

# Academic Writing Workshop

For PhD Scholars belonging to SCs & STs

14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2016

Patna Bihar



*Jointly Organised by*

**Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Patna Centre, Bihar**  
**Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development,**  
**Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu**  
**Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion, Bihar**



# **Report of the Academic Writing Workshop For PhD Scholars belonging to SCs and STs**

**Dec. 14-15, 2016, Patna**

## **Background**

Academic writing is an integral process of research and generation of scientific knowledge. The research scholars in humanities and social sciences in Indian Universities lack in the ability to prepare research reports and dissertations in a systematic manner and publish research papers in reputed journals owing to lack of adequate training in the research methodology, critical thinking and academic writing skills. The research scholars belonging to Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) face the problem more acutely for a variety of reasons linked with the poor quality of schooling they receive resulting in academic and language barriers and learning disabilities imposed by the oppressive social structure. Unlike Western universities, in India we do not have writing centres in our universities, where students get training and resources to develop their academic writing skills. As such a system is not in place right now and this issue needs to be addressed by offering a special programme for research scholars in social sciences and humanities to equip them with the necessary academic writing skills.

In this backdrop, a two-day academic writing workshop for PhD scholars belonging to SCs and STs was organised by the Patna Centre of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

## **The Objectives of the Workshop**

The objectives of the workshop are:

1. To gain an appreciation of what quality means in the context of academic writing;
2. To understand the nuances of writing different sections of the PhD thesis;
3. To develop the ability to appropriately frame and structure a research argument using evidence as per disciplinary conventions;
4. To understand the requirements of publication; and
5. To reflect upon the social issues that are prevailing in the society, use research as a tool to find out the empirical evidence and write quality report to sensitize the society.

## **Participants**

The workshop was planned for 30 participants. However, one more participant was allowed to attend. Of the 31 participants, 29 were residents and two were non-residents. 30 participants belonged to the Scheduled Castes while one participant was from Scheduled Tribes.

Participants were from different different universities and institutions of Bihar – Patna University, Veer Kunwar Singh University (Arrah), L. M. Mithila University (Darbhanga), Magadh University (Bodh Gaya) and AN Sinha Institute of Social Studies (Patna).



(Participants attending the workshop)

## **Methodology of the Workshop**

All the listed sessions were conducted in a mixed language i.e. English and Hindi. All participants were given a compendium consisting of articles and handouts on different aspects of writings. One hour was dedicated for each session, out of which 45 minutes were allotted for resource persons to make their presentations while rest 15 minutes were kept for interactions. Power point presentations were also used by the resource persons.

## **Inaugural Session**

Prof. Pushpendra, Incharge of TISS Patna Centre welcomed the participants, the Chief Guest and the resource persons. He introduced the guests and spoke about the context of the workshop. He also briefed all the participants about the structure and session plans of the workshop. The Chief Guest of the Inaugural Session was Mr. Srikant, Director, Jagjivan Ram Institute of Parliamentary Studies and Political Research. In his inaugural speech, Mr. Srikant laid the emphasis on quality research. He underlined the importance of more and more students from the marginalised communities joining higher education and undertaking research. He hoped that the researchers belonging to the SC and ST communities will select those topics for research that are directly relevant to their communities. As a matter of fact, the issues related to the SCs and STs remain far less researched in Bihar. He advised the researchers to write their theses in such a manner that they are creative and interesting for non-academic readers too. Most of the PhD theses are usually boring for non-academic readers, hence, they do not get wider audience. He invited the participants to his institute to use the available academic resources.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Satyendra Kumar from the Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion (CSEI) explained the objectives and the work of CSEI and why his institution decided to get involved in organising the workshop. He explained in detail the discrimination students from the SC and ST communities often face in the institutions of higher learning and how that discourages them from pursuing higher studies. He informed the participants about different government schemes meant for students belonging to the SCs and STs. He narrated the finding of a study undertaken by his institution about how the budgetary allocations under the special component plan either remain unutilised or are diverted to undertake activities that have nothing to do with the welfare of the SCs and STs.

The inaugural session was also attended by Prof. Parthasarthy Mondal, TISS, Mumbai and the researchers of the TISS, Patna Centre.



