



# PROCEEDINGS

of ICSSR Sponsored  
Capacity Building Programme on  
**Academic Writing and Publication Processes**  
for early career teachers and researchers  
01.12.2022 - 14.12.2022



## ORGANISED BY:

Department of Economics, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

## KNOWLEDGE PARTNERS:

Biodiversity Collaborative (BC) and  
Indian Society for Ecological Economics (INSEE)



GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS



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NAAC Accredited A++ Grade | 3rd Ranked among Universities in NIRF-2022



**INSEE**  
Indian Society for Ecological Economics

## HOST ORGANISATION:

**Jamia Millia Islamia**, an institution originally established at Aligarh in United Provinces, India in 1920 became a Central University by an Act of the Indian Parliament in 1988. In Urdu language, Jamia means 'University', and Millia means 'National'. "Strive to foster the goals of building a secular and modern system of integrated education for sustainable development of society and better future for all" reads its Vision statement. Following are included among its Mission: (a) "To be a teaching and research-intensive university driven by a spirit of innovation", (b) "To encourage multidisciplinary learning and research in cutting edge and niche areas" and (c) "To take measures towards sustainable development of society and environmental care". Web: <https://www.jmi.ac.in/>

**Department of Economics** established in 1971, under the Faculty of Social Sciences offers B.A. (Hons.)(Economics), M.A. (Economics), M.Sc. in Banking and Financial Analytics and Ph.D. (Economics). The Department received INR 20 lakh and INR 24.49 lakh grant under SAP/DRS-I and SAP/DRS-II respectively from UGC. "To transform the Department into a Centre for Excellence in Teaching, Research and Policy Making in the wider canvas of Economics and Finance" reads its Vision. Its Mission includes (a) "To educate and inculcate overall development of the students with proven skills and expertise in the subjects" and (b) "To prepare the students to compete in the real world". Web: <https://www.jmi.ac.in/economics>

## SPONSORING ORGANISATION:

**Indian Council of Social Science Research** was established in the year of 1969 by the Government of India to promote research in social sciences in the country. It provides grants for projects, fellowships, international collaboration, capacity building, survey, and publications to promote research in social sciences in India. It's training and capacity building (TCB) division provides grants to the social science faculties for organizing research methodology and capacity building programme for young researchers and junior faculties in various social science disciplines. It's research survey and publication programme provides publication grants/ financial subsidy to Indian nationals for publication of manuscripts of the research work done in any field of social sciences, including doctoral thesis and reports of research projects/fellowships and papers presented in seminars/ symposia /workshops. Web: <https://icsr.org/>

## KNOWLEDGE PARTNERS:

**Biodiversity Collaborative** is a growing network of institutions and individuals whose shared vision is to promote biodiversity science in India and its application in conservation and sustainable development with a focus on enhancing human well-being. Members of the Collaborative were involved in the Preparatory Phase Project of the National Mission on Biodiversity and Human Well-Being (supported by the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, 2019-21) and in public engagement and outreach to make biodiversity and its links to human well-being a part of society's imagination and discourse. Since 2021, it is supported by Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies. Web: <https://www.biodiversitycollaborative.org/>

**Indian Society for Ecological Economics** (INSEE) established in 1999, aims to further the cause of sustainable development by providing a forum for continuous dialogue among scholars, practitioners and policy analysts working at the interface of the economy, society and the ecosystem. It seeks to provide a platform that would facilitate interactions between scholars from various disciplines, particularly economics and the ecological sciences, and including both natural and social sciences. It works to disseminate the results of research and its policy implications to national and international bodies (governmental and non-governmental) through multiple avenues such as conferences, workshops, networking and publications. Its flagship, open access, no APC, Scopus indexed and UGC CARE listed *Ecology, Economy and Society – the INSEE Journal* offers authors a forum to address socio-environmental issues from, across and within the natural and social sciences, with an aim to promote methodological pluralism and inter-disciplinary research. Web: <https://www.ecoinsee.org/>

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### **SUPPORTED BY:**

**Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)**



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Nandan Nawn is solely responsible for the contents of this document and not the organisations involved with the capacity building programme, namely, Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), Department of Economics, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI), Biodiversity Collaborative (BC) and Indian Society for Ecological Economics (INSEE) or the resource persons.

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मौलाना मोहम्मद अली जौहर मार्ग, नई दिल्ली-११००२५

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(NAAC Accredited "A++" Grade)

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کولپتی

Professor Najma Akhtar  
Vice Chancellor

پروفیسر نجمہ اختر  
شیخ الجامعہ



### Message from the Vice Chancellor

I am very happy to know that Department of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences, Jamia Millia Islamia, is organising an ICSSR Sponsored two-week Capacity Building Programme on Academic Writing and Publication Processes for early career teachers and researchers from 1<sup>st</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022 as a part of its Golden Jubilee celebrations. The programme is relevant for the higher education system in general and Jamia Millia Islamia in particular.

JMI with A++ grade awarded by NAAC, is reckoned among the top three universities in India as per NIRF Ranking 2022. Dozens of its faculty members have featured in the Stanford University global list of top 2 per cent scientists on a regular basis, have an h-index of more than 100, among others. Looking to our laurels is our top priority. This Capacity Building Programmes well contribute towards this end. I wish to congratulate the Department of Economics and its knowledge partners Indian Society for Ecological Economics and Biodiversity Collaborative for organising it.

I extend my good wishes to the participants, resource persons, participants and the Department of Economics, JMI for a truly rewarding experience.

I wish to thank Indian Council for Social Science Research for the generous grant towards organising this programme.

*Najma Akhtar*

(Prof. Najma Akhtar)  
Vice Chancellor

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## CONCEPT NOTE

### GOAL

To augment publication profile of higher education institutions in India.

### OBJECTIVES

- To impart skills to improve writing quality research proposals,
- To develop skills to write quality work across publication avenues,
- To hand-hold the researchers to improve quality of their ongoing research output,
- To provide an exposure to various aspects of research and publication ethics,
- To offer a ‘ringside view’ of publication processes in a Scopus indexed journal.

### RATIONALE

ICSSR has been extending financial support to various Research Methodology Courses and a variety of Capacity Building Programmes (CBPs) through its Training and Capacity Building division (<https://icssr.org/training-and-capacity-building>) over many years. In addition, as per the relevant UGC regulations governing Ph.D. programmes, all students registered in such programmes study compulsory courses on Research Methodology and Research and Publication Ethics. The latter one has been in place since 2019.

The scope of these courses seldom includes any training on writing for academic or professional purposes. In the course of M.Phil. and Ph.D., students learn how to write a dissertation or a thesis—at best—with support from their supervisors and members of RAC or SRC (albeit to a greatly varying degree).

ICSSR CBPs on the other hand attempt to inculcate writing skills and provide exposure to various stages of the publication processes—this is the domain to which *this* CBP belongs to (link to syllabus of courses: <https://icssr.org/sites/default/files/TCB-Syllabus.pdf>).

As ‘training’ on how to write for academic purposes is present only in a limited fashion in the higher education landscape in India, authors are mostly self-taught by trial and error. Be it a research proposal, a book, a commentary, a working paper or a full-length research article, it’s almost always learning-by-doing. As a result, the researchers face difficulties in publishing their research through the most desired avenues. This is particularly true for early career academics.

It’s a fact that generations of authors have learnt this ‘skillset’ mostly by themselves, but in the process may have incurred substantial ‘transaction costs’. This often involves time to (a) search for appropriate style, structure, form, expected academic rigour, logical consistency and expositional clarity pertaining to *each* type of writing and *each* publication avenue, (b) understand them and (c) hone these skills over the years.

*This* CBP intends to fill up the first two gaps above. In fact, the [New Education Policy 2020](#) (p. 43) envisages such a course: “[a]ll fresh Ph.D. entrants [...] irrespective of discipline, will be required to take credit-based courses in teaching/ education/ pedagogy/ *writing*” (emphasis added).

Over the years, one can identify a transition in the Indian higher education space away from a narrow disciplinary focus and towards multidisciplinary engagements. A formal recognition of this is provided by the [NEP 2020](#) (p. 37). It is not just among social or natural sciences or engineering, but across and within them. As it is well known, societal challenges warrant engagements with more than one discipline.

Given the experience, interests, and expertise available with the sponsoring and hosting organisations (and knowledge partners), the proposed CBP intends to engage with writings with a strong social science component within the domain of sustainable development goals (SDGs), targets and indicators.



## PEDAGOGY


Pedagogic approach included (a) sessions by domain experts, (b) mentoring by experts, (c) review of written research outputs by ‘peers’, (d) presentations by participants and discussions thereof, (e) hands-on training on selected aspects of writing and publication, among others.

Sessions were divided into (a) fundamentals of methods of *doing* research, (b) *expressing* and *structuring* research ideas into pre-defined structures and forms, (c) *improving* visual appeal of the expressions, (d) *understanding* the steps of the publication process. Details are in the Programme Schedule that can be accessed on the programme webpage at <https://www.jmi.ac.in/bulletinboard/eventmodule/latest/detail/2792/22969>.

Programme director served as the mentor to all the participants. Comments were shared on the draft research output submitted at the time of application (v.1). The participants submitted the modified research output (v.2) at the end of day 8. This submission took place through a mock journal portal (session 8.3). They presented v.2 on day 11. Each participant was given 20 minutes time with appropriate instructions for making effective presentations (session 10.4). Another participant played the role of the Editor of the journal for which v.2 was prepared. Mentor also offered comments on v.2 on day 12 (session 12.2). Participants appeared in a test with multiple choice questions (MCQ) (session 12.1).

In short, while mentoring addressed the requirements of publishable output, the lectures and hands-on sessions took care of the structure, form and related matters connected with academic writing. Reading materials were made available online in electronic form, alongwith video of lectures, besides handouts, slides, and other such used by the resource persons (with due permission from them).

Medium of delivery of all ‘transactions’ in this CBP, including but not limited to lectures, presentations, comments, hands-on training, and communications was English.



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(01.12.2022 to 14.12.2022)

Knowledge Partners: Biodiversity Collaborative (BC) and Indian Society for Ecological Economics (INSEE)

Applications are invited from Teachers (preferably Lecturers and Assistant Professors) and Researchers in a UGC recognized Indian University/ Deemed to be University/ College/ Institutes of National Importance or ICSSR Research Institutes for participation in an ICSSR sponsored two-week capacity building programme (CBP) on ‘Academic Writing and Publication Processes’, organised by the Department of Economics, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi 110025 with [Biodiversity Collaborative](#) (BC) and [Indian Society for Ecological Economics](#) (INSEE) as knowledge partners between 01.12.2022–14.12.2022 (both days inclusive).

Interested teachers and researchers can find further details related to *this* CBP at <https://www.jmi.ac.in/bulletinboard/eventmodule/latest/detail/2792/22969> (Programme Webpage) and on ICSSR sponsored CBPs at <https://icssr.org/training-and-capacity-building>.

Application window will open for 45 days on 01.09.2022. Applicants will be required to submit a (draft) research output (v.1) with a strong social science component and connect with (a set of) UN Sustainable Development Goals, Targets and Indicators. Academic rigour, logical consistency and expositional clarity of v.1 will enjoy a higher weightage than others in the process of preparation of the list of successful applicants. It will be subjected to plagiarism check with a 6-word string. Those in violation of the UGC Ethical Guidelines (for research and submission of Ph.D. thesis) will not be considered further (more than 10% similarity). Interested applicants may refer to the template of the form on the [Programme Webpage](#) to note all the requirements.

Successful applicants are likely to be informed on 20.10.2022. A waiting list will be released, if any, on 27.10.2022 (indicative date)

Maximum number of participants shall be 30 [10 each from (a) NCT of Delhi, (b) NCR but outside of NCT Delhi, and (c) outside of NCR; location of the institution as included in the bonafide certificate submitted during the application process (item no. 11A) will be used for this categorisation]. Three separate and mutually exclusive lists will be prepared.


Accommodation will be made available (on need basis) for participants from outside of NCR between 30.11.2022, 10:00 hrs (IST) to 15.12.2022, 10:00 hrs (IST) at [Nehru Guest House](#) on shared basis. Limited support to defray travel/transport costs (on need basis) will be extended to participants from outside of NCT of Delhi (i.e., from NCR but outside of NCT of Delhi and also outside of NCR).

All details will be made available on the [Programme Webpage](#). For *other than routine matters*, interested applicants may write to the Programme Office through <events [dot] economics [at] jmi [dot] ac [dot] in> from their respective institutional email accounts.

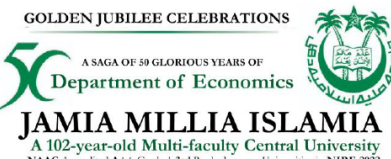
Sd/-  
Nandan Nawn, Programme Director  
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Member, Biodiversity Collaborative and Member, INSEE

Sd/-  
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(Former) Professor, Department of Sociology  
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## BRIEF BIO OF RESOURCE PERSONS

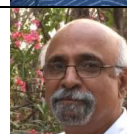
**Anup K Dhar** is presently a Visiting Professor, at FLAME University, Pune. Earlier he was at the Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi, Delhi. He is a Member of the Editorial Board of *Rethinking Marxism*, Section Editor of *ReMarx* and Editor of the *Journal of Practical Philosophy* and *CUSP: Journal of Studies in Culture, Subjectivity and Psyche*.

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**C Rammanohar Reddy** is presently the Editor-In-Chief of *The India Forum*. After obtaining a Ph.D. in Economics he has been in journalism since 1988. He was Editor of *Economic and Political Weekly* between 2004 and 2016. He is based in Hyderabad.

