talukdar in her discussion gives more focus on the recent policies that have provisions for disabled persons. Different policies, laws, and mechanisms that are followed are discussed in this session, along with the limitations of such mechanisms. The resource person discussed different types of disabilities that includes: i) intellectual disabilities, ii) learning disabilities, iii) persons with memory of cognitive disabilities, iv) people with no interactive tendency, v) speech related disabilities, vi) pain related disabilities, etc. in lucid as well as in in-depth way. The various census data of disabled persons in India were shown in this session which provided various insights about gender-wise classification, disease-wise classification and also, rural-urban wise classification of data. After that, the importance of more inclusive policy is analyzed in this session of the workshop. Disability data, to the resource person, need to be more reflective of the specific or particular kind of disabilities that people of the country are facing today as policy formulation requires proper data of any kind of disabilities.

In the later part of the session, the resource person discussed various measures through which disabilities can be prevented in the coming generation and also in the present context. She highlighted the importance of early detection and prevention of disabilities, counseling and medical rehabilitation, use of assistive devices, development of rehabilitation professionals, education for PWDs, economic rehabilitation for PWDs, bringing of positive environment, ensuring social security for PWDs, promotion of NGOs, and finally, on importance of conducting more research through which disability can be tackled in the country. She continuously showed limitations of existing framework in bringing about efficient environment for PWDs and focused on amending the existing acts with the need of the situation and time.

At last, the resource person gave great importance on bringing the PWDs in education. She discussed very significantly that the earlier mechanism and services existing in educational

institutions is far less than enough to make such institution comfortable for PWDs. The overall situation in educational institution, to her, must be scrutinized from perspective of disabled persons. Again, she rightly emphasized that the enrollment of children with disabilities in education is not enough; and rather, importance should be placed more on providing proper guidance and services through which such children can continue their study in effective manner, and not just for the sake of studying only. This is a crucial view, particularly in case of India, where we can see that children with disabilities are not encouraged to continue their study. She ended the lecture with the note that schools must play pro-active role in upliftment of education of children with disabilities.

The session was extended for thirty-forty minutes more as the interaction of the resource person with the participants turned into a lengthy one. Finally, the session ended with the vote of thanks rendered by DR. D.R. Gautam, Research Officer, Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Tezpur University.

### **Session Two: Doing case studies**

#### **Resource Person: Prof. D. B. Talukdar**

Prof. D.B. Talukdar started her second session by elaborating meaning of case studies, types of case studies, and clarifying how to ask question to the respondents while doing case studies.

A case study is a research method involving an up-class, in depth and detailed examination of a subject of study, as well as its related contextual conditions. In doing case study research the 'case' being studied may be an individual , organization, event, a particular place, department, company, organization, or an action, existing in a specific time or place. For example, clinical science has produced both well-known case study of individual and also case study of clinical practice.

She also gave another suggestion that was defining a research strategy an empirical enquiry that investigates a phenomenon with in its real life context. It can be single or multiple or individual/ Groups and it may involve both qualitative and quantitative research method. Case study means we examine the memory power of respondent. So that for we used to try person's memory, diary, autograph, what they can remember like friends, parents, photograph, small incidence, condition, management, experience etc. It has instance investigation to identity certain psychological process. Always the research question pick on why, which is goes through pilot study. For the example: the patient's personal history. It is a descriptive method. Which kind of symptom, provide the treatment, diagnosis and what is the product outcome?



It's just come on explanatory research child personal history: like Birth position (1st, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>) even she also gives another example of dropout (kind of dropout: push dropout, silent dropout).

Case study always derives with narrative focus, which also is very limited.

Prof. Talukdar defines how to do with case studies. Mostly the researcher think about the questions, how to compiled (study question), how it's going to proceed, what are to be asked to the respondents, about the observation and analyze of identity. Always remember every little aspect to be note down. Normally in case study we used the person's own memory, but in multiple case studies diagnosis has to be done by the researcher to give a treatment.

Researcher question always be:

- Ask positive question
- Always try to study high level, because it's very limited
- Do always semi structure interview
- When we go to field for data collection / case study researcher always have to care his/her communication, language, behavior and most of have to care about observation
- Keep calm always
- Explain everything
- Rich qualitative information

Through the mentioned case study, Prof. Talukdar added clarity for the benefit of the participants. The session ended with a vote of thanks rendered by Dr. D.R. Gautam.

### **Session Three: Research design and sampling**

#### **Resource Person: Dr. Apurba Saha**

The third session of the day was started with felicitation and welcome speech delivered by Prof. Kedilezo Kikhi, Chair Professor (Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Tezpur University).

In the beginning note, Dr. Apurba Saha stated that the framework of a research is as follows:

Types of research, research design, variables, experimental design, sample.



Dr. Apurba Saha started the session with a topic 'Research Design' where he describe that research design is the arrangement of condition for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedures.

Later, he stressed on the importance of research design as it is appropriate, efficient economical and minimizes bias and maximizes the reliability of the data. He also discussed about important experimental design i.e. a) Informal experimental design and b) Formal experimental design.