(Mr. Srikant, Director, Jagjivan Ram Institute of Parliamentary Studies and Political Research giving inaugural speech)

## Workshop Schedule

Session	Topic	Resource Person
I	Challenges in academic writing: Difference between academic writing and other writings	Mr. Mithilesh Kumar Research Fellow, TISS, Patna
II	Introduction and Review of Literature	Prof. Parthasarthy Mondal TISS, Mumbai
III	Theoretical Framework	Prof. Parthasarthy Mondal TISS, Mumbai
IV	Methodology	Prof. Parthasarthy Mondal TISS, Mumbai
V	Data Chapters (Introduction)	Dr. Miranda Das Research Fellow, TISS, Patna
VI	Dalit Politics and Academics (over dinner)	Mr. Satyendra CSEI, Bihar

VII	Data Chapters	Prof. Abdul Shaban Deputy Director, TISS, Tuljapur
VIII	Conclusion	Prof. Abdul Shaban Deputy Director, TISS, Tuljapur
IX	References/citation/style/bibliography	Dr. Miranda Das Research Fellow, TISS, Patna
IX	Preventing Plagiarism	Dr. Miranda Das Research Fellow, TISS, Patna
XI	Writing Research Article	Prof. Abdul Shaban Deputy Director, TISS, Tuljapur

## Session – I

The session started with ‘Challenges in academic writing: difference between academic writing and other writings’. The session was conducted by Mr. Mithilesh Kumar of TISS, Patna Centre. Following are some of the broad areas which were covered under the session.

- Types of writing and what makes academic writing different from other forms of writings like journalistic writing and blog writing.
- Why it is important to adhere to the following steps in academic writing:
  - (a) Introduction
  - (b) Statement of the problem
  - (c) Literature review
  - (d) Methodology
  - (e) Data analysis
  - (f) Reference
- The importance of usage of formal language in the research
- The importance of method, theory and concepts
- What does it mean by originality of the research
- Why raising question in proper ways becomes so important in research.

The lecture was followed by the discussion and a question and answer session. The speaker also suggested important readings to the participants.



(Mr. Mithilesh Kumar, TISS, Patna Centre speaking on ‘Challenges in Academic Writing’)

### **Session – II, III and IV**

These three sessions focused on introduction, review of literature, theoretical framework and methodology. The sessions were conducted by Prof. Parthasarthy Mondal of TISS, Mumbai. Following are the main components in the session he conducted.

- What do we mean by theoretical framework; Types of theoretical frameworks.
- Division and differences between social sciences and natural sciences; what makes social sciences different from natural sciences; similarities and key differences between social science methods and natural science methods.
- The question of objectivity and subjectivity in social sciences.
- Difference between traditional Indian thesis writing and other thesis writings.
- Importance of introduction and review of literature chapters in the thesis.
- Why is it important to maintain originality and transparency in one’s research thesis?
- What is the data and how to use it in the thesis?
- Different theoretical traditions in social science research.
- Different methodologies in doing social science research.
- Importance of thinking rationally.

- The challenges posed by Hermeneutics, phenomenology and post-modernist studies in qualitative methodology.
- The relationship between interpretive and qualitative methods.
- Establishing links between the chapters.
- The importance of internal and external validity in the thesis.
- Investigating research questions from all possible angles.
- Importance of objectivity in the research; and
- Importance of citation and referencing in the research.



(Prof. Parthasarthy Mondal, TISS Mumbai conducting a session)

## **Session – V**

Fifth session of the workshop was conducted by Dr. Miranda Das of TISS, Patna Centre. This session was to make scholars aware about the data chapters in the research. The session was introductory in nature in which the emphasis was laid on understanding different types of data, be it quantitative or qualitative. Following points were covered in the session:

- Importance of data chapter; qualitative and quantitative data
- Different approaches to data analysis
- Coding of data

- What is the deductive approach and how to use it
- What is inductive approach and how to use it
- Analysis of textual data
- Guidelines and rules which are followed in data analysis
- Importance of making sections and subsections in data analysis.

## **Session – VI**

The sixth session was informal session conducted over dinner by Mr. Satyendra Kumar along with Mr. Chandan Kumar, Consultant, Gender Resource Centre, Government of Bihar. The session started with context setting by Mr. Satyendra. The objective of the session was to make the participants aware about dalit student movements in Indian universities and how these students are further marginalised and excluded in the university spaces. A short documentary namely, ‘the death of merit’ was screened which was followed by discussion.

The participants were informed about different online and offline platforms for young writers. Participants were motivated to use these platforms for publishing their writings.