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**Chander K Singh** is an Associate Professor at TERI School of Advanced Studies, New Delhi. He is a recipient of Young Scientist Award by International Union of Geological Sciences in Euro Conference 2009, Switzerland for his work on groundwater in Aravalli Quartzite. He is member expert for Arsenic Task Force, Punjab and Royal Society of Chemistry, UK.

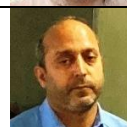
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**Deepak Malghan** is a chemical engineer and an ecological economist working at the interface of scale theory and thermodynamic at IIM-Bangalore as an Associate Professor. He received the 2015 VKRV Rao Prize in Social Sciences. He is an editor at *Ecological Economics*, a member of INSEE and an adjunct fellow at ATREE. Profile: <https://www.iimb.ac.in/user/93/deepak-malghan>



**Johan Mohamad Mir** is Information Scientist at Dr. Zakir Husain Central Library, JMI. He was a Member of Institutional Academic Integrity Panel, JMI. Earlier, he has served at Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University and Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University, Al-Khobar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Profile: <https://jmi.irins.org/profile/243968>



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**Nilanjan Ghosh** is presently Director of two Centres at the Observer Research Foundation, namely, ORF Kolkata, and the Centre for New Economic Diplomacy & President, INSEE. Natural Resource Economics, Applied Econometrics, Commodity Markets are areas of his interest.

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**Pranab Mukhopadhyay** is Professor of Economics at Goa University, Goa. He is a Fellow of the South Asian Network for Development & Environmental Economics (SANDEE), Kathmandu and was former President of the INSEE (2016-18). He is an Associate Editor of *Ecology, Economy, Society—the INSEE Journal*. His research interests have been ecosystem services, institutions, and development. Profile: <https://www.unigoa.ac.in/faculty/pranab-mukhopadhyay.html>



**Ravi Chellam** is Chief Executive Officer of Metastring Foundation and coordinator of Biodiversity Collaborative. As a wildlife biologist and conservation scientist, he has pioneered research on Asiatic Lions. He was earlier worked at WII, UNDP, and ATREE among others.

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**Surit Das** presently write reports and proposals for non-profits and businesses, besides editing articles for economics journals and researchers in economics and sociology. He was worked earlier at the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi and copy-edited for *Ecology, Economy and Society—the INSEE journal*. Profile: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/thereportwriter/?originalSubdomain=in>



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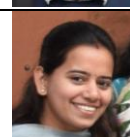


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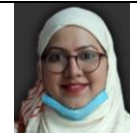
**Suraj Beri** teaches at Department of Sociology, Nagaland University, Lumami, Dist. Zunheboto. Social inequality, Development, and Urban spaces are areas of his research interests.  
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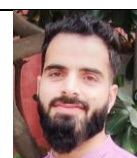
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**Ahmad Raza** is in the second year of Ph.D. programme at the Dept. of Economics, JMI. His research is on the 'Carbon emissions, Economic Growth and Healthcare Expenditure: An empirical investigation'. His broad research interests are in the domain of Environment. He has completed his B.A. in Economics from University of Allahabad, M.A in Economics from Aligarh Muslim University, and a Diploma of proficiency in French from University of Allahabad. He has been qualified UGC-NET in December 2019.  
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**Isha Sharma** is in the second year of Ph.D. programme at Dept. of Economics, JMI. Her research is on the impact of sanitation practices on selected health indicators among children in Uttar Pradesh. Her broad research interests are in the domain of Health and Development. She completed her B.A. in Economics from Indraprastha College for Women, University of Delhi and M.A. in Economics from Ashoka University. She has presented a paper titled 'IMR Causatum in Odisha' organised by University of Delhi. She has worked as a research assistant with Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and J-PAL. Profile: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/isha-sharma-01aaa524a/>



## SNAPSHOT OF PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

	9:30 – 11:00 hrs	11:15 – 12:45 hrs	13:30 – 15:00 hrs	15:15 – 16:45 hrs
Dec 1	<b>1.1. Inauguration</b> Prof. Najma Akhtar Prof. Mohd. Zahid Ashraf Prof. Pranab Mukhopadhyay Prof. Asheref Illiyah Prof. Nandan Nawn Prof. Savyasaachi	<b>1.2. Academic Writing and Publication Processes: A 'scoping exercise'</b> by Nandan Nawn and Savyasaachi	<b>1.3. Writing Proposals for sponsored projects: an introduction</b> by Pranab Mukhopadhyay	<b>1.4. Writing components of a Proposal: Study Goals, Objective and Expected Outcomes</b> by Pranab Mukhopadhyay
Dec 2	<b>2.1. Writing components of a Proposal: Research Methods, Data/sources, Tools of Analysis</b> by Pranab Mukhopadhyay	<b>2.2. Linking different components of a proposal: the Logical Framework matrix for an action-research proposal</b> by Nandan Nawn	<b>2.3. Multi-author and multi-institutional proposals: how to overcome the challenges</b> by Uma Ramakrishnan	<b>2.4. Writing Reports for Sponsored Projects</b> by Chander K Singh
Dec 03	<b>3.1. Organising and Presenting an Argument: a general introduction</b> by Anup K Dhar	<b>3.2. Wordplay: how to attract a reader's attention with words and phrases</b> by Anup K Dhar	<b>3.3. Using RStudio for display items, documents and reproducibility-I</b> by Vikram Dayal	<b>3.4. Using RStudio for display items, documents and reproducibility-II</b> by Vikram Dayal
Dec 05	<b>4.1. Structure and Form in Academic Writing: A General Introduction</b> by Savyasaachi	<b>4.2. Framing of an Abstract and Executive Summary</b> by Surit Das	<b>4.3. Preparing and Reporting a Literature Survey/ Review</b> by Nandan Nawn	<b>4.4. Description of the Research Method, Variables and Metadata</b> by Chander K Singh and Ravi Chellam
Dec 06	<b>5.1. Writing for different sections in a Journal</b> by C Rammanohar Reddy	<b>5.2. Writing Op-Eds</b> by Ravi Chellam	<b>5.3. Writing for online platforms</b> by C Rammanohar Reddy	<b>5.4. Writing and Editing Books</b> by Savyasaachi and Nandan Nawn
Dec 07	<b>6.1. Ethics in Academic Writing: A General Introduction</b> by Nandan Nawn and Savyasaachi	<b>6.2. Varieties of Plagiarism and how to avoid it</b> by Murari Tapaswi	<b>6.3. Research Misconduct; Falsification, Fabrication</b> by Chander K Singh	<b>6.4. Rules for Referencing/ Citation and why should they be followed; Practical with Zotero/Mendeley</b> by Johan Mohamad Mir
Dec 08	<b>7.1. Publication Ethics and Best Practices in Publishing</b> by Murari Tapaswi	<b>7.2. Violation of Publication Ethics and Misconduct, Authorship/ Co-authorship, Complaints &amp; Appeal Provisions</b> by Nandan Nawn	<b>7.3. Initiatives at HEI regulatory bodies in India to instil publication ethics</b> by Nandan Nawn	<b>7.4. How to choose a forum for releasing or publishing your work?</b> by Chander K Singh
Dec 09	<b>8.1. Publication process in a journal: a general introduction</b> by Nandan Nawn	<b>8.2. Submission and publication of a paper in a journal—processes from the author's end</b> by Nandan Nawn	<b>8.3. Submission of a paper in a journal</b> by Nandan Nawn	<b>8.4. Making effective communications during an oral presentation</b> by Nilanjan Ghosh
Dec 10	<b>9.1. Using tools to improve quality of textual expressions</b> by Johan Mohamad Mir and Sandeep Sharma	<b>9.2. Review process in a journal: a general introduction</b> by Deepak Malghan	<b>9.3. Revisions and response sheets</b> by Deepak Malghan	<b>9.4. Post-acceptance processes: copyediting, response to queries</b> by Surit Das
Dec 12	<b>10.1. How to communicate research beyond the 'academia'?</b> by Shailly Kedia and Shreyas Joshi	<b>10.2. How to improve visibility of your work?</b> by Shailly Kedia and Shreyas Joshi	<b>10.3. Visual tools: wordcloud and datawrapper</b> by Nandan Nawn	<b>10.4. Creating Author Profiles</b> by Nandan Nawn
Dec 13	<b>11.1-11.4. Presentations</b>			
Dec 14	<b>12.1. Written test</b>	<b>12.2. Feedback and discussion on output submitted in day 8</b> Nandan Nawn	<b>12.3. Feedback from participants</b>	<b>12.4. Valedictory session</b> Prof. Asheref Illiyah Prof. Nazim Husain Al-Jafri Reflections by participants Prof. Prabhash Ranjan Distribution of Certificates Prof. Nandan Nawn Prof. Savyasaachi



## Week 1, Day 1: 01.12.2022

### Speaker Quotes:

“Sustaining our laurels is our top priority”.

“Information on how to write for academic purposes is present only in limited fashion in higher education landscape in India. Authors are mainly self-taught by trial and error”.

— **Prof. Najma Akhtar**, Vice Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI)

“98% of readers will only read your summary”.

“Try to connect your work with larger global problems”.

— **Prof. Mohammad Zahid Ashraf**, Director (Academics) and Head, Department of Biotechnology, JMI

“Don’t dilute the rigor of conceptual vocabulary”.

“Writing with pen and paper has its own value; it cannot be substituted with computer”.

“Academic writing promotes a reasonable way to think”.

“Institutional time and academic time often don’t talk to each other”.

— **Prof. Savyasaachi**, Programme Co-Director and (former) Professor, Department of Sociology, JMI

“Simple curiosity may not be a good enough reason to do research but it can be a good starting point”.

“Natural sciences publish more than social sciences and it is important for us to recover that ground”.

— **Prof. Pranab Mukhopadhyay**, Former President, INSEE and Professor of Economics and Vice-Dean (Research), Goa Business School, Goa University

“Not all research problems are suitable for getting funds”.

— **Prof. Nandan Nawn**, Programme Director, and Professor, Department of Economics, JMI, Former Secretary, INSEE and Member, Biodiversity Collaborative



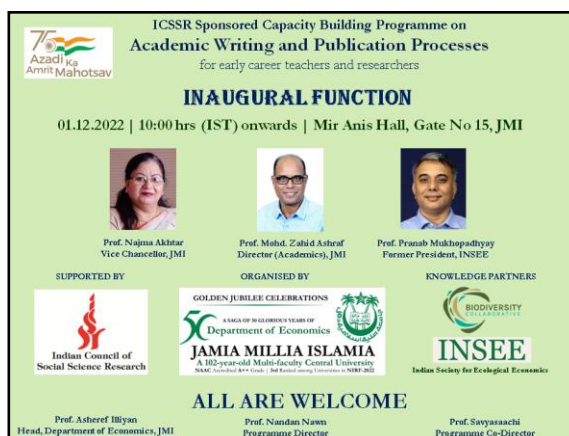
### Narrative

#### Session 1.1: Inaugural Function

##### Programme

- 10:00 hrs Welcome by Compere [Ms. Isha Sharma](#)
- 10:02 hrs Welcome address by [Prof. Asheref Illiyan](#), Head, [Department of Economics](#), JMI
- 10:15 hrs Remarks by Chief Guest, [Prof. Najma Akhtar](#), Hon’ble Vice Chancellor, JMI
- 10:30 hrs Remarks by Distinguished Guest, [Prof. Mohd. Zahid Ashraf](#), Director (Academics) and Head, Department of Biotechnology, JMI
- 10:40 hrs Remarks by Guest of Honour, [Prof. Pranab Mukhopadhyay](#), former President, [INSEE](#) and Professor of Economics and Vice-Dean (Research), Goa Business School
- 10:50 hrs Remarks by [Prof. Nandan Nawn](#), [Programme](#) Director and Professor, Department of Economics, JMI, Former Secretary, INSEE and Member, [Biodiversity Collaborative](#)
- 11:00 hrs Vote of Thanks by [Prof. Savyasaachi](#), [Programme](#) Co-Director and (former) Professor, Department of Sociology, JMI
- 11:05 hrs Announcement of closure of programme by Compere, followed by high tea

**1.1.1.** Prof. Asheref Illiyan began the session extending a warm welcome to everyone. He thanked the hon'ble Vice Chancellor for accepting the invitation and for her continuous support and co-operation for all the programmes organised by the Department of Economics. He informed that the department is celebrating the completion of 50 years of its establishment as the first Honours programme started in 1971-72. He mentioned that the hon'ble Vice Chancellor inaugurated the Golden Jubilee celebrations with a workshop on R on 16.09.2022.



**1.1.2.** Chief Guest, Prof. Najma Akhtar congratulated Department of Economics for completing 50 glorious years. She mentioned that JMI has been awarded with A++ grade by NAAC, is reckoned among the top three universities in India as per NIRF Rankings 2022, dozens of its faculty members have featured in the Stanford University global list of top 2% scientists on a regular basis and have an h-index of more than 100. She added that JMI is an exceptional institution with eminent teachers and a composite culture. She mentioned that this Capacity Building Programme will benefit many researchers across disciplines and will impart skills to improve the quality of research. She thanked ICSSR for finding the necessity for such a training programme besides the generous grant. She concluded by extending her good wishes to the participants, resource persons, and the Department of Economics, JMI for a truly rewarding experience.

**1.1.3.** Distinguished Guest, Prof. Mohd Zahid Ashraf started with the role of higher education institutions in creating leaders — JMI has created many such leaders in diverse fields, he said. He emphasised that students and scholars must learn to communicate to the intended listeners — publication is the best way towards this end, where one's words are put in a documented form. He mentioned that about 1500 publications per year come from JMI. A useful starting point can be writing a summary of about 250 words in order to get an idea of limitations of the thought process in implementing the idea. He argued that one must spend considerable amount of time on writing and rewriting the abstract as about 90 per cent of the readers will read it *only*. He suggested use of simple language for improved communications — even the mother tongue — to express one's views. No matter what language one uses, one must get into the habit of writing, he emphasised.