Apart from these, he highlighted on a subtopic variables in research and its types, viz. independent variable, dependent variable, extraneous variable and confounding variable. He concluded the session by describing population, sample, sampling design, sampling error.

#### **Session Four: Navigating fieldwork - What our research methodology textbook does not teach us?**

##### **Resource Person: Dr. Veda Yumnam**

Dr. Veda through her presentation talked the whole practicality regarding the fieldwork in research. She beautifully arranged the complexity of fieldwork into very simple terms to make the participants understand the whole idea of fieldwork. She discussed the whole practicality of fieldwork in the following terms:

Ethics: In regard to ethics, she laid too much emphasis as ethics and research go hand in hand. She discussed at length on the ethics in taking permission, dealing with the participants, in collecting data etc.



The idea of Participants: How to deal with the participants, time management with them. She talked about how individual participants' permission and how to approach them is one of the key ingredients in the field.

Gatekeepers: Who are gatekeepers? Gatekeepers may any institutions, Individuals, Cooperative society etc. Gatekeepers of any institutes, organization, village, township etc. are very important as with the permission from them, a fieldworker can enter a space.

The identity as a researcher: In the field, the identity of the researcher also plays an important role. For example, if the researcher is a person, who has a better position in economic or political or social position, his/her/trans position sometimes may influence the field, so we should avoid that influence.

She conclude her presentation by saying that 'Fieldwork is Political' which we can't help but try to understand it. And lastly, as a researcher and fieldworker, we have to cope-up with the idea which is called as 'Fieldwork Blues'.

## **Day Six: 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019**

### **Session One: Exploring tribal issues: India and Northeast**

#### **Resource Person: Prof. Virginius Xaxa**

Prof. Xaxa, an eminent social scientist and most established name for doing research on tribes in India started by a reference for his journey towards comprehending and exploring about tribes. He mentioned that it was Dr. Veena Das who approached him to write a piece on tribes back in the late 1980's for her edited volume. To make the participants aware, Prof. Xaxa stated that the writings specifically on tribes during the colonial times described them as savage or uncivilized which disturbed him. The very idea of tribe was used in opposition to what was civilized in colonial times. He wanted to change how tribe is perceived in colonial context and started to write about them.



The term 'tribe' has already been discredited by west as the world acknowledges the diversity, idea of tribe has changed but in India, the term is still in use. The communities which were described as tribes- have undergone tremendous change- they are no longer what they were 60 years back. The term 'tribe' has been discredited by all and has been replaced by 'indigenous' in its place.

In the context of India, the term 'tribe' has politico administrative connotation and is engrained with the Indian constitution which bestow them with few rights and provisions. Though in India, it has overcome the whole idea of 'savage' but for an average Indian it still holds the colonial outlook and use the term which has savage connotation.

About 84% of tribal population is concentrated in the central India, while only 13% resides in northeast India. The state of Orissa alone has around 64 tribal communities. The demographic size differs across Indian states (Delhi, Haryana and few more do not have any listed tribal population)

According to Census 2011 an approx. of 750 tribes are being listed as Scheduled Tribe in the Indian constitution. The context of tribe needs to move from politico context to socio economic. The list of the number of tribes has gone up over the years. There is various complexities to define any group. In Sikkim, some communities are identified as Scheduled Caste (SC), while the same were identified as tribes in West Bengal. In current scenario, more and more people are identifying themselves as Scheduled Tribe (ST) due to politico administrative reason. Before ST

recognition was regarded as inferior while now more and more want to be identified as ST. This reflects a paradoxical situation of the whole idea of 'tribe'.

### **Session Two and Three: Introduction to quantification and issues of measurement, and Analysing quantitative data**

#### **Resource Person: Prof. Amit Choudhury**

The second and third session was on quantitative aspects in social research. These sessions were delivered by Prof. Amit Choudhury who is duly introduced and welcomed by Prof. K. Kikhi. He started with a question before the participants about how to do a research? And what are the practical difficulties in ascertaining the research problem? After deliberating few points, he arrived at sampling, its types and design which were dealt in detail by him. This was his logical approach to reach at statistics which he mentioned to be utilized cautiously as to avoid any miscalculation leading to erroneous inferences. He emphasized importance of choosing variables in utilizing statistics for analyzing the research data from the field or from secondary sources. Prof. Choudhury for the better understanding of the participants, introduced rudimentary level of statistics which included measures of central tendency, i.e. mean, median and mode, and explained their meaning and usage.



He gradually shifted to further use of statistics and introduced the concept of 'hypothesis' a generally used term in most of the social researches. He divided the hypothesis into two, one research hypothesis and the other as statistical hypothesis, and only the latter can be measured statistically. Meanwhile, he explained one tailed and two tailed hypothesis and when to use those apart from mentioning how to use these as a tool for analysis. As a measure to elaborate upon hypothesis, Prof. Choudhury introduced the concept of null and alternative hypothesis through statistical example of a research data. To shed further light on this he gave few examples to make participants understand the difference between parametric and non-parametric tests in statistics, and also deliberated on different types of statistical errors, i.e. type one and type two errors while citing the necessary precautions to be taken to for their utilization and inferences. Prof. Choudhury further briefly mentioned t-test and its types and usage apart from introducing the levels of significance that help in accepting or discarding the hypothesis for a particular research.