(Mr. Satyendra Kumar, CSEI, speaking to the participants)

## Session – VII and VIII

The seventh and eighth sessions were devoted to the data chapters and writing conclusion in the thesis. These two sessions were conducted by Prof. Abdul Shaban, Deputy Director, TISS Tuljapur Campus. He picked up from where Dr. Miranda Das had concluded her session on data chapter the previous day. He discussed all the components of data chapters in great details. He started his session with inputs on steps involved in a doctoral research and gradually moved to inputs on data chapters. Followings were the highlights of the session:

- Eight important steps in research
- Subject and object in research, relationship between the two
- Framing proper research questions
- Importance of objectives in research
- Methods for data collection
- Analyzing qualitative and quantitative data
- Relationship between hypothesis and data chapters
- Writing conclusion



(Prof. Abdul Shaban conducting a session)

## Session – IX and X

These sessions focused on making young research scholars aware about the ethics of doing research. The session was facilitated by Dr. Miranda Das. Followings are the important points discussed in these sessions:

- Importance of references, citation and bibliography
- How to cite works of other researchers
- Style of referencing
- Different ways in which references, citation and quotation is written.
- Phrasing and paraphrasing
- Distinction between reference, notes and bibliography
- What is meant by plagiarism, legal aspects of plagiarism



(Dr. Miranda Das conducting a session on referencing/citation/styles)

## Session – XI

Prof. Abdul Shaban was the resource person. He discussed about the art of writing research papers. Prof. Shaban explained the key points in making a piece of research publishable. He

explained the structure of a research paper. He explained in detail what differentiates a good, publishable paper from a poorly written unpublishable paper.

After the session, feedback forms were circulated amongst the participants. The participants were given 15 minutes to write their feedback.

### **Valedictory Session**

The workshop concluded with the valedictory session in the evening of 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2016. Dr. Ramendra, Professor, Philosophy Department, Patna University was the chief guest for the session. He distributed the certificate to the course participants. In his valedictory address, he underlined the importance of the workshop in the context of Bihar. According to him, students mostly rely on the university departments for such inputs but due to the lack of both material and human resources the universities in Bihar are unable to provide those inputs. He congratulated the TISS and the other partner institutions for organising the workshop. Such workshops creating an environment which inspire not only the young research scholars but also veteran researchers like him. He concluded by suggesting that such workshops should be organised for longer duration.



(Prof. Ramendra distributing certificate to the participants at the valedictory session)

Prof. Pushendra thanked all the participants, resource persons, Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development, Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion and the members of his team for making the workshop a great learning experience.



(Prof. Pushendra speaking at the valedictory session)

## Annexure – 1

### (List of the Participants)

Sr. No.	Name of the Participant	University/Institute
1	Ajay Paswan	Patna University
2	Ajeet Kumar	Patna University
3	Ajit Kumar Hasda	Patna University
4	Amit Kumar	Veer Kunwar University
5	Aswini Kumar	Patna University
6	Brajesh Kumar	Veer Kunwar Singh University
7	Brijkishor Ram	Patna University
8	Chandrabali Kumar	A.N. Sinha Institute of Social Studies
9	Dharmnath Kumar	Patna University
10	Godawari Kumari	Veer Kunwar Singh University
11	Hemant Kumar	Patna University
12	Jawala Chandra Choudhary	L.N.M.U Darbhanga University
13	Jugal Prasad	Veer Kunwar Singh University
14	Manoj Kumar Ram	L.N.M.U Darbhanga University
15	Meena	Patna University
16	Meena Kumari	LNMU University , Darbhanga
17	Rabindra Kumar	Patna University
18	Rahul Kumar	L.N.M.U Darbhanga University
19	Rajni Gandha	L.N. MITHILA University, Darbhanga
20	Rakesh Ranjan	Magadh University
21	Ranjeet Murmu	Patna University
22	Ravi Shankar Kumar	Patna University
23	Rawat Kumar	Patna University
24	Sanjay Kumar Mahto	L.N.M University , Darbhanga
25	Sanjay Paswan	L.N.M.U Darbhanga University
26	Sanjeet Kumar	L.N.M.U Darbhanga University
27	Sonali Sheetal	Patna University
28	Suvash Chandra Singh	Patna University
29	Umesh Kumar	Patna University
30	Vidya	Magadh University
31	Vivek Kumar	Patna University

## ANNEXURE – 2

### Workshop Evaluation

29 participants submitted the workshop evaluation form. The following shows the feedback of the participants.

Themes	Very Poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	Extremely Good
1. Challenges in academic writing			2	12	15
2. Introduction and review of literature		1	6	10	12
3. Theoretical framework		1	4	15	9
4. Methodology		1	2	14	12
5. Data chapter			2	11	16
6. Referencing	1		1	10	17
7. Preventing plagiarism	1		3	7	18
8. Writing research article	1		5	10	13
<b>Overall, how do you rate the workshop?</b>			<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>

#### Some qualitative feedback from the participants

- The workshop was excellent and scholarly but should have been for longer duration, at least for a week.
- The workshop was well structured and organized.
- This workshop is going to help me in my PhD thesis and other academic writings.
- Faculty members were knowledgeable and approachable.
- We liked most of the sessions. Most of topics which were covered in workshop were very relevant to our thesis.
- This workshop helped us in understanding the nuances and the technical aspects of social science writing.
- It also helped us to understand the importance of our research work.