**1.1.4.** Guest of Honour, Prof. Pranab Mukhopadhyay spoke on behalf of the Indian Society for Ecological Economics (INSEE), one of the knowledge partners. He expressed his happiness to be at JMI, the first university in the NCR to have a woman Vice Chancellor. He then provided a brief



introduction to INSEE, established in 1999 to further the cause of sustainable development, actualised through providing platforms to facilitate interactions between scholars from various disciplines, particularly economics and ecological sciences. Its flagship open-access, no APC, Scopus indexed and UGC CARE listed *Ecology, Economy and Society—the INSEE Journal* offers authors a forum to address socio-environmental issues with an aim to promote methodological pluralism and inter-disciplinary research, he mentioned. He thanked the organisers for inviting INSEE to be a knowledge partner.

**1.1.5.** Prof. Nandan Nawn first spoke on behalf of Biodiversity Collaborative (BC), the other knowledge partner. He traced the brief history of this growing network of institutions and individuals whose shared vision is to promote biodiversity science in India and its application in conservation and sustainable development with a focus on enhancing human well-being. Members of the BC, like him, were involved in the Preparatory Phase project of the National Mission on Biodiversity and Human Well-being, approved by the Prime Minister's Science Technology & Innovation Council (PM-STIAC), he said. Subsequently, he spoke as the Director of the Capacity Building Programme tracing its genesis in late 2020, before providing an overview of the structure of the programme.

**1.1.6.** Prof. Savyasaachi thanked everyone for the co-operation extended towards organisation of this CBP, including JMI administration and the knowledge partners.



## Session 1.2: Academic Writing and Publication Processes: A ‘scoping exercise’

**Resource Persons:** [Savyasaachi](#) (formerly, JMI) and [Nandan Nawn](#) (JMI, INSEE and BC), co-director and director of *this* CBP, respectively.

**1.2.1.** To Savyasaachi, every author must follow some simple rules. Most difficult part of academic writing is finding the right word, to communicate what the author wants to say to the reader. Writing several drafts and reading them may help here. Karl Marx had written *Das Kapital* after several drafts. Writing logically consistent and powerful paragraphs will warrant an enormous amount of concentration but most importantly, discipline. This, in short, calls for practice, just like a good football player. Someone like Ronaldo must have practiced different shots tens of thousands of times! Third, an academic must ask questions, but respectfully. This is her only way to *know*. For this one may have to transgress ‘boundaries’ like asking question to teachers. But the skill of asking questions does not come easily. Formulating a question in a formal setting is not easy, unlike when one is sitting among friends. This requires confidence that comes only with regular writing.

**1.2.2.** No academic should say anything on which s/he has not researched. We need to resist the temptation of making comments on anything and everything in the world. Of course, it requires some courage to state that “I do not know”. But this is not the lack of strength but just academic humility. Further, a good academic will not make personal attacks. One may criticize the views of the person, but not the person himself or herself. Academic ethics warrants this.

**1.2.3.** We often need to remind ourselves about the audience, for whom we are writing. Journalists or novelists have a different kind of audience than academics, for example. Even otherwise, good writers often follow a two stage process. First s/he writes her/his own thoughts, when audience is zero. Knowing a matter clearly will allow the author to express the thoughts clearly. Only after this stage, one should address the question: whom to write for? To Savyasaachi, one can write just to clarify one's own voice, like him. For him, the motivation does not come from whether the audience is interested or not. It comes from the fascination around some ideas. Even if no one is to read his work it does not bother him. In this context he gave an example of a piece on the difference between H<sub>2</sub>O and water—most people found it to be crazy. While the difference was obvious for him, he had to spend a lot of time on finding the right words for conceptual vocabulary. First, he wrote his own thoughts and tried to find the simplest conceptual vocabulary to express them. It was written for anyone who is interested, but he did not 'make it easy' for the lazy reader (who does not want to think) by diluting the rigour of his conceptual vocabulary. It was published in the Review of Environment and Development in *EPW*.



**1.2.4.** It is important to be mindful of the vocabulary of one's own discipline, Savyasaachi added. Many hundreds of years have been spent to build this. In case the author does not respect this, but take the words given by the State or the market discourses or multinationals, it is just unacceptable. Of course the vocabulary changes over time, as it should. But this process does not borrow words from discourses that have nothing to do with the discipline in question. Marketing or policy, for example, requires a different vocabulary. One can understand policy without vocabulary but to understand the academic discourse, a firm grip over vocabulary is necessary. Consider this example: can globalisation be the title of a course in a programme offered by a Department of Sociology? This term comes from a different discourse involving Bretton Woods institutions like WTO, but in Sociology, this matter is covered by World Systems of Wallerstein.

**1.2.5.** Next important thing in academic writing, to Savyasaachi, is transparency. One must write in such a way that it contains all the information required for the reader to arrive at a conclusion. Footnotes are useful in this regard and so is the bibliography. In short, the reader should be able to understand the work without talking to the author. Transparency also warrants due acknowledgements and appropriate attributions. This can include the conversations on the streets even, if the author gets the idea from there. Only being transparent one can be ethical. The other ethical aspect is to share one's own ideas. This takes place through processes such as discussion, conversations and writing. One example is presenting one's own thoughts in seminars and conferences to receive feedback. These improve the academic rigour of one's own writing.

**1.2.6.** Institutional time and academic time sometimes do not talk to each other. Regulations may warrant finishing a Ph.D. in five years but academic rigour may ask for more time. One way is to break down a bigger idea into smaller doable pieces and not to compromise on the academic rigour. Time is important but one should not cut corners.

**1.2.7.** Academic writing also promotes a reasoned way to thinking. We should be reasonable in what we say and should abide by the dictates of something called reason, Savyasaachi said. What the reason constitutes of is a big question, of course. But a short answer is we should not promote anything that is outside of what we understand as reasonable (it is like defining justice by saying what is devoid of injustice). For example, someone saying that person X said so and hence it is right is not reasonable. Everything should be scrutinised. We must be able to understand the underlying structures that made a particular thought possible. It is important to promote reason in all walks of life. Be it regression, or fieldwork, it must follow reason. No false belief, no superstition, no loose talks, no opinions but only reason based arguments. An author should always remind her/himself the very reason for writing.

**1.2.8.** Nawn in his introductory remarks clarified that this CBP is *not* a programme on research methodology and is agnostic to both discipline and research-ideology. It is more to do with *doing* research, releasing the work or even publishing them. He provided an overview of the entire programme which is divided into four sections (see below).



**1.2.9.** He started with proposal writing (top right box). He emphasised that the rigour that is required for this is different from the one for writing. What the funders may be looking for or even be appealing to them is different from what may attract a general reader. Taking a cue from the previous speaker, he said that while it may be perfectly fine to write for oneself, but the funder may not be interested in it! She may be interested in some themes included in the Call for Proposals (CfP). Even within the themes, there may be specific aspects. The author of a proposal must know exactly what is being asked. Reading between the lines of the CfP assumes most importance in this regard.

**1.2.10.** At the same, there are some common aspects in every proposal, be it funded or otherwise, such as, study goals, data sources, tools of analysis, etc., Nawn pointed out. Some proposals may even need a logical framework (LogFrame) matrix — it provides a synoptic view of what one intends to do. Dividing sponsored research into two types, a theoretical/ empirical matter and an action-research, he stated that LogFrame matrix is most applicable to the latter type. It is even



more apt in case the funding agency is in the ‘development sector’ such as UNDP, UNEP, USAID, among others. In case it is a purely theoretical or even empirical one (he referred to the H<sub>2</sub>O and water work referred to by the previous speaker), LogFrame matrix is surely not applicable — nor will any agency be interested to fund it! It follows that in case the author is interested to pursue one’s own ideas, it is better to forget responding to a CfP for funded research. In case you or your organisation is keen to get funds for research, you need to narrow down, if not identify the research problem that will be appealing to the funding agency, he cautioned. Not every research problem will be appealing to a funding agency, he concluded.

**1.2.11.** He echoed the previous speaker on the matter of splitting big ideas into smaller parts. His advice was to select those parts that may be of interest to a funding agency and write a research proposal *only* on that aspect, and not on the big idea. However, in case one does get funding for research, one must be aware of the accountability and transparency requirements. One example is submission of quarterly progress report, which is most common across agencies. It often involves a lot of time. One has to write a report for a sponsored project as well — its structure, form and content are different from the proposal or a journal research article. In short, there is a trade-off: if one is aiming at a sponsored project, some amount of academic time will be taken for meeting the institutional requirements. Further, he pointed to the calls for multi-author and multi-institutional project proposals by most (at least international) funding agencies — coordination involves more time for everyone! This — ‘transaction costs’ in the language of economics — at times can be prohibitively high, he warned. It is a fact that in case one is inclined to get funded through a sponsored project, one must have her of his own social standing/ academic credibility or/ and located in an organisation of academic standing (such as JMI with 3<sup>rd</sup> rank in NIRF). Researchers may note that UGC has stopped awarding grants for major research projects, he informed the audience.

**1.2.12.** Subsequently he provided a detailed overview of the (top left) components of Academic Writing and Expressing. He said that it shall be assumed that once an author has reached this stage, by sponsored project or otherwise, s/he has already collected information, data or knowledge and also processed them following an (or a set of) accepted research method(s). In short, in this stage one is expressing the processed information, through words or display items, or/ and presenting them. At times one’s articulation or even command over English language may make the author hesitate to express oneself in the written form. But one may be more comfortable through oral medium, say, a podcast. Whatever be the case, the author must express, within or outside of academic space. He informed that *this* CBP will offer an exposure to multiple avenues, from Op-Eds to online mediums, from different sections in a journal to avenues outside of the academia.

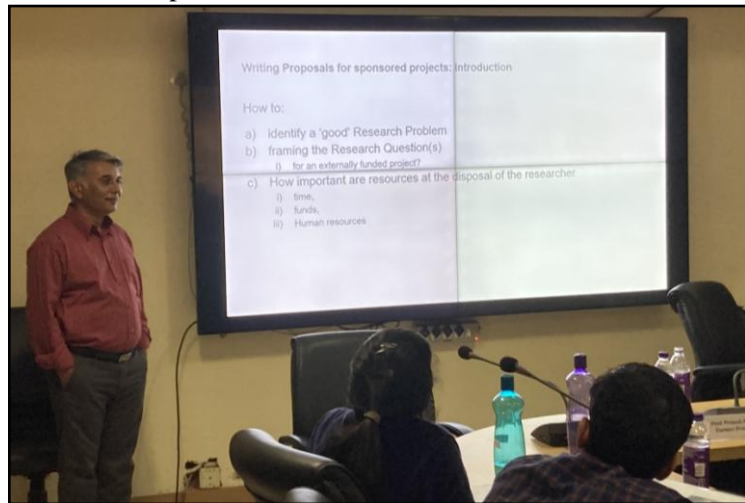
**1.2.13.** After detailing certain aspects of third component, namely, research, writing and publication ethics (lower-left), he reemphasised that there exists multiple avenues to express one’s thoughts other than a ‘research paper’ in a journal. The point is to keep writing: unless one writes, one’s ability to improve writing to make it attractive or appealing will not be augmented. On the matter of writing multiple drafts, he suggested that it may be a good practice to distance oneself for some time from the work and then read it as a reader or even a reviewer.

### **Sessions 1.3 and 1.4: Writing Proposals for Sponsored Projects: an introduction and Writing components of a Proposal: Study Goals, Objective and Expected Outcomes**

**Resource Person:** [Pranab Mukhopadhyay](#) (Goa University and INSEE)

**1.3.1.** Mukhopadhyay began with a trajectory of modes or avenues of publication over the years. Earlier, edited books were written once the authors established a certain level of credibility among the peers. Things have changed over the years, for multiple reasons. One is the many requirements for teaching and research as per the evolving policy framework, including but not limited to the New Education Policy, 2020. The other is mushrooming of predatory journals. In fact, this may be the reason behind the recent change announced by the UGC removing the provision requiring publication (at least acceptance) of one paper in a UGC CARE listed journal before submission of Ph.D. thesis. Notwithstanding this change, however, all academics need to publish to ensure career advancement. One of the objectives of *this* CBP is to facilitate this, he added.

**1.3.2.** To elaborate further, he provided a brief history of South Asian Network for Development and Environmental Economics (SANDEE) as a parallel. Towards the end of last millennium — when SANDEE was founded almost at the same time as INSEE — the founders, namely (late) Karl-Göran Mäler and Sir Partha Dasgupta noticed that publications from South Asia in environmental economics (or for that matter, even economics) were relatively small, given the number of academics. They realised that giving grants may facilitate it, but UGC or ICSSR were already sponsoring major and minor research projects. Such research was not being translated into publications, at least in Scopus indexed journals. This led to conceiving Research and Training workshops to help the participants to prepare a proposal for grants. Subsequently, the successful grantees received funds for travel, data collection, etc. It may be noted that the institutions with which the participants are engaged, usually do not have provisions for giving grants for conducting research. Even UGC or ICSSR scholarships usually do not cover a separate head for collecting data or tools for conducting analysis. In Europe or USA, the system works a little differently. Advertisement for recruiting a Ph.D. against a scholarship is not uncommon. In such cases the Principal Investigator of a ‘sponsored project’ while submitting the proposal includes a provision for such appointments.