With an intention to familiarize participants with the statistical tools, Prof. Choudhury conducted hand on training in the class with some dummy variables and responses.

#### **Session Four: Qualitative Analysis**

##### **Resource Person: Prof. Virginius Xaxa**

The last session of the day was on qualitative analysis, an important dimension for doing subjective social research especially on themes like disadvantages status. As a background for qualitative research and therefore analysis, Prof. Xaxa explained the changing nature of frame for research from positivist to interpretivist. He highlighted various ways through which qualitative information is being enumerated and analysed, e.g. interview, focus group discussion, etc. For analysis he mentioned that the guidance is actually drawn from the nature of objectives of the research as the objectives may determine what form of analysis is to be done. To benefit research scholars in their research endeavor, Prof. Xaxa suggested operationalization of the key terms which will help in adding meaning to and from our research.



Regarding analysis, profiling of data is required before their arrangement and organization to make the (collected) information logical and meaningful. Giving information about codification a necessary exercise, he stated and explained its three types, primary, secondary and tertiary on the usage in the analysis of gathered information/data. Thereafter, he outlined the features of different qualitative methods as narratives and discourse, and outlined the use of theory in interpretation to avoid arbitrariness and for providing rationalization for analysis. His session came to a close with brief revision and a vote of thanks by Dr. D.R. Gautam.

#### **Day Seven: 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019**

##### **Session One: Qualitative research methods – Interviews and FGD**

##### **Resource Person: Prof. Sashmi Nayak**

On the seventh day of workshop, the first session was started with a welcome speech delivered by Prof. K. Kikhi, Chair Professor, Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Tezpur University



In the beginning note Prof. Sashmi Nayak stated that the concepts of qualitative research methods namely interview in social science. Interviews can provide access to the meanings people attribute to their experiences and social worlds. It can be defined as a qualitative research technique which involves “conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation. It was followed by various types of interviews such as telephone interviews, face to face interviews and in-depth interviews. Regards to in-depth interviews, she highlighted that in-depth interviews is a conversation with a purpose, talking to people to grasp their point of view and knowledge about the social world is constructed in normal human interaction. Further, she has discussed different types of approaches namely postmodern approach, creative approach, dialectical approach, feminist approach, heuristic approach, biographical, narrative, life history and oral history approaches. She has briefly discussed the key features and requirements of an interviewer. More so, she illustrated the five stages of interviews includes, stage 1 Arrival, stage 2 introduce the research, stage 3 begin the interview, stage 4 the interview and stage 5 ending the interview and finally how to achieve breadth and depth, question formulation and techniques for achieving depth for examples- listen and remember, express interest and attention, establish that there are no right or wrong answers, sensitive to tone of voice, body language, pace the interview and responding to emotions and so on.

Regards to, qualitative research methods i.e., Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), she highlighted FGDs reflects the social constructions-normative influences, collective as well as individual self-identity shared meanings that are an important part of the way in which we perceive, experience and understand the world around us. We use it to study attributes and experiences for exploring how opinions are constructed. Moreover, she mentioned some types of focus group namely exploratory- as a means to generate hypotheses, clinical-insight into unconscious motivations, phenomenological- common sense conceptions and everyday explanations and consultative- to aid decision making etc. In addition, she discussed group process that is forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning in focus group. More so, she discussed how do we moderate a FGDs includes step 1 scene setting & ground rules, step 2 individual introductions, step 3 opening the discussion, step 4 the discussion, step 5 ending the discussion. In addition, she highlighted the how we should determine the group size: usually it should be six to eight participants, articulate and highly interested participants, sensitivity or complexity of the issue, breath or depth of data, people with communication difficulties and structure and tasks involved in the session. Finally, Prof. Sashmi Nayak windup her discussion talking on research ethics and

responsibility of researcher while conducting such qualitative research methods like interviews and FGDs with logical illustration.

Lastly, the session concluded with the vote of thanks offered by Dr. D.R. Gautam, Research Officer, Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Tezpur University.

## **Session Two: Exploring anti-oppressive methods**

### **Resource Person: Prof. Sashmi Nayak**

Prof. Sashmi Nayak gave her lecture on ‘Exploring Anti-Oppressive Methods’ in continuation to her previous lecture ‘Qualitative Research Methods—Interviews and FGD’. She began with a question to the participants asking about the priorities of a social science research. After a variety of answers, she described research as a critical inquiry. She asserted on the importance of ‘critique’ in research and its impact on society. Anti-oppressive methods are most evident in the discipline of social work but its impact cuts across all social sciences. Anti-oppressive methods entail the search for solutions, and excavating the problems. She asked for examples of academic researches that helped create an impact and actually provided a solution. Nima, one of the participants, responded that in the area where he belongs from there was extensive research on a tribe that was previously treated as slaves but due to the research people of this tribe are now recipients of benefits from the central government. Prof. Nayak then raised an open question on the possible outcomes of future researches.



She then described the definition of ‘oppression’ as to understand anti-oppressive methods, it is necessary to understand oppression. Oppression hinges on unjust power and authority. It relates to situations of injustice, inequality, arbitrariness, exploitation, subordination, discrimination, exclusion, negligence and marginalization. Oppression takes place both at the macro level and at the micro level. Most research is done at the micro level. Oppression is structural and systemic, so it exists at the macro level but the actors are individuals. So, oppression plays out at the individual level. Anti-oppressive practices entails on challenging this power and authority. Hence, anti-oppressive research is a highly political work. Since researchers are a part of the system that oppresses, they prefer to keep their work apolitical and neutral. Engaging in political work entails the researcher to lose their privileges and that affects them. Thus, there are no solutions for this.

She posed questions such as “Does the research cause distress to anyone?”, “What is the value of this research?” Research should not only strive for liberation of the people but also for the liberation of the self. The government which gives money for the research sets the research agenda for the scholars of the country. It, thus, ensures that the research does not challenge its institutions. The beneficiary of a research project is the researcher. But the power to formulate or modify policy on research does not rest on the researcher. The goal of anti-oppressive research is that it promotes knowledge that supports people’s action. It should help support dissent against the authority.

The right to equality of opportunity is the first theoretical base of anti-oppressive research where one can encourage under represented populations to participate in processes of enquiry. A research must have action in it as it cannot progress unless the population acts in it. It should be aimed at developing skills and knowledge of the people. It should increase the level of access to participation in culture, economic and political life. It should influence the functioning, and decision making processes of organizations and institutions from the context in which they act. And these processes should take place at the grass-root levels. Hence, a research should be based firmly on theory that is universal. The principle of self-determination should be encouraged where the participants are in charge of taking decisions for their own life. She gave an example of farmers who would not plant a second crop in spite of having the resources or conditions to do so. They did so because it was important for them to leave their cattle to graze and it also serves as fodder. The farmer has the solution to cattle grazing, and hence the solution to their problem. Thus, the solution for a problem of oppressed population lies with the people themselves. The researcher is merely a facilitator. Research without action takes years to gain a ground and actually help in changing society. Action research helps the community discover their problems and find out workable solutions for it while getting adequate support and sustenance.

The right to freedom from exploitation or oppression is related to the way of thinking of the researcher. Knowledge and action lie with the people. The researcher must codify and theorize these actions. Facilitating political processes for confronting oppression at the research, dissemination and implementation stages of enquiry is of primary importance. So, if the researcher builds a model out of their research which is benefitting the people, it will automatically get replicated. The entire process of research should leave the population studied in a better position.

In a qualitative research, there is no fixed methodology. A researcher can use whichever methodology fits their research best. It is necessary to question the research tools used. Quantitative research is important as it helps gather and measure empirical data. Qualitative methods are more of bottom-up approach. Critical social science is necessary to challenge power, resources and status inequalities. Narrative and constructive research is important to reveal the internalized oppression among the oppressed themselves. The challenge of participatory research is getting the participation of the population themselves. In order to do so, it is necessary for the researcher to collaborate and interact actively with them. Representation in participation is also highly political and should be closely scrutinized as that governs the direction of the research. Research environment should be a healthy one where every member of the community should be informed and supportive of the research. Sometimes, among some groups, research acts as therapy. Knowledge ownership is a conundrum faced by all researchers and it is important for the researcher to give up control of their research to the participants and let it take its own direction.

Making promises to the participants is considered manipulating the respondents and is an unethical research method. Sometimes the participants express a real fear of losing their benefits if they participate in the research. In such a situation, the researcher must not make false promises or give them false hope. The scope of research starts from the source of oppression and follows it to the solution. Research should be a participative, egalitarian, redistributive production of knowledge that aims for transformation of both the social scientist and of society. At the end of the lecture, Prof. Nayak was questioned to give some examples of such a research process to which she responded with a case study she had conducted in a village to promote the farmers in the region.

### **Session Three: Discourse analysis**

#### **Resource Person: Dr. P. Anbarasan**

The starting remark of the resource person was, 'Language is not neutral'. Discourse Analysis as a research method aims to dissect language both written and spoken within a socio-cultural context. It is beyond trying to understand the technicalities of any language. Discourse Analysis is embedded in the constructivism and structuralism traditions and tries to comprehend any talk or text within its social context. Meaning Discourse Analysis as a research tool tries to relook at processes influencing a language formulation, questions the everyday knowledge and examines how power and ideology remain intertwined in any language form. In conducting discourse analysis, we therefore need to primarily understand that social reality is constructed. This makes a departure from the obsession with objectivity and instead sides with those in the margins.