**1.3.3.** Next, Mukhopadhyay pointed at the ‘disciplinary requirements’ across modes to publish: some consider *only* books to be the worthy while some others consider *only* journals. This disciplinary divide notwithstanding, the UGC system of Academic Progress Indicators (API) awards higher points to articles in journals, in contrast to books or edited books. One reason could be the difference in the process of review, he opined: every research article published in a Scopus or Web of Science (WoS) indexed journal will be reviewed and approved by at least two reviewers outside of the editorial board of the journal besides the editor and handling/associate editor in the journal. Further, while some type of research may involve mostly thinking (say, philosophy, theoretical economics), some others (say, empirical sociology, natural sciences) requires field or laboratory based work — the latter requires funds. May be due to this reason, while it is rare to find a book written by two philosophers, it is not uncommon to find articles by 10 or more authors in natural sciences. The progress in the latter is so fast that the authors may not have the time to write a whole book — may be by the time the work is published, it could be irrelevant. Hence one finds short communications in natural science journals, including *Science* and *Nature*. In those journals, the turnaround time for the first decision can be as low as 48 hours. In contrast, in Social Sciences, it can be as much as one year. But it does not indicate that the quality of the ‘peer review’ is compromised in natural science journals. Most natural science journals, in their website, will provide information on journal metric, like, time for first decision, average time to publish, acceptance rate, whether Scopus or WoS indexed and a variety of impact factors (‘impact factor’ is a trademark of Clarivate). The last assumes some importance. It sends an important signal to the prospective good authors. Good journals need good authors, and vice versa.

**1.4.1.** Subsequently, Mukhopadhyay provided an overview of reports that reviewed the social science research in India. For example, India Council of Social Science Research Review Committee Report by Malcolm Adiseshiah (1973: ICSSR), ‘Reflections on Social Science Research in India’ by P C Joshi (1975; *Sociological Bulletin*, Vol. 24, Issue 2), Social Science Research in India A Mapping Report by DFID South Asia Research Hub (2011), *Social Science Research in India: Status, Issues and Policies* edited by Sukhadeo Thorat and Samar Verma (2017; OUP), among others. He pointed that ‘Bibliometrics of social science and humanities research in



India’ by M Tripathi, S Kumar and P Babbar (2018; *Current Science*, 11) shows a change in the percentage of publications across categories such as articles (62% to 82%) and book reviews (31% to 16%) between 2005 and 2014. The reason is obvious to him — the higher education system has assigned more ‘value’ on the research articles. The paper also shows that the mean number of times that top 8 Indian Social Science journals have been cited per year vary between to be 0.0-0.6. Certainly, this points at some quality issues, one being predatory journals. He referred to ‘UGC-CARE initiative to promote research quality, integrity and publication ethics’ by Bhushan Patwardhan and Archana Thakur (2019; *Current Science*, Vol. 117, No. 6). Among other things, the article pointed that predation and deception in scientific publishing has assumed pandemic proportions. This lack of credibility is addressed by lists such as Scopus or Web of Science. By default, all such journals are included in UGC-CARE list. One must note an exception here: of EPW. It became a part of Scopus very recently, but it enjoyed the same credibility even before. In short, either a journal that has built reputation over time or those that are included in lists such as Scopus or WoS should be the preferred avenues for publishing journal articles.

**1.4.2.** Mukhopadhyay advised prospective authors to note the elements of the most common structure of a research paper in a journal, known by its acronym, IMRAD: I-Introduction; M-Materials and Methods; R-Results; A-Analysis; D-Discussions. He suggested looking at the list of journals included in the reference list accompanying the literature review to identify potential journals where one can submit the article for publication.

**1.4.3.** He advised spending some time on framing the title as it is the first thing which editors and reviewers may notice. He explained the features of a good title and the matters to be kept in mind — precision, for example — while framing it.



## Week 1, Day 2: 02.12.2022

### Speaker Quotes:

“Research Question is the only clincher in proposal writing”.

“An extensively used dataset but with improved techniques or methodologies makes it viable enough for doing further research”.

—**Prof. Pranab Mukhopadhyay**, Former President, INSEE, and Professor of Economics and Vice-Dean (Research), Goa Business School, Goa University

“Economise your words while doing academic writing”.

—**Prof. Nandan Nawn**, Programme Director, Professor, Department of Economics, JMI, Former Secretary, INSEE and Member, Biodiversity Collaborative

“Collaboration, coproduction and interdisciplinarity allows for the production of high impact knowledge”.

“Numerous types of barriers exist to collaborative writing”.

—**Prof. Uma Ramakrishnan**, Professor, NCBS-TIFR and Member, Biodiversity Collaborative

“There are no standard benchmarks followed in writing reports”.

“To fail to prepare is to prepare to fail”.

“Objective is not what you intend to write but what you intend to achieve”.

—**Dr. Chander Kumar Singh**, Associate Professor, TERI School of Advanced Studies

**Narrative**

**Session 2.1: Writing components of a Proposal: Research Methods, Data/sources, Tools of Analysis**

**Resource Person:** [Pranab Mukhopadhyay](#) (Goa University and INSEE)

**2.1.1.** The most universal advice on writing a successful grant proposal is to present a well written, focused solution to a problem in a logical progression — on this note, Mukhopadhyay began this session. He shared some of the rudimentary aspects of a proposal for sponsored research (below).

<p><b>Title Page</b> Includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the title,</li> <li>• duration of the project,</li> <li>• amount requested (with currency),</li> <li>• name and address of the PI and institutional contact (in most cases, the Registrar).</li> </ul> <p>[Keep it short and concentrate on the essentials.]</p>	<p><b>Abstract or Proposal Summary</b> Describes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• objectives,</li> <li>• methodology,</li> <li>• significance of the proposed project.</li> </ul> <p>[This is a standalone item providing a first impression of the request. There can be word/character limits against each head.]</p>
<p><b>Introduction</b> Should specifically and concisely state why the proposed research is important. [Avoid confounding and technical language. The reviewer may not always be from the same field. Most often, one of the reviewers will be a general manager from the funding agency. Clear communication is most necessary here.]</p>	<p><b>Description of the Project</b> Describe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• specific aims,</li> <li>• goals,</li> <li>• methodology,</li> <li>• each PI's role in carrying out the proposed activities.</li> </ul> <p>[Proposals with interdisciplinary outlook and a team with members from different disciplines often get priority even for the identical proposal. Some agencies have already made it mandatory.]</p>
<p><b>Bibliography</b> Should list references cited in the body of the proposal.</p>	<p><b>CV/Biographical Sketch</b> All key persons likely to be involved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• current designation (location),</li> <li>• background (typically, from UG),</li> <li>• professional interests (member of any learned society portraying commitment to the area of the proposal),</li> <li>• research expertise and publications especially on the topic being proposed.</li> </ul> <p>[Often there is a page limit on CV.]</p>
<p><b>Budget and Budget Justification</b> Should reflect a reasonable estimate of expenses necessary to conduct the project. Most often no honorarium for employed PIs. Pay attention to the sub-heads; often the unspent funds in one sub-head cannot be shifted to some other sub-head. Even if it is allowed, it will be at most 10-15%. At times there are limits (in terms of maximum percentage of the total) on many sub-heads. [This information is considered only if the proposal has been shortlisted on the basis of academic merit.]</p>	<p><b>Facilities and Resources</b> What facilities does your institution have and you have access to — equipment, databases, computer labs, psychology labs, etc. [For example, access to the database, license to proprietary software, etc.]</p>
<p><b>Institutional Letter</b> A cover letter or endorsement form of approval of the application by Registrar.</p>	<p><b>Collaborating institutions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope of work,</li> <li>• Budget and justification,</li> <li>• Collaborating institutions' letter of support.</li> </ul> <p>[Important to have formal letters on commitment and rewards, and not just oral conversations. In case of multiple partners it is important that everyone is on the same page or responsibilities and rights — transparency is of paramount importance here.]</p>
<p>Source: <a href="https://your.yale.edu/research-support/office-sponsored-projects/proposals/components-proposal">https://your.yale.edu/research-support/office-sponsored-projects/proposals/components-proposal</a></p>	

At times, agencies ask for a concept note first, and only those that are shortlisted, move to the next level, when a full research proposal is called for. SANDEE follows this. Also, proposals need clearance from the ‘institutional ethics committee’. Most journals ask for this approval these days.

Some funding agencies like SICI provides seed grant to Indian researchers for developing proposals in collaboration with a Canadian partner. ECRC in UK also provides seed grant. UGC started providing seed money to newly recruited faculty members in Central and State Universities (at Assistant Professor level).

In many universities abroad, there are separate divisions preparing and handling all budget related matters, leaving the researchers to concentrate on the academic part of research. In India, there are not many Universities with such facilities. May be IITs, IIMs and ICSSR institutes have this.

Agencies gives preference to those who are already doing interesting work, and have the capability to undertake the tasks included in the proposal. This may mean individual and/ or institutional capability or even the research team. <https://www.serbonline.in/SERB/HomePage> and [https://cepi.net/get\\_involved/cfps/](https://cepi.net/get_involved/cfps/) are useful sites to understand the requirements for funded research.



**2.1.2.** Subsequently, he elaborated on ‘effective proposal writing’. To him, the following attributes makes a good proposal:

- A new idea, well articulated:
  - A clearly defined question
- ‘Brief’ discussion of the ‘relevant’ literature
- Methodology:
  - Theoretical framework,
  - Empirical Issues: data availability, models to analyse the data
- Policy implications, if any?
- It should make the reviewer want to read it (*interesting*)
- It has a clear question (*sharp*)
- It has a convincing research method (*logical*)

His advice was to narrow down from area of interest from research theme to research question.

**2.1.3.** To him, literature survey should be used to explain the proposer’s research. It should show

- Why your research needs to be carried out,
- How you came to choose certain *methodologies* or *theories* to work with,
- How your work *adds* to the research already carried out, etc.

[Source: <http://www.experiment-resources.com/what-is-a-literature-review.html#ixzz1FHVzM1rt>]

Another use of the literature survey could be to use it as the ‘proof of your work’. Using it, one can (a) ‘prove’ that your work is important, (b) working in a new area of your field, (c) not repeating work that someone else has done, and (d) your methods are appropriate for the questions and theories that you seek to study.

[Source: [http://www.comp.dit.ie/dgordon/lectures/Research\\_Methods/Research\\_Methods4.htm](http://www.comp.dit.ie/dgordon/lectures/Research_Methods/Research_Methods4.htm)]

**2.1.4.** Next, he identified a few questions that constitute the ‘reviewer’s checklist’ to elaborate on the importance of literature survey in gaining confidence of the reviewer:

- Has the researcher established why this study is important?

- Have the gaps in literature been identified?
- Is the literature review just a list of studies?
- Have studies been compared and contrasted?
- Have methods in other studies been examined?
- Is it a repeat or “cut and paste” of others’ work?
- Have the key papers been included?
- Is it an ‘own’ literature review aimed at supporting the present research, rather than just being ‘a’ review of ‘the’ literature?

On the last point his advice was to be careful in not including irrelevant literature. No words are ignored by the reviewer, and if s/he is annoyed enough, the remaining text may not even be read, he warned.

To elaborate further, he advised that references are to be identified to bolster key messages such as those that support the claims (on policy) that proposal focuses on. Further, it may be a good idea to provide evidence of how others have undertaken similar studies. This will convey the proposer’s command over the specific research area. Towards this end, he suggested covering each methodological issue separately, linking own prior work or the proposal itself with work by others, besides including studies from within and outside the region/ spatial area of the proposal.

**2.1.5.** To Mukhopadhyay, the research question is the only clincher which makes a proposal to stand out. To him, it is the research question that dictates both the relevant literature and the proposed research method and analysis.



He suggested asking simple and relevant questions. He presented a few examples: (a) What are the benefits of mangrove preservation? (b) Have NREGA funds been effective in building mountain infrastructure? (c) Have power subsidies been beneficial in improving agrarian productivity? (d) Is indoor air pollution contributing to a decline in tea labour productivity? (e) Why do some households to adopt clean stoves while others do not?

Each of the examples makes it clear for which stakeholder the question is relevant. The next step for the researcher is to find out whether this question has it already been studied? The literature survey should address it.

**2.1.6.** He shared some links to understand how to write effective proposals:

- <https://file.pide.org.pk/pdfseminar/seminar-2012-22-writing-an-effective-proposal.pdf>
- <https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/handle/10625/19905/IDL-19905.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

**2.1.7.** To understand how the reviewers ‘see’ the proposals, he shared a table (below) on ‘award criteria’ used by one funding agency.

Qualitative award criteria	Points
<b>1. The clarity of the proposal as assessed by the precision with which:</b>	<b>30</b>
(i) it explains how the research topic will be addressed,	10
(ii) it discusses the theoretical and empirical techniques that will be used to analyze specific issues,	10
(iii) it explains the policy relevance of this analysis	10



**2. The quality of the proposal as measured by:** 70

- (i) its potential to provide robust economic analysis that offers value-added vis-à-vis the existing academic literature on the subject field. 25
- (ii) the comprehensiveness of the proposal to address the research topic 20
- (iii) the potential of the proposal to provide new insights on highly pertinent policy issues specific to the research topic 25

**Total points** 100

[Source:[http://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/procurement\\_grants/procurement/calls\\_for\\_tender/callfortenders-2012\\_b\\_006\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/procurement_grants/procurement/calls_for_tender/callfortenders-2012_b_006_en.htm)]

**Session 2.2: Linking different components of a proposal: the Logical Framework matrix for an action-research proposal**



**Resource Person:** [Nandan Nawn](#) (JMI, INSEE, and Biodiversity Collaborative)

**2.2.1.** Nawn started the session on the need for preciseness in the research question in the sponsored projects that are in the ‘action-research’ domain. Likewise, objectives must show the exact things that will be achieved by the project, he said. Funding of the projects is decided upon on the basis of their objectives (among other things). Good objectives must be S.M.A.R.T.: Specific (devoid of ambiguity), Measurable (quantifiable), Achievable (attainable), Realistic (reasonable), and Time-bound (specified period for achievement).

**2.2.2.** He elaborated on the aspect of preciseness — the opposite of ambiguity — through two commonly used phrases in economics: efficiency and productivity. Without specifying the ‘prefix’, namely, Pareto, energy, technical, allocative or productive (among others), the term efficiency remains imprecise. Similarly, unless one defines whether it is productivity of labour or land, the research question remains vague. In short, possibilities of interpretation by the reader or reviewer should be minimised. On the question of measurability, he emphasized that this includes qualitative data also, such as gender distribution in a class. This is connected to the next requirement, namely, attainability, as funding agency will be interested to validate the result. It follows that the agency will prioritise such proposals that are more ‘reasonable’ or do-able in terms of the given time period, the final two requirements. On the question of time-bound, he advised using programme evaluation and review technique (PERT) charts that schedule, organize and coordinate tasks in the project.

**2.2.3.** Next he referred to an Office Memorandum by Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, Government of India (No. 24(35)/PF-II/2012 dated 05 August, 2016) with ‘Appraisal and Approval of Public Funded Schemes and Projects’ as the subject matter (link: <https://archive.pib.gov.in/documents/rlink/2016/aug/p201681001.pdf>) to show that even the objectives of public projects must satisfy the requirement of S.M.A.R.T. In his opinion, there is a similarity between funding agencies choosing the best proposals for research and the Council of Ministers choosing the most convincing Detailed Project Report (DPR) — the criteria is almost the same, i.e. preciseness and tractability. He used a DPR template (Link: [https://www.meity.gov.in/writereaddata/files/DPR\\_template\\_World\\_Bank\\_assisted\\_project\\_0.pdf](https://www.meity.gov.in/writereaddata/files/DPR_template_World_Bank_assisted_project_0.pdf)) to show the uses of a Logical Framework (LogFrame) Matrix.



Logical Framework Matrix vis-a-vis Supervisory roles of RBI (integration of climate and environmental risk in the institutional framework only for banking)			
Goal			
Narrative Summary	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Decreased Vulnerability/ Improved Resilience of Financial System (banking only) vis-à-vis shocks owing to disruption in Nature (both Climate and Environment Risks)	A fall in stranded/ lost assets in the accounts books of supervised entities (over time), due to exposure to CER (in addition to shocks from extreme weather events).	Accounts books of supervised entities by D/o of Supervision for its functions such as “Oversight on the safety and soundness of the Supervised Entities (SEs) including review of their solvency position and their regulatory compliance status within the provisions of relevant statutes” and “Off-site monitoring of SEs”	Willingness on the part of responsible departments in RBI to make necessary addition/ modification in the Accounts books’ templates to capture number of and amounts (in INR) connected with stranded / lost assets owing to exposure of CER (of varying intensity).

2.2.4. He used a complete LogFrame Matrix from his report submitted to and accepted by Reserve Bank of India, titled ‘‘Adaptations’ and ‘Mitigations’ in the Institutional Framework Governing Banking in India in Response to Disruptions in Nature: selected issues’. He showed its core components and significance. Usefulness of a LogFrame matrix to tell a precise story with specific goals, objectives, activity, output, and outcomes was illustrated. He pointed at the importance of preciseness while filling up the various cells, while keeping in mind the two fundamental requirements: horizontal consistency and vertical logic. He emphasized on using a language that is accessible. After all, it is not necessary for all officers in RBI to understand and know economics! As a follow up, he referred to Output Outcome Framework 2020-21 for Major central sector & centrally sponsored schemes (Link: [https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/budget2020-21/doc/OutcomeBudgetE2020\\_2021.pdf](https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/budget2020-21/doc/OutcomeBudgetE2020_2021.pdf)) to showcase the importance of preciseness even for

Output			
Narrative Summary	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Development of database towards assessing Climate and Environmental Risks (CER) at the level of assets of supervised entities (existing and potential).</li> <li>2. Capacity building at the level of RBI (including interns through the existing schemes) and supervised entities to access, analysis and interpret contents of the database for assessment of risks.</li> <li>3. Publication of results of stress tests.</li> <li>4. Advisories on considering CER in financial decisions, from RBI, for supervised entities, borrowers and lenders.</li> <li>5. Minutes of meetings with other government departments/ line ministries to reduce the stress owing to climate and environment risks.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Validated and verified Database to assess CER and its impact on the stability of the banking ecosystem.</li> <li>2. No of trained personnel at RBI offices and supervised entities on CER matters.</li> <li>3. News items, newspaper articles, journal papers, TV programmes and other such carrying results of stress tests and other such actions on the part of RBI to reduce vulnerabilities of the banking ecosystem from CER.</li> <li>4. Actions on the part of line ministries towards restoration of Nature, energy transition and other such that leads to improved resilience of the banking ecosystem against CER.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use of database created by RBI to address vulnerabilities from CER.</li> <li>2. Feedback from the users and customers at RBI officers and supervised entities on the knowledge and capabilities of the concerned personnel to understand CER and quality of advice offered.</li> <li>3. List of media reports maintained on RBI website.</li> <li>4. Improved biophysical indicators over time that reduces CER for banking ecosystem.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Willingness on the part of RBI (and line ministries sharing the datasets) to make the database accessible by supervised entities.</li> <li>2. Willingness on the part of the users and customers to share feedback on quality of advice.</li> <li>3. Willingness on the part of the line ministries to take actions on the ground to improve climatic and environmental variables (in line with global commitments made by India) towards reduction of CER.</li> </ol>

performance of government funded interventions in terms of indicators for outputs and outcomes (below). He informed that these indicators may have been picked up from the DPR of the corresponding scheme. He alerted the participants that it takes a lot of time to prepare a LogFrame matrix but it is worth doing, to gain clarity.

**2.2.5.** In the final component, participants were encouraged to frame a log-frame matrix using the text of an UN declaration as a hands-on exercise.

1. Crop Insurance Scheme - Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (CS)						
FINANCIAL OUTLAY (Rs in Cr)	OUTPUTS 2020-21			OUTCOMES 2020-21		
2020-21	Output	Indicators	Targets 2020-21	Outcome	Indicators	Targets 2020-21
15695.00	1. Increase in coverage	1.1. Increase in loanee applications (%)	10%	1. Better Risk Minimization for farmers covered	1.1. Incremental sum insured (%)	10%
		1.2. Increase in non-loanee applications (%)	10%		2. Timely processing and settlement of claims	2.1. Number of farmers covered who received claimed benefits (%)
		1.3. Increase in coverage of cropped area/ insured area over cropped area (%)	10% <sup>2</sup>	2.2. Farmers with claim payable who received benefits (%)		80% <sup>1</sup>
	2. Efficient claims processing mechanism of the agriculture insurance firms	2.1. Claims payable in notified unit areas (%)	80% <sup>1</sup>	2.3. Loss cost ratio in % (claims payable / Sum insured)	10% <sup>1</sup>	
		2.2. Average turn-around time for claim payment in days (from field data submission by states till claims paid)	30			

**Session 2.3: Multi-author and multi-institutional proposals: how to overcome the challenges**

**Resource Person:** [Uma Ramakrishnan](#) (NCBS-TIFR and Biodiversity Collaborative)

**2.3.1.** Academics always want to pursue their ‘own’ research, and she was no exception — on this personal note Ramakrishnan started her lecture. The reason, she said, is obvious: to improve the CV by distinguishing oneself from others in today’s competitive world. The most common way is through publishing papers. But this may not be easy — to find something new can be overwhelming given that so many researchers are engaged with the same pursuit. At the same time scholars in India or the global South may have a distinct disadvantage — limited access to quality (prior) work to check redundancy of the proposed work and data required to pursue the work.

**2.3.2.** A desire to publish not just any work but those with high impacts is common among academics these days, she said. In today’s world, it may be unusual for an ‘armchair’ academic to publish such. After all, work(s) focussing on a common (if not global) problem facing the society has the largest potential to have a high impact. Climate change and biodiversity losses are examples of such problems. Work on these matters is not abstract in nature: they are most unlikely to be resolved by a series of equations, for example.

**2.3.3.** It is true that scientists like Darwin or Newton worked in isolation for many years and produced path breaking work(s). Even today there can be exceptionally brilliant scientists producing abstract work of high quality involving thinking mostly. Examples include development of frameworks in any discipline. But in case someone wants to ensure a high impact (not just high quality), it is necessary to focus on something ‘current’, i.e. of immediate value to the society. These are the ones that are being reported in newspapers on a daily basis. These works warrant an engagement that is inter-disciplinary and collaborative in nature. Ramakrishnan referred to some examples from her own work on biodiversity in the North-east India that required extensive fieldwork besides arranging the funds. The other reason warranting collaboration, in her opinion, originates from the demands made by the system on academics — of publishing in international journals — to ensure career progression of PIs and research assistants. This calls for having more general questions — not limited by space or scope. For this collaboration is a necessity.

**2.3.4.** There is a difference between interdisciplinary collaboration (say, between researchers with a specialisation in different disciplines such as sociology, biodiversity, quantitative statistics and

economics) and co-production of knowledge (between researchers with expertise on the same sub-discipline, say gene sequencing). A good example of the latter is a global study on poverty, where each researcher will bring data from different geographical areas. She asserted that collaboration, inter-disciplinarity and co-production of knowledge lead to higher impact knowledge.

**2.3.5.** To emphasise on the importance of collaboration to produce socially relevant works, she provided an example from her own laboratory, where gene sequences of tigers are analysed. One needs a machine to read the 2400 million letters of the entire sequence, a program to extract sets of letters, say, first 100 or the 50,000<sup>th</sup> one. It is not humanly possible to see the entire sequence! The other example was a study on world's big cats, where collaboration between researchers across spaces was a necessity. For example snow leopards live in one area, jaguars live in another, tigers live in even another, and so on. Even long-term studies require collaboration between different teams. Finally, for the uptake of the relevant knowledge, collaboration is necessary. However, due to political (and other) reasons, data sharing may not be possible always. This is one important barrier for a successful collaboration. Others include time zones, trust deficit and language.



**2.3.6.** She shared some interesting insights on the question of authorship. Many a times research involves engaging with the local field guides and recruiting research assistants. Their contribution is essential for carrying out the research, yet, as per the author's guidelines, they cannot be authors. But that does not mean that they do not exist — they are a part of the team. Ramakrishnan referred to one particular instance of Mujahid A Khan, a field guide in Rajasthan who knows tigers like none else. As the authorship guidelines prevented him to get an authorship in the research paper where he contributed, a novel way was found: illustrator and writers at Pratham Books conversed with him. His experience was captured in *Tiger, Tiger, Where Are You?* authored by Khan (<https://freekidsbooks.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/tiger-tiger-where-are-you-pratham-fkb.pdf>)

**2.3.7.** The final matter that she dealt revolved around an ethical issue on authorship in the context of research that necessarily involves many authors. One example is studies involving large data (say, involving 1 million human samples). Here, it is impossible to give authorship to all the contributors. A second one was on the question of whether to 'accommodate' 'silent' contributors by being 'generous' or be rather strict (and face consequences later). At times, an agreement on the extent of contributions and criteria to claim authorship may help but it may not work always, she asserted. In her concluding remarks, she mentioned that bringing people together and working with them always brings rich dividends in future.

## Session 2.4: Writing Reports for Sponsored Projects

**Resource Person:** [Chander Kumar Singh](#) (TERI School of Advanced Studies)

**2.4.1.** Singh started his lecture emphasising on the variety in the requirements of funding agencies on what are to be included in the final report, in terms of both content (what to write) and structure (template). To him, the former is more important. On the matter of template, he was of the opinion that there has been a convergence between funding agencies in and outside of India over time.

**2.4.2.** Writing papers and reports are different things in multiple ways, even length-wise, he said. On the question of 'effectiveness' of a research report he identified four characteristics: (a) focus, (b) accuracy of reporting data and findings, (c) clarity and (d) conciseness. First implies foregrounding of all the important information in the report. The second deals with how data is



represented. For example, all parameters must be mentioned and correctly stated; similarly, repetitive measurements are included and outliers, if any, are to be reported. On the question of clarity and conciseness he pointed at the difference between a progress report and final report. To him, it is the managers at the funding agency who usually looks at the former: mainly to check if the activities as included in the proposal have been carried out and also financial aspects. However, the academic matters such as results, findings and their interpretation are contained only in the final report and are evaluated by the external experts (usually academic). He alerted that there is a no guarantee that these experts will be from the exact sub-field in which the project is situated. This possibility is higher for inter-disciplinary projects. Further, the expert who reviewed the proposal may not review the final report. Finally, the manager at the funding agency may change over time. All these points to the requirements of utmost clarity and preciseness, quite similar to a research paper to be submitted to a journal that subjects submissions to reviews by peers.

**2.4.3.** Next, Singh mentioned the variety among the reports of sponsored projects such as Feasibility Study/ Report, Case Study, Recommendation Report, among others, besides the progress and final report. He categorised the reports into Informational (inform or present information, reader sees the details of events, activities or conditions but no analysis of the situation, conclusion, or recommendations), Analytical (written to solve problems, contains analysis of information, conclusions are drawn and recommendations are made) and Persuasive (an extension of analytical reports with a focus to sell an idea).