Thus, tilts toward structuralist/post-structuralist linguistic tradition in analyzing social inequalities. Dr. Anbarasan asserts that we need to delve deep into language through discourse analysis in order to unearth how discriminatory social realities exist and perpetuate. Also states that discourse analysis is time specific operational and entrenched in a historical time and space. Discourse analysis therefore considers that the dominant language of the state or nation making is not given and apolitical, instead it gets historically entrenched, produced and interpreted. It therefore critiques the taken for granted of knowledge production. To elaborate, identity at a specific point of time becomes dominant in its transition towards becoming the normative objective social reality in a given context. The process of knowledge making hence lies at the discretion of the state. Language keeps gaining meaning as we continue to untangle the dominant meanings attached to it. This in turn brings calls attention to the preexisting processes and realities existing before a particular point of time and space.



Dr. Anbarasan then moves on to highlight the strand of critical discourse analysis stating that it emerged concomitantly with the post-structuralist school of thought. To extrapolate further, he mentions the contribution of Teun A. Van Dijk who prescribes meaning making through cognitive processes and refers to a mutually influencing interaction among cognition, discourse and society. He exemplifies by referring to how a child learns a language. In suggesting critical discourse analysis, Dijk avers that as an analytical approach it tries to decipher how social power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimized and resisted by talk and text in any social political context. Language becomes a conduit through which the dominant markers of social inequalities get internalized. Meanings therefore alter with the contexts.

He then pronounces Stuart Hall's conceptualization of how a reader gets situated in three locations and accordingly the readers' positionality therefore assumes three positions, one internalizing the dominant ideology, second the negotiated and third the oppositional positionality. In conclusion, he emphasizes that our social realities, power and knowledge largely arise out of mediated realities constructed out with the contours of the individual human existential reality.

#### **Session Four: Interaction Session**

The last session of the day was interaction session where discussion happened on qualitative understanding in the presence of resource person.

#### **Day Eight: 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019**

#### **Session One: Doing ethnography**

#### **Resource Person: Dr. Madhurima Goswami**

In this session Dr. Madhurima Goswami talked about ethnography from her own experience. She did her research on one of the dominant groups of Assam i.e., the Boro group, where she worked on their sacrificial ritual which is in a transition phase. From her life experience she said that "when we did our researches, we were not very serious about research methods and things like that. But we went to the fields, we confronted certain phenomena, we got engrossed into that. For a long time, we were there in the field, we gathered data, out of the data a theory or an

ethnographic text was prepared.” She also said that ethnography is like 24 hours 7 days per week continuous iterative discussions and making of field notes. She talked about how she created a lot of social relationships with everybody at that point of time and how a researcher became an insider once he/she gets the emic validity. The entire process of preparing ethnographic text starts from there. But unless and until there is emic validation, one cannot do that. This entire process of ethnography was always practiced by anthropologists and it was also concerned as unscientific. But as Prof. Govinda has said in his keynote address, your research has to be emancipatory, it has to transform reality. So, before one transform reality, there has to be an understanding of reality first, and for this understanding of reality we need to go near. As Malinowski had said, in order to have a grasp of even an inch of their life, you must be a native, you must be an insider. Insiders’ point of view is important.



In order to explain the setting and create ambiance about her work, she showed a video clip of her research. In this video she focused on the cultural settings and ethnic formations of the community she studied. She said that the cultural setting and everything that we see in the clip are very important. Ethnography is writing a story, gathering data and from that data we develop a method and theory. In her particular research, theory comes later. Once the researcher enters the field, you cannot solve anything if you don’t have the lens of culture. Here she talked about cultural systems paradigm. She said that cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete, the deeper you go, your findings are less complete, and culture is like that. As a researcher who is set out to study culture, you have to practice ethnography, prepare an ethnographic text first about everything that you are going to study. Prepare a text out of your field whichever cultural phenomena you are going to investigate and bring out the details of it. This detailing is very important in ethnographic research.

Ethnographic sources are in different places, some of them have already gone, but they are there in all historical sources. Ethnography has historical sources and it very difficult to grab those sources especially in northeast because most of the things are in oral tradition and majority are not documented. There are only small documentations which were written by the colonizers at a point of time. Therefore, in doing ethnography, the ethnographer has to move with tools like camera for days. This is because there are certain things which are implicit, a very long narrative that they present which cannot be explained and one must have patience to follow those details.

To make the researcher understand the context which cannot be simply explained, the people being studied would take the researcher all over the places. This, for an ethnographer, is very

difficult to actually gauge what it exactly meant. The people are engrossed and immersed in it because it is a part of their religion, their philosophy, their everyday life. For a researcher, our entire attitudes stem from the philosophical foundation that we have, we agree and disagree to certain things. There is a big disjuncture here; at times the researcher may feel like things are unsolvable. The ethnographer's world is a different world, and world of the community is different. But unless and until one is able to achieve an understanding, he/she is stuck. The first important thing of becoming an ethnographer is that one has to be very passionate about the ethnographic research. He/she cannot become tired of collecting sources, resources, informants, what to collect and what not to collect. This is not easy and is very time consuming if one wants to get into details. Getting the idea of how values, attitudes, beliefs, and knowledges from an insider's point of view are very important in ethnographic research.