**2.4.4.** Subsequently he spoke on different components of the project report. On the ‘Project Summary’ his advise was to include what the project was all about in layperson’s terms. The reasons are multiple — much time may have been passed, project managers may have changed, many new projects may have been started, extensions may have been granted (say, due to Covid 19 or other such *force majeure* events) and so on. This section, to him, is similar to an abstract in a research paper: what did we do, how did we do, and why did we do it. Here it will be what were planned, how they were executed and what have been achieved. In terms of items, his advise was to include the following: (a) the main objectives of the project, (b) who were involved (single or multiple institutions), (c) what activities were conducted and where, (d) timescales of the project and (e) any highlights or memorable anecdotes. Of particular importance is the deviation, if any, from the proposal. It could be due to inaccessibility of the location for study due to reasons that cannot be predicted before (*force majeure*). Even if one has all the necessary permission, the person on the ground can refuse permission. In such cases, clear explanations are to be provided on how exactly these decisions were made. On this matter, his final advice was to remain positive throughout the grant report, notwithstanding the deviations. As there will be some deviations which are for the better and some which are for the worse, it may make sense to adopt a measured approach and discuss both. Transparency is the key here: its absence may result in being ‘blacklisted’ by the funding agency.

**2.4.5.** Singh discussed the key project indicators (KPIs) next. He explained a possibility when the KPIs defined in the proposal had to be redefined during the course of the study. He suggested

foregrounding such KPIs that are most aligned with the mandate of the funding agency. One useful way to do it is through demonstrating the impact of the project by taking a baseline ‘before’ and comparing it to an ‘after’ state against such KPIs. For example, if mandate of the agency is ‘assisting the community’, then the proposal should include activities such as communicating with the community. The funding agency may not be particularly interested to know what was done (or how it was done) inside the laboratory, etc to arrive at the knowledge to be communicated but what was the impact of the knowledge itself. Singh thinks that the importance of benefits to communities through the project is increasingly being foregrounded. He emphasised on being aware of not just the mandate of the funding agency but even the division which provides the grant. For example, Science for Equity Empowerment and Development (SEED) Division (earlier known as Science and Society Division) (link: <https://dst.gov.in/seed-home>) has a different mandate than its parent body, the Department of Science and Technology.

**2.4.6.** On the matter of costs and utilisation certificate, he mentioned that these days most funding agencies ask the organisation to start a separate bank account. Most times, the finance section of the host organisation is unwilling to do so. It may be a useful practice to keep all expenses on a spreadsheet and receipt of all expenses in scanned form at least.

**2.4.7.** Conclusion section of the report may include aspects such as key takeaways from the project and the next steps for the host organisation. Here, positive societal impact of the project (as a result of the funding) may be highlighted — this can connect the funding agency with the human elements of the project. It may be a good idea also to ‘thank’ the funders — this helps in building long term professional relationships.

**2.4.8.** Then, he shared some of the features from template of the National Science Foundation for project reporting (see, below). He mentioned that it is quite simple and specific in contrast to the requirements of many Indian funding agencies.

**What are the major goals of the project?**  
**What was accomplished under these goals (provide information for at least one of the 4 categories below)?**  
 Major Activities:  
 Specific Objectives:  
 Significant Results:  
 Key outcomes or other achievements:  
**What opportunities for training and professional development has the project provided?**  
**How have the results been disseminated to communities of interest?**  
**List any products resulting from your project during the specified reporting period, such as:**  
 Journals: Books: Book Chapters: Thesis/Dissertations: Conference Papers and Presentations: Other Publications:  
 Technologies or Techniques: Patents: Inventions: Licenses: Websites: Other Products:  
**What is the impact on the development of the principal discipline(s) of the project?**  
**What is the impact on other disciplines?**  
**What is the impact on the development of human resources?**  
**What is the impact on physical resources that form infrastructure?**  
**What is the impact on institutional resources that form infrastructure?**  
**What is the impact on information resources that form infrastructure?**  
**What is the impact on technology transfer?**  
**What is the impact on society beyond science and technology?**  
**Changes / Problems**  
 Changes in approach and reason for change:  
 Actual or Anticipated problems or delays and actions or plans to resolve them:  
 Changes that have a significant impact on expenditures:  
 Significant changes in use or care of human subjects, of vertebrate animals or of biohazards:  
 Has there been a change in your primary performance site location from the originally proposed? If so, please provide the location of your new primary performance site and reason for the change in location.  
 Source: Adapted from <https://www.research.gov/common/attachment/Desktop/NSF%20Project%20Report%20Template.pdf>

**2.4.9.** In his concluding remarks, Singh provided various tips to write a project proposal (including how to set the objectives) and how to write a report (including how to identify the possible audience, what are to be kept in mind while framing the title, structure, sections and subsections, table of contents, use of style guides, design of display items such as tables, maps and figures, among others).

## Week 1, Day 3: 03.12.2022

### Speaker Quotes:

“Having a puzzle in mind, and also creative madness are essential to carry out research”.

“A Ph.D. is not about similarities; it is all about differences”.

“Process of research is like filling holes on the wall of knowledge”.

“Earlier hands of people were cuffed but minds were free; now minds are cuffed and hands are free”.

“To compare x & y we must acknowledge both, admitting their peculiarities”.

— **Prof. Anup K Dhar**, (Formerly) Professor, Dr. B R Ambedkar University Delhi

“Graphics are relatively simple yet powerful tool for understanding data”.

“LaTeX helps you to make your academic documents more advanced and powerful”.

— **Prof. Vikram Dayal**, Professor and Head, IES Section, and Course Director, IES Training, Institute of Economic Growth and Member, INSEE

### Narrative

## Sessions 3.1 and 3.2: Organising and Presenting an Argument: a general introduction and Wordplay: how to attract a reader’s attention with words and phrases

**Resource Person:** [Anup K Dhar](#) (Formerly, Dr. B R Ambedkar University Delhi)



**3.1.1.** Dhar initiated with a question that all researchers face most often: “What you are working on?” This, he explained, can be best addressed through the research question: it should be an ‘unknown’ and contribute to the existing knowledge quite akin to filling the gaps in the ‘wall of knowledge’. Without the ‘unknown’ there cannot be any research, for Ph.D. or otherwise. Looking beneath the surface can help a researcher to find *his/her* unknown.

**3.1.2.** Next, he showed that unknown of one researcher is often connected with another — making the ‘search’ a continuous endeavour. He illustrated how Stephen Hawking developed his unknown from the work of Albert Einstein, and Sigmund Freud from Karl Marx’s.

**3.1.3.** To him, the entry point, or ‘object of enquiry’ is crucially important: it provides the ‘angle’ distinguishing the researcher from her/his predecessors. As an example, he explained how Karl Marx started his enquiry on commodity to understand the changes taking place in the sphere of production around him and traced it to the ‘secret abode of production’. This method of going backwards was picked up later by Sigmund Freud, to explain adult’s behaviour by looking at the childhood experience.

**3.1.4.** In Dhar’s opinion, Freud had a puzzle to solve: are dreams meaningful or just the ‘dustbin of the mind’ (as they used to be called then)? The first chapter of *Interpretation of Dreams* is a review of literature covering authors pointing to the uselessness of dreams. In other words, Freud did not try to find confirmatory research but exactly the opposite before proving them wrong. A review of literature, to Dhar, is to show the (present) author’s difference with the earlier authors.



This is not just a summary of work(s) but a ‘critical review’ that covers what others have said about the researcher’s unknown. This helps in framing the research question around the unknown using a lens that is different from others.



**3.2.1.** In the second session, Dhar continued with the question of locating the unknown by the researcher, with the use of a metaphor: how to define a table? For adults, it may be a flat surface supported by three or four legs. But for a toddler this may appear as a roof supported by four pillars. While for the adult it may be a place to keep the laptop, but for the infant it can be a place to hide, if not seeing the cobwebs in the roof and being fascinated by it. This is what a difference in angle does (above versus below, in this example) to allow one to see beyond the obvious, in Dhar’s opinion. He used this metaphor to argue that only by changing the angle one can see minoritisation, otherness, and exploitation, among others. This leads to a research question: how does the world look like when seen from below, say, from the lens of women, labour, dalits, minorities, etc. — which cannot be seen from above, using the mainstream ‘angle’. To him, research is to look for what one cannot see; using a different angle one can see the unseen or missing elements from the world that one sees—this can help one to frame the research question. This requires some ‘learning to learn from below’ however, he said.

**3.2.2.** Subsequently, Dhar problematised the phrases development, developing and under-development. He started with a quote by Amartya Sen (2004, ‘Chapter 2: The Possibility of Social Choice’ in *Rationality and Freedom*, Harvard University Press, p. 65): “A camel may not have the speed of a horse, but it is very useful and harmonious animal — well coordinated to travel long distances without food and water”. He argued that we need not look at the world through a horse, and the horse should not become the standard. It follows that camel is not a slow or a weak or a lacking horse, just like a woman is not a lacking man. By this logic, he argued that third world societies are not under-developed societies, but just differently developed — they do not lack development! They may have problems but so is the first world; for example, both first and third world have poor people.

**3.2.3.** Dhar advised ‘listening, communicating, and relating’ as a method, while using the different angle to understand and analyse the world. For this, he used the metaphor of a coconut tree and compared it with a banyan tree that is supported by prop-roots. To him, it is important to move from a linear, coconut tree like thinking (one tree, one stem, many branches) to a multi-dimensional, banyan tree like thinking (where prop roots become the main roots over a period of time). Each of the prop roots may tell a different story that needs to be understood in its own terms, and certainly not in comparison to the coconut tree. Seen in this way, banyan tree will not be seen as a lacking or a deficient coconut tree, but just a different tree. For any comparison between two entities, the first thing is to acknowledge their differences, he added. He emphasized on following a ‘Banyan tree approach’ to enquiries rather than a ‘coconut palm’ one where

categorization and hierarchies of superiority and inferiority takes place.

**3.2.4.** Next, Dhar focussed on the usage of words and how important words are in conveying meanings and explanations: words have politics, they have weights. Giving example of the word ‘underdeveloped’, he said it gives an image of backwardness, while in reality it is just *differently* developed. Subsequently, he explained the ‘weights’ of the commonly used prefix, pre-. To him, pre- signifies that the path is determined. For example, a society categorised as pre-capitalist implies that it is on the path to become capitalist. In reality, it can very well be a non-capitalist one, he said. The other usage of ‘pre’ is to connote primitive or not worthy — this results from the ‘coconut tree’ approach. As the final example, he explained the title of his own book *From Third World to World of the Third* illustrating the difference between a space and the transitions taking place in someone’s or something’s world, captured just by the change in the order of words. His concluding advice was to seek ‘decolonisation of the mind’ that requires a *swaraj* in ideas. Only then one can be a *satyagrahi*, someone with an *agraha* (interest to pursue) in *satya* (truth) — this will ensure an original research question, for sure.

### Sessions 3.3 and 3.4: Using R Studio for display items, documents and reproducibility I & II (hands on)

**Resource Person:** [Vikram Dayal](#) (Institute of Economic Growth and INSEE)

**3.3.1.** Graphs can help one to communicate data — Dayal started the session on this note. This can also be helpful in creating ‘media’ items that may be read by a larger audience who may not be much interested to read the text in the research paper. In fact, it can communicate the contents of the mathematics models better — graphs are easier to follow and understand. At the same time graphs are ‘low tech’ and there are fewer assumptions.



**3.3.2.** Dayal referred to the description of *Exploratory Data Analysis* by John Wilder Tukey (1977, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, link: <https://www.worldcat.org/title/03058187>): “This book is about exploring data.... about looking at data to see what it seems to say” to point out that one must be sure about the interpretation.

**3.3.3.** Subsequently, he showed a number of examples of graphs using R studio to explain the need and advantage of presenting data in graphical methods since it is relatively simple and quite a powerful tool for clearer understanding. Quoting Andrew Gelman and Jennifer Hill, he said that graphics are mainly used for (a) display of raw data, (b) graphs of fitted models and inferences and (c) for presenting final results. Later he explained the properties of basic graphs like line graph, distribution graph and scatter-plots including its peculiarities. He advised using `<ggplot2>` package in R studio for making graphs, as “it implements the grammar of graphics using a coherent system for describing and building graphs”.

**3.3.4.** In the hands-on session, Dayal demonstrated how to import external and inbuilt datasets to the workspace of R and using it for creating varieties of graphics. With help of `<deplyr>` and `<gcookbook>` packages in R, he explained how to create graphs, change colours and filling and other functionalities for improving the visual/ aesthetic appeal. He also pointed that graph plays a



significant role in data journalism and blog. With examples from the work of eminent scholar's like Acemoglu and Robinson he showed how such graphs are created. He concluded the session by introducing LaTeX, which can be creatively used to generate sophisticated academic work.

**3.3.5.** He shared links to the following freely accessible resources on the internet: (a) the R graphics cookbook <https://r-graphics.org/> and (b) R for data science <https://r4ds.had.co.nz/>. In addition, he shared the links to the following resources to understand the link between data, codes to represent them, and the final output: (c) a general video on using R for environmental economics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yj6h0-iLm6s>, (d) accompanying paper: [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3978880](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3978880), (e) accompanying code on GitHub repository: <https://github.com/rahuln13/R-for-Environmental-Economics>, (f) datasets used in the paper: (i) section 3: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0231931.s006>; (ii) section 4: <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/FORDEN>



## Week 1, Day 4: 05.12.2022

### Speaker Quotes:

“As a research scholar, you should try to express what you already know about the topic rather than what others have said”.

“The researcher should depend on her/his own reason and legitimacy rather than adopting authority from others”.

— **Prof. Savyasaachi**, Programme Co-Director and (former) Professor, Department of Sociology, JMI

“Depending on the word limit imposed by the particular journal, the format for writing abstracts will vary”.

“Every abstract should begin with the research gap, followed by the conclusion, implications, and, if applicable, suggestions”.

— **Mr. Surit Das**, Freelance Editor

“A proper framework is necessary to get better clarity on what the researcher wants to do within certain boundaries and without any deviation from the main topic”.

“The frameworks are most general, and the models are most specific”.