One must make continuous field notes. When studying culture, making rigorous ethnographic field notes is necessary. Missing even one section and then later joining with something else or generalizing them can be ambiguous. To have a quality research one must have time for making detailed field notes. Ethnography studies at the human individuals, the behavioral systems, and the social systems and also social processes. When you study culture and become an ethnographer, and when you are near to your phenomena, you cannot miss any of the details categorically one has to take all the field notes. Apart from the social systems and processes, the idea systems and the belief systems are also very important. One must know what their value systems are, what is the attitude, what knowledge is that they carry is very important. Therefore, when entering into any cultural systems paradigm, one must be careful to look into the human individual behavioral system, the idea system, the social system as well as the physical environment in which human interact. Emic validation can only happen if the researcher's understanding is perfect.

According to her, problems in doing ethnography are cultural translation and inter-subjectivity. The problem with ethnographic research that Dr. Goswami found in her research was cultural representation that were seen and then to translate into academic writing. The problem of inter-subjectivity of the researcher and the field is also very important. In ethnographic research, you come back to your human consciousness, back to reality and feel some part of the work as important and not important. Also, in academic research there are certain rules and restrictions. But it is very difficult to put everything into academic writing, and for this most of the times researcher try to change and even get confused. One who is doing ethnographic research has to understand that they are bound to have findings, which way he/she is going to conclude. Here the consciousness will come which makes the researcher want to say "this is the thing that I want to say and not other things". So how do one development an ethnographic text is also another important question. One has to understand everything and only after this the researcher can have a say. When you understand the reality, you can talk about transformation. Therefore, ethnographic research grows along with the researcher and develops a theory/idea out of that.

### **Session Two, Three and Four: Field Visit**

With an aim of orienting participant scholars towards empirical research, and to provide practical sessions, a field visit was organized with a focus on studying disadvantaged status. The site of the field visit (Harijan Colony) was deliberately selected in one area of Tezpur town with settlements of one of the most disadvantaged sections, viz. manual scavengers. The purpose was to give some hands on training towards few qualitative methods as, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Case Study, Interview, and Ethnography by giving a real exposure to the field.



Accordingly, the participants were divided into respective four groups, and were asked to utilize such methods in revealing the disadvantaged status of the residents in a locality of around 120 households. The group doing FGD could do discussion through specified questions to two distinct groups each with eleven respondents (with males and females). The group for case study could make a case of schooling experience and drop outs among select three/four cases. Interview group took the task of entering to few households and meeting few female and male members with an aim to know their peculiar experiences with the outside world of their own as they were being stigmatized due to their humble background and odd job of manual scavenging. Remaining group was of ethnographers who just went in the locality and observed their daily routine, chores, etc. highlighting lack of facilities, awareness, and feeling of insecurity and helplessness. As per our understanding and also through the experiences of the participants, it was a real experience to know the empirical reality and challenges of doing qualitative research amongst disadvantaged communities. Such experiences were shared through presentations happened the succeeding day.



## Day Nine: 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019

### Session One: Exploring and utilising e-resources

#### Resource Person: Dr. Mukesh Saikia

The first sessions on 9<sup>th</sup> day was delivered by Dr. Mukesh Saikia, Librarian Tezpur University. He started the session with importance of library and various e-resources in research. He had also discussed thoroughly about the various e-resources and online repositories available such as e-sodh sindhu, web of knowledge, NDLI, Bodleian library, library of congress, national and international open access libraries and their usage. He have also discussed about the use of DELNET and the facility of borrowing books from other university libraries for research work. The session also dedicated to understand the importance of these online resources in order to generate a good review for a research work and how it helps the researcher to have an understanding of the ongoing works related to their area of study. He further discussed about the use of various online and offline materials for the research purpose. He also addressed rightly the questions raised by the participants. The session was very much informative and enlightening.

### Session Two: Referring library – need for appropriate approach

#### Resource Person: Dr. Mukesh Saikia

Dr. Mukesh Saikia started with a brief introduction for the need of referring library during research. He talked about the impact of digital revolution that has brought changes between researchers and libraries. He talked about library as a hub, where immense number of journal's, books etc can be easily accessed and further provides and promotes access to external research material. He talks about the physical space and information and advice that a library provides.



He talked on how good libraries help institutions to recruit and retain top researchers, how libraries help researchers win grants and contracts, how libraries promote and exploit new technologies and new models of scholarly communications and how specialist staff work in partnership with academic departments. He talked about the digital revolution that has help connecting with researchers across the world and which indeed has enhanced the value of library's services.