— **Prof. Nandan Nawn**, Programme Director, Professor, Department of Economics, JMI, Former Secretary, INSEE and Member, Biodiversity Collaborative

“Present the data in line with the audience for whom the study is intended”.

— **Dr. Chander Kumar Singh**, Associate Professor, TERI School of Advanced Studies

“Clarity in language only comes from clarity of thought”.

— **Dr. Ravi Chellam**, CEO, Metastring Foundation and Coordinator, Biodiversity Collaborative



## Narrative:

### Session 4.1: Structure and Form in Academic Writing: A General Introduction

**Resource Person:** [Savyasaachi](#) (Formerly, JMI)

**4.1.1.** Savyasaachi initiated the session differentiating between writing an academic paper and conventional methods like reading the literature. He emphasized that, scholars acquire much knowledge starting from schools and later pursuing bachelors and masters degrees. Scholars should not expect that knowledge will come from others. He urged the participants to start writing what they already know. It is reasonable for the scholars to ask, if s/he needs to find references, to check whether adequate data is available, etc. His advice was not to be bothered about such questions at the beginning but to write what is already in the mind. Only by this way, one can build up one's agency as a thinker, a necessity in academic writing, he said. This will mean that the scholar will have to discover something unique and its relationship with the world and express it through her/his own words. The third principle, he said, is to reminding oneself always about the fundamental principles of reason while writing.



**4.1.2.** Next, he pointed out at three forms through which one can bring legitimacy to knowledge: (a) traditional ones that every person gets from his/her ancestors; (b) charismatic ones that one gets through 'divine' texts; and (c) reason, which no one will obtain unless they use their own constructive thoughts and ideas. The last one does not depend upon external agencies for its legitimacy, such as teachers, parents, divine texts, etc. His short advice was not to 'borrow' authority from others while writing — only one's own reason can provide the required legitimacy to one's words. By this way, one can be intellectually self-reliant in the true sense.

**4.1.3.** Thoughts may come to the researcher sporadically, and not in a logical fashion. One may write down those thoughts and after a while find out if the thoughts can be connected with each other. In case the researcher has multiple set of thoughts and faces difficulty in arranging them, reading can help to find linkages among those sets of thoughts and ideas. At the same time, writing can be tedious, tiring and frustrating, in Savyasaachi's opinion. Observations can help in writing though. Emphasis on the process of observation doesn't reduce the need for reading. But continuously reading others' work(s) is a denial of the strength of one's own observations. When one gets stuck in writing, it may be a good idea to resume the act of observation rather than finding an answer in the literature. It is not important to be bothered about correctness of grammar, etc. at this stage — rather just let the flow of your thoughts penned on the paper or screen in a reasoned way.

**4.1.4.** To Savyasaachi, different perspectives about a single object or phenomenon come from different people using different domains of knowledge: none can deny others. But the validity of each lies in the requirement of being 'falsifiable' (Karl Popper). Only this 'test' can prove what scientific knowledge is and what is not.

## Session 4.2: Framing of an Abstract and Executive Summary

**Resource Person:** [Surit Das](#) (Freelance Editor)

**4.2.1.** Das began the session by asking some fundamental questions in the context of submission of a research article in a peer-reviewed journal: is the article in sync with what the journal may be looking for in terms of its Aims and Scope? Do the title and abstract clearly convey the research reported in the submission? To him, the most important attribute of a perfect abstract is that it should motivate the editor to read further. To him, a few but simple thumb rules can be followed for this purpose: making the submission easy to read, and in the process making it easy to understand and therefore, to process (by the reader, i.e. editor). In his opinion, anyone interested to publish in a journal needs to know how the journals work, and the constraints under which the journals work — these will help the author to navigate the process easily.



**4.2.2.** Next, he argued that from the journal editor's or the copy editor's perspective, it is important to locate what is 'new' in the submission through the title and the abstract: is it new evidence, a new method or a new analysis. The distinguishing attributes of the submission must be clear from these two. After all, journal editors in most cases are not paid

employees, and hence they do have a strict time constraint to work against. In case the most distinguishing attributes of an 8,000 word submission appears after the first 5,000 words, in all likelihood it will not reach the editor's eyes (leave alone, appreciation of its significance). S/he may have stopped reading after the first few hundred words, as nothing new could be found there. It is important to remember that every editor receives many submissions on a regular basis, and will always choose the one that is most appealing to her/him in consideration with the Aims and Scope of the journal and the readership.

**4.2.3.** To Das, if the author is not absolutely clear what the paper attempts to do, it will be quite difficult to write either the abstract or the 'research highlights' (increasingly being asked by the journals, with a limit of 10 words and maximum five in number). The latter asks for penning the 'soul' of the submission, be it the arguments or the points of departure or the conclusions. In his opinion, whether it is a précis, a synopsis, an abstract or an executive summary, it is important to consider the following things: who will read it (audience), what purpose will it serve (objective), what is the word limit and what are the most important points that the (particular) audience needs to know. One should be able to write the 'gist' version within 250 words containing the following things: motivation for doing the work (reported in the submission), what was done (may not be how it was done, unless asked for), where were the challenges in doing the work (or limitations), and the key significance of the work.

**4.2.4.** In this partially hands-on session, he asked each participant to write a full length abstract first and then a three line version. After the first stage, he reviewed each abstract and gave specific suggestions on how to improve. Subsequently, he reviewed the short abstract.

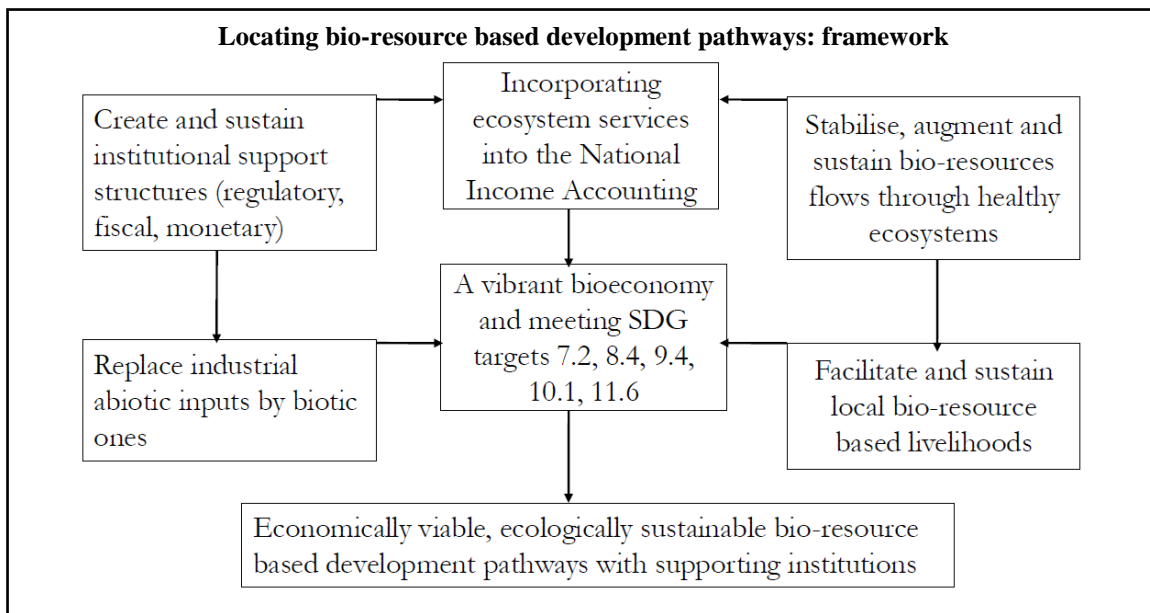
## Session 4.3: Preparing and Reporting a Literature Survey/ Review

**Resource Person:** [Nandan Nawn](#) (JMI, INSEE, and Biodiversity Collaborative)

**4.3.1.** Nawn initiated the session mentioning that anthropologists and archaeologists started using survey as a tool of research long ago — but the quest always had an object of enquiry. To arrive at

this, it is important to formulate a framework of one’s own. This is the starting point of research, he said, before narrowing down to the theories and then models: clarity in the first will lead to clarity in the second, and so on.

**4.3.2.** To foreground the usefulness of having a framework, he shared his experience of penning the bio-economy component of the Detailed Project Report (DPR) of the National Mission on Biodiversity and Human Well-being as a member of the Biodiversity Collaborative, tasked with the preparation of DPR by the office of the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India. To him, a framework helps to provide the necessary clarity to convince the policymaker, for whom the DPR was written. It also includes the ‘object of inquiry’, howsoever abstract it is: in the present work it was how to achieve an “economically viable, ecologically sustainable bio-resource based development pathways with supporting institutions” (see, display item below). But most importantly, a framework binds the researcher — all work that is to be carried out must be within this boundary. This helps the researcher in ensuring that s/he does not move away from the path of inquiry — else s/he may spend a lot of time returning back to it.



**4.3.3.** Next, he spoke on how a framework can help in the ‘policymaking process’. He quoted E Ostrom in identifying two attributes: “frameworks organize diagnostics and prescriptive inquiry” and “[they] provide a foundation for inquiry by specifying classes of variables and general relationships among them” (2011, ‘Background on the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework’, *The Policy Studies Journal* Vol. 39, Issue 1, pp. 7-27). To him, any inquiry can be divided into four ways: ‘exploratory’, ‘explanatory’, ‘analytical’ and ‘predictive’, besides between the usual types, namely, diagnostic/ positive and prescriptive/ normative. He shared a couple of research questions as examples under both these typologies. He advised not to address more than one type of question (say, explanatory) in a single paper.

**4.3.4.** To him, for conducting explanatory research it is important to have a firm grip over the exploratory kind in the same area; likewise, for analytical, it’s important to have clarity on explanatory and so on. Further, he advised venturing into the ‘predictive’ domain only if one has reasonable clarity on the analytical one. While researching on the predictive domain, he continued, the researcher should expect to find some trade-offs; in case it is not visible, one should go back to the evidence, he advised.

**4.3.5.** To Nawn, models are most specific while frameworks are most abstract or generic — these models are not the models used in mathematical formulations supporting econometric explorations. Following Ostrom, he stated that models always make *precise* assumptions about a limited set of parameters and variables that allow analysts to test particular parts of theories by fixing a limited set of variables at specific settings and exploring/ examining the outcomes produced.



**4.3.6.** Towards the end of his lecture, Nawn explained the purpose of the literature review in the following way: to demonstrate the reader that the researcher is well informed about the matter s/he intends to research on, as well as to convey to the reader what motivates her/him to inquire further (“The literature has looked at this and that, but there is no good answer to this important question, which I address in this paper”). He differentiated between the literature review and literature survey. In review, the researcher tries to critically evaluate the work(s), identify the research gaps, etc.

#### **Session 4.4: Description of the Research Method, Variables and Metadata**

**Resource Persons:** [Ravi Chellam](#) (Metastring Foundation and Biodiversity Collaborative) and [Chander Kumar Singh](#) (TERI School of Advanced Studies)



**4.4.1.** Chellam started the session by citing some examples from his own Ph.D. work on lions that involved extensive field-work. Then he differentiated between two most common kinds of research methods: descriptive and experimental: He explained that former mostly describes a study or topic, whereas the latter is conducted on a specific condition in a certain place while controlling for particular variables, etc.

**4.4.2.** Irrespective of the method used, Chellam stressed on the importance of clarity in language and logical structure while describing the method. The originality necessitates use of one’s own thoughts and ideas rather than of others; repeat of work(s) already done by others hardly makes sense.

**4.4.3.** Singh started with discussing the research methods used in his own studies on groundwater contamination that used both field and experimental (laboratory) data. While presenting the data, he said, it is important to remember that it must be comprehensible to the audience/ for whom the presentation is being made. He demonstrated various methods for presenting data using illustrations from his own work.

**4.4.4.** He discussed many characteristics of scientific research: (a) it is a public research in the sense that it allows other researchers to verify or refute the research independently; (b) objectivity in science rules out eccentric judgments by the researcher; (c) empirical attribute of science implies that research should be concerned with a knowable world and potentially measurable; (d) systematic and cumulative attributes of science can be ensured only by taking an exhaustive account of the previous studies (this helps in identifying the research gap); (e) predictive attribute of science is connected with the dataset on the basis of which predictions are made.

**4.4.5.** He listed the following steps of research procedures: (a) select a problem; (b) review existing research and theory; (c) develop hypotheses or research questions; (d) determine an appropriate research design/methodology; (e) collect relevant data; (f) analyze and interpret the results; (g) present the result in the appropriate form. On the matter of method, data analysis and interpretation, he stressed on the need for both internal and external validity. He added a note in his concluding remarks that *all* the seven steps are not necessarily followed in *all* scientific research.

**4.4.6.** In the final half an hour, Chellam discussed attributes of variables and metadata. Variables are any quality or characteristic that researchers are trying to measure, control, or manoeuvre, he said. For example, in order to understand how things relate to one another in a descriptive study, the researcher should thoroughly analyze the variables and interpret the value(s) of each variable. He then went on to define ‘metadata’: the data that describes the other data. Additionally, it also summarizes basic information about data, which can make it easier to find the use and reuse of particular instances of data. For example, simple document file metadata includes things like author, date created, date edited, and file size. Having the ability to search for a particular element (or elements) of metadata makes it much easier for someone to locate a specific document. In addition to document files, metadata is used for computer files, images, relational databases, spreadsheets, videos, audio files, web pages, etc, he concluded.

## Week 1, Day 5: 06.12.22

### Speaker Quotes:

“Don’t think that the people on the other side (editors) want to exercise power just for the sake of exercising power — they are also looking for something new, from perspectives to voices to styles”.

“The author and the journal are interested in the same result: publication of the best paper you can possibly write!”