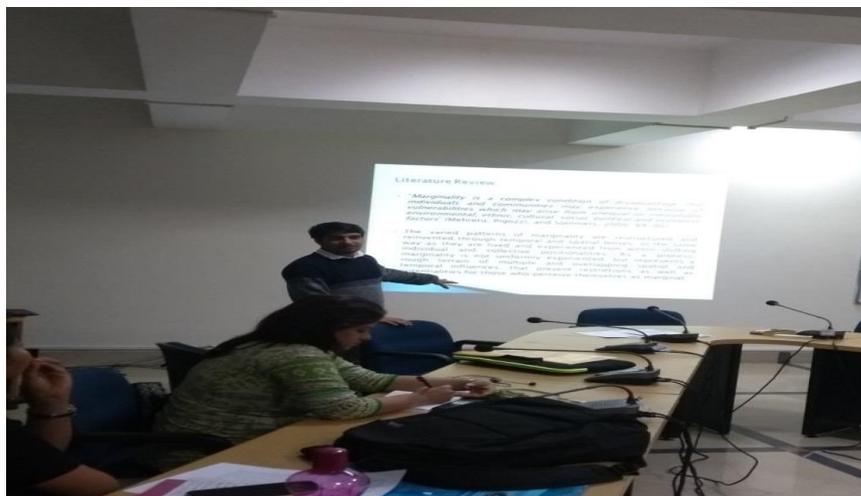
He also talked about the better work environment that the library provides for students, Research Scholars. He talked about the huge amount of money spend by many universities in order to sustain and develop their collections and researchers across the sector now have access to more content than ever before. And how convenient is access to high-quality research content remains a key foundation for good research.

He also talked about how libraries are a physical manifestation of the values of academy and of scholarships and about the risk that this intrinsic value may not be recognized by future generations of researchers who are dedicated to the online world. He also talked about various digital libraries such as, National Digital Library of India, Library of congress, British library and Bodleian Library- Oxford, United Kingdom. At the end he urges every research scholar and student to explore library and get benefited to the fullest.

### **Session Three and Four: Interaction Sessions**

#### **Presentation of Field experience and research proposal developed by the participants**

As per our schedule these were the dedicated sessions for the practical exercise where presentations were requested by each participant for the research proposal developed on the selected theme out of previously (on second day) announced eight themes. Each participant was given a time limit of seven to ten minutes for their presentation and another two to three minutes for observations, suggestions, and questions by other participants and organizers. Prior to that, there were presentations/reflections by the participants on their field visit experience. These sessions began in the presence of observer of the workshop Prof. M.P. Bezbaruah, and continued till late evening. The intention was to provide practical experience to prepare and present a research proposal on related themes of disadvantaged status.



**Day Ten: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019**

#### **Session One: Publishing academic research**

##### **Resource Person: Dr. Parasmoni Dutta**

The first session of the last day begun by Dr. Parasmoni Dutta who deliberated on publishing academic research. He referred to “Handbook of Academic Publishing” for introductory guidelines on academic publication. He mentioned key characteristics of academic publishing where he stated that academic writing and publishing needs to comprise of the following-

- Writing needs to target the intended audience.
- It needs to allude to certain standardized frame of reference meaning writing needs to contain a definite grammar structure, a narrative structure, i.e. there should be a narrative flow, with cohesiveness and consistency defining its readability.
- There should be clarity, but this does not imply simplicity.

- Tables, figures, maps should follow a good schema of documentation.
- Title and the abstract of the paper should be catchy and attention drawing.
- The citation and reference styles should be as prescribed by the journal one sends one's paper to.
- One needs to avoid 'Padding' meaning extra irrelevant stanzas or paragraphs and refrain from beating about the bush and precisely refer to what the paper aims at submitting.
- The writer must avoid repetition to gloss over issues.
- Also, too many points or too less points reduces chances of acceptance for publication.



Reflecting on a pattern for the academic paper, Dr. Dutta suggested the points as:

- Abstract
- Keywords - which are the consistently repeated words that would primarily define the paper
- Introduction of the paper
- Literature review- which is a critical review of the available literature
- Theoretical framework
- Methodology, i.e. the ideological inclination of the paper
- Analysis
- Discussion
- Conclusion

After giving details of all the above mentioned points for academic writing Dr. Dutta concluded by stating that a writer could either move from:

Introduction- > Analysis- > Generalisation- > Particularisation

Or

Analysis- > Conclusion- > Particularisation- > Generalisation

However, what he vehemently suggests is reading basic material on the subject areas one wishes to write on, which he believes would preclude the writer from all the erroneous theoretical oversimplifications, one might make during the process of writing.

## **Session Two: Feminist theories – an exploration**

### **Resource Person: Prof. Tulsi Patel**

The second session of the last day of the workshop was conducted by eminent sociologist Prof. Tulsi Patel from Delhi School of Economics. Prof. Patel in her session stressed on the evaluation and development of feminist movement. The movement began as a reaction to the notion of division of labour in the society wherein the male is the ‘producer’ while the female is seen as a ‘consumer’ since ancient times. For a long time the notion of ‘Bread and Butter’ i.e. food the very essence of life was thought to be male responsibility, whereas any contribution of woman, if any, was just the ‘jam’-delicious but not essential. This accepted notion, according to Prof. Patel, began to crumble during the war times in early 20<sup>th</sup> century which required women to come out of closed indoors and work in industry as most men were out in the battle front fighting enemies. Most of the casualties were male which drastically reduced their active participation in the economic activity. As a result women came out of their comfort zone and shared economic productivity with male counterparts. This also resulted in further liberation of women individuality and they began to assert for more political rights. The inter-war period too witnessed greater participation of women in all walks of life, they began to organise themselves as a political identity.

But, with the Second World War coming to an end and men coming back to the social and political sphere women participation began to be resented. With this began an active movement by women activist to maintain and assert their position in the society. This was a real challenge in a patriarchal male dominated society and women had to face multiple hurdles both within and outside the family. The very idea of family being a private institution outside the realm of politics and state was challenged and ‘Personal is Political’ became a war cry of the women activist around the world. Prof. Patel also pointed to the fact that feminist movement around the world was not uniform and there was a multiplicity of voices within it depending on the positionality of the voice. Various forms - Black, Latin, Asian, Indian, Dalit, Muslim and other forms of feminism proliferated accentuating the debate on the power position of the feminist voice.

Prof. Patel concluded this session with a note that she explored different social practices, traditions which are deeply entrenched in our society. Knowingly or unknowingly, we are part of that society and indeed contributing in the system of re-strengthening the patriarchal norms. So, we should question the norms of the society without harming anyone.

## **Session Three: Valedictory**

### **Contemporary significance of researching disadvantaged status**

#### **Resource Person: Prof. Tulsi Patel**

In keeping with the theme of the valedictory session Prof. Tulsi Patel begins by stating that doing research on highlighting disadvantaged statuses is the need of the hour. Having said that, she elaborates that her doctoral research is hugely centered on the same thematic concern. She therefore, prefers to speak mostly of her doctoral research to illustrate how she conducted her project in researching disadvantaged status in the local Panchayat level governing bodies in the state of Rajasthan in and around the time when the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment Acts passed. Her doctoral thesis is titled “Anthropological Demography in a Rajasthan Village”. Prof. Patel is suspicious of the employability of focus group discussions in contexts as diverse as India. She focuses on the need and the urgency to conduct research on the status of disadvantaged

communities in India. She then elaborates on the nature of sociological research she has been engaged with during her career. She has carried out extensive research on trying to decipher the methodological and theoretical aspects to understand human fertility behavior providing insightful accounts of the social cultural and symbolic aspects of human fertility. Contrary to the assumptions made on factors influencing fertility behavior by demographic studies, Patel urges for the need of an anthropology of demography which will be transgressive and more illuminating given that such a study would take into consideration the values and perceptions of the society at large. Thus, family and kinship become important areas of sociological studies influencing fertility behavior and consequently demographic indicators. So, she vouches for a more inclusive and in-depth anthropological studies of demographic behavior like family planning.



Patel endorses the use of ethnography against demographic studies, it being an iterative form of doing field research, more inductive than a research based on top down approach. However, again, the ethical aspect of this methodological tool is debatable, Patel comments.

Having said this, Prof. Patel then elucidates on the short-sighted colonial understanding of caste dynamics in India. Colonial administrators defined caste as primarily premised on rituals and that caste would disappear once India undergoes modernizes. The manner through which caste got reified did not consider the possibilities of fluidity of occupations, occupation-the trope on which basis, one's caste got ascribed. One could alter one's occupation and thus laid a claim on change on one's caste positionality, therefore. This led to a huge conundrum and as a result, caste-based census had to be discontinued post 1931.

Moving on, Patel informs that Rajasthan was the first state in India to instrumentalized 30 percent reservation to women in local governing bodies provisioned by the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the Constitution of India. Despite that, there has been continuing disparities in representation. This differential is explicit in the demographic indicators evident in Rajasthan.

The domain of reproductive rights being another central area with which Prof. Patel is deeply involved, she laments the plight of reproductive rights of women in India. Despite the latest techno-medical advances, the laws have remained stagnant or rather restrictive, complicated further by selective female fetus abortions, depriving women of autonomy of choice over their body. Hence, she upholds the urgency of the rise of feminist campaigns against such

politicization of the female body. Hence, this too again thus, foregrounds the necessity of researching disadvantaged status in India. She discursively moves from one vantage point to another exemplifying through multiple instances of disadvantaged situations and locations, however, what she conclusively vouches for exclusively is the need to gendering demographic practices and policies, which will then help in discarding gender blinding and attain a more inclusive dimensionality and outlook.

#### **Session Four: Interaction session**

#### **Feedback & Distribution of Certificates**

#### **Chairperson: Prof. P. K. Das**

The last session of the workshop was chaired by Prof. P. K. Das who happened to chair the valedictory address by Prof. Tulsi Patel. He gave his reflections on the importance of having research methodology courses for empowering research scholars. He stated that the workshop like this is of real worth as is being theme specific unlike other research methodology workshops being organized elsewhere. There were few reflections on the experience by the participants before they received certificates for their successful participation from the honorable chair.



Organizers expressed their thanks and gratitude to all the participants, resource persons, Tezpur University and most importantly the sponsoring agency, ICSSR whose support have made this exercise possible.