— **Dr. C Rammanohar Reddy**, Editor-in-Chief, The India Forum

“If you want to communicate to a wider audience, just scientific writing is not adequate”.

— **Dr. Ravi Chellam**, CEO, Metastring Foundation and Coordinator, Biodiversity Collaborative

### Narrative

## Session 5.1: Research Writing and Publishing Process: An Overview and a Discussion of Individual Sections

**Resource person:** [C. Rammanohar Reddy](#) (The India Forum)

**5.1.1.** Reddy, a former editor of *Economic and Political Weekly*, started with the need to overcome the ‘fear of rejection’ by the authors. Notwithstanding the ‘unreasonableness’ of editors, it is the perseverance that has key importance, especially for early authors. Not losing confidence on oneself and keep on practising writing are the other two key ‘principles’, he said.

**5.1.2.** He divided the entire publication process into three heads:

- What does a research paper consist of?
- Why are there these different elements?
  - What purpose do they serve?
  - How are they to be presented: rules.
- The most common reasons why papers are rejected.

**5.1.3.** It may require a lot of creativity in developing an argument, but putting it down needs different kinds of effort. As English is not our mother tongue, we may have difficulties in expressing things in English. For this reason, certain rules are to be followed — here comes the importance of practice. After a while, one may write in English effortlessly (as if it’s the mother tongue) but early in the career one may need to put in some effort, on a continuous basis. In fact, in

the early days, most may think in their mother tongue and then translate it into English — in later years, one may even think in English!

<h3>Article Heading</h3> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 45%;"> <p><b>First Look</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will it lead to interest among peers?</li> </ul> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 45%;"> <p><b>What to include</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important keywords</li> <li>• Central Message; Hook</li> </ul> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 45%;"> <p><b>What to avoid</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complexity</li> <li>• Adjectives</li> <li>• Punctuations</li> </ul> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 45%;"> <p><b>Careful about Sub-heading</b></p> </div> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <p>Keep it Simple</p> </div>	<h3>Abstract</h3> <div style="background-color: #4a7ebb; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p><b>WHAT TO INCLUDE</b></p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Keywords</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be phrases</li> <li>• Follow protocols, common words</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Main contribution(s)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you put it in two-three sentences?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Link to important debates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps other readers relate to your work</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Rules:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Word limit,</li> <li>• No definitions,</li> <li>• No citations, references</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<h3>Abstract</h3> <div style="background-color: #4a7ebb; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p><b>WHAT TO AVOID</b></p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Praising your research             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows lack of maturity <i>and</i> confidence</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Points not contained in the paper</li> <li>• Details (tangential, low relevance)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sometimes though a detail can be good</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Excitement or strong partisanship             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pros and Cons of “neutral tone”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<h3>Introduction</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduces the reader to your <b>framing question</b></li> <li>• Explains the organisation of the article (<b>map</b>)</li> <li>• Different from expanded abstract             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brings <b>nuance</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Share several functions with literature review             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature review can be subset</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">GRASP READER'S ATTENTION PROVIDE OVERVIEW</p>
<h3>Literature Review</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Survey</b> of <b>significant</b> literature published on the theme / area / topic</li> <li>• Cite and reference <b>range</b> of authors <b>correctly</b> and concisely</li> <li>• Identify <b>Gap</b> in Research / Debate</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">PROVIDES THE <b>CONTEXT</b> FOR YOUR PAPER</p>	<h3>Literature Review</h3> <p style="text-align: center;">ARTICLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Only authors and research relevant to argument</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Concise and pointed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Thematic</li> </ul>
<h3>Literature Review</h3> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>FOUR ZS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Summarize</li> <li>2. Analyze</li> <li>3. Criticize</li> <li>4. Synthesize</li> </ol> </div>	<h3>Methodology</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Methodology should be             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• correctly and succinctly described</li> <li>• with attention to problem areas</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Limitations and strengths are identified</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">REMEMBER DISTINCTION BETWEEN <b>METHODS</b> and <b>METHODOLOGY</b></p>
<h3>Sources Data Results</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sources / Evidence / Data are described in adequate detail and clearly</li> <li>Results and interpretations provided</li> <li>Be careful about visual aids</li> <li>Remember to only provide relevant information</li> </ul>	<h3>Conclusion</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sum up the argument</li> <li>• Highlight contribution to knowledge</li> <li>• Lay out policy implications</li> <li>• Point to further areas of research, unanswered questions</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">CONCLUSION SHOULD NOT BE STAND ALONE ARTICLE</p>
<p>Source: Adapted from slides prepared and shared by C Rammanohar Reddy, drawn from presentations on ‘Research Writing’ and ‘Publishability’ prepared by Aniket Alam, IIT, Hyderabad.</p>	



**5.1.4.** Reddy deconstructed a research article and discussed the most common attributes of each part:

**A.** Title: there is a tendency to use fancy words, but using simple words makes more sense, as it will appeal to a wider audience. Even if it may appear ‘dull’, use of fancy words may be reserved for popular pieces (or later in the career).

**B.** Abstract: It should contain the main elements of the research paper. Jargons and citations are to be avoided here. Here the usual practice is to include what the researcher is set out to do and why (hypothesis and research questions), how s/he has done it (methodology), what s/he has found (results and conclusions) and what can be recommended based on the research (its nature will depend on the type of research).

**C.** Introduction: There is a tendency to replicate the abstract in the introduction — it should include matters beyond the abstract. The purpose of this section is to grab the attention of the reader: why it is interesting and/or important to study the matters reported in the paper. This section is expected to provide the readers a lot of information on what the issue is, why it is significant, and how the author intends to move the ‘conversation’ along. In the majority of academic fields, the introduction should include a ‘thesis statement’ that states the main point. Ideally, it should also provide the reader with a feel of the types of data that will be used to support the claims and the overall structure of the sections that will follow.

**D.** Literature Review: Many authors (even mid-career ones) include a lot of text in this section. Even if one may have read 40 or 50 papers, it does not automatically follow that each of them are to be included in the literature survey — only the aspects of the literature that are important for the research paper concerned are to be reported. At times, one may have to include conflicting perspectives in this section, making it a little longer, but it is never a good idea to make the paper ‘top heavy’ (say, covering 4000 words in a 8000 word paper). In short, it should not ‘put off’ the editor, reviewer or the reader. This is not to undermine the importance of this section, but it is important to maintain the balance. A literature review’s objective is to provide background information on the subject to the reader. The author must avoid duplication while listing existing studies and properly credit other scholars. Author may recognize a pattern, contradictions or inconsistencies between studies, gaps and identify unanswered questions. Author may determine if there is a need for further research (i.e. justifications to carry out new research). Author may put the findings in the context of the existing literature and argue why more research is necessary. It may be useful to locate the impact of existing work on the subject and other work — this will help identifying the key papers (beyond ‘citation’).

**E.** Methodology: This section should assist the reader to understand the plan of the investigation carried out by the researcher. The author is expected to choose the best approach (and justify the choice), given the aims, and put them down clearly in the research design sub-section. It also enables researchers to gain clarity. There is a difference between a methodology and a method. The former signifies the broad overarching approach (say, political economy) while the latter is the specific method used in the paper (say, measuring the standard of value).

**F.** Conclusion: It should make the purpose and significance of the work clear rather than introducing any new ideas. Additionally, it could highlight the contribution of the work to the exciting literature besides listing limitations and offering ideas for further study on the subject (beyond addressing the limitations). This section will contain the policy implications, if any.

**5.1.5.** Reddy shared that plagiarism was a problem when he started his career many decades ago and it is still a problem! Over time, however, awareness has increased and so is the availability of tools to detect it. He shared his concern on ‘involuntary’ plagiarism. To avoid it, he suggested the following: (a) make it a practice to write on your own, (b) avoid mixing up your notes with quoted texts, and (c) familiarise oneself with code of research ethics followed by your institution (and the journal where the author wants to submit). Costs of plagiarism are heavy, he pointed out: (a) destroys ability to *do* and *present* original research, (b) destroys *credibility* among peers, (c) can be found out at any time in the future, (d) destroys career and more importantly, (e) builds a culture of

mediocrity. His final advice was to perform plagiarism check through dedicated software or even simple ‘googling’ the text before submission.

**5.1.6.** To Reddy, the reasons for low publication (or high rejection) rates are the following: (a) poor structure/ badly written, (b) plagiarism/ lack originality, (c) poor/ incomprehensible language, (d) ignoring journal rules and requirements, and (e) improper fit with journal. He elaborated each of these subsequently. In most of the Social Science subjects (economics to somewhat lesser extent), the ‘narrative’ that is conveyed through the paper is of utmost importance (see, display item on the right).

**5.1.7.** Next, he spoke on the importance of revising one’s own writing. It may be a good practice to keep some temporal gap between writing and revising. He shared a personal note: even after more than 35 years of being in the academic profession, he still revises multiple times before making the submission. Revision can be done by the writer her/himself or by her/his friends, peers or colleagues. At times, authors (especially early career ones) may be scared to share, anticipating harsh comments, but in the end, (mid-term) benefits will be larger than the (short-term) costs!

**5.1.8.** He empathised on the importance of making the submission ‘tailor-made’ for the journal to which one is making a submission. Identification of the most appropriate journal is the first step (see, display item below). This does not mean that one should write keeping a journal in mind;

**Narrative**

- The article has to tell a story
- Draw the reader into the problem you raise
- Engage (hook) him by showing how others have not (fully) succeeded in explaining the problem
- Explain how you will address it
- Provide her with data (information) needed so that she can draw independent conclusions
- Show how you solve the problem
- Argue out why your approach is useful

**Narrative Guidelines**

- Social Science research writing is text heavy
- A good narrative style helps publishability
- It is not about stating the point but rather how the point is explained and engaged

**Academic Publishing Process**

- Author submits manuscript
- Editor’s First Cut
  - Accept as is
  - Reject outright
  - Send to Referee
- Reviewer’s comments and recommendations
  - Accept
  - Reject
  - Author asked to make revisions
- Author
  - Rejects Referee’s suggestions
  - Revises manuscript and resubmits
- Editor accepts or rejects manuscript
  - Editor (sometimes) sends revised manuscript back to external referee
- Author provides editing or proofing of final copy before publication
- Paper is eventually published in the journal

**Revision of Article**

- Adhere to the letter and spirit of the suggestions
- Referee’s suggestions may not be most optimal
- Author is the final authority on her / his paper
- Explain how you have dealt with the referee report
- Use “track changes” feature

rather it is the opposite — first write and then identify. Only in case there are some specifics that the journal requires the author to follow, the paper may be modified. But, even then, it will be mostly on the structure and format, and not the argument. In case one wants to submit a paper rejected by journal A to journal B, it is important not to send the earlier version but a modified one in the light of comments shared by the editor on the reasons for rejection. This revision is different from the one to be carried out *before* the first submission. This is more to do with emphasis, presentation, etc.

**5.1.9.** Next, Reddy provided an overview of the publishing process usually followed in journals (one example is EPW; see display item on the right). The most important stage of this process is how to address the comments and suggestions made by

the referee(s). There are many instances where author does not agree with all of them. In fact, no editor expects that! But the editor will expect a revision, in consideration with the *most* of the

comments made by the reviewer. For the unattended comments, the author needs to provide valid arguments. In case none of the comments are acceptable, the author is free to withdraw and submit in another journal.

<p><b>Journal Selection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wide range of journals             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think beyond India</li> <li>• Or easy publication</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Look up Scopus, Elsevier, JSTOR for full lists</li> <li>• Open Access Journals             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interesting Research is moving here</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Disciplinary Journals             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• History, Anthropology, Sociology...</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Cross-Disciplinary Journals             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender, Urban Studies, Environment, Migration...</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>How to Decide</b></p> <p><b>Does the journal offer a good match on</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• area of academic interest</li> <li>• specific academic field</li> <li>• methods/ methodology</li> <li>• cultural/ policy contexts</li> </ul> <p><b>Nature of Paper</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theoretical/ Empirical</li> </ul> <p><b>Target Readership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local/ Regional/ National/ International</li> <li>• Disciplinary versus Cross Disciplinary</li> </ul> <p><b>Timeline for Publishing</b></p>
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**5.1.10.** Admittedly, selection of papers in a journal is a subjective process. A good editor is the one who is aware of the subjectivities and tries to minimise it. It is a fact that author credentials matter; it is also a fact that all journals follow their own publishing cycles. At times there are special issues or special sections. In all likelihood, a good journal receives twice the number of (publishable) papers that it can possibly publish. It follows that some good papers will be rejected — but rejection is a part of life. It is important not to be discouraged by the rejections and move on with life, i.e. keep on writing.

**5.1.11.** Even after a paper is accepted by the journal, there remain several steps, to ensure timely publication: (a) correcting language and stylistic changes; (b) checking all references/ footnotes/ endnotes, and (c) pointing out inconsistencies/ missing information.

**5.1.12.** Most journals have many sections. Typical categories include (a) Research Article, (b) Literature Review, (c) Comment or Discussion, (d) Notes, Draft, Work-in-Progress and (e) Book Review. However there are journals that focus on only one aspect: *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (Commentaries), *Journal of Economic Surveys*, *Journal of Economic Literature*, *The Book Review*, for example.

**5.1.13.** It may be a good idea for the first time authors to write a comment or a note, rather than a full discussion paper. This will serve the purpose of practicing writing. He advised against prioritising writing a book review, as it is quite difficult to write one: one must first write what the book is all about, and then situate the book within the larger scheme of things, besides identifying positives and negatives about the book. It is certainly not a summary of the book!

<p><b>Uniqueness of each Section</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Research Article– Paper presenting and analysing an argument in detail</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Literature Review – Survey of a particular topic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Discussion -- Comment on a published paper</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Notes, Draft, Work-in-Progress – First exploration of a problem/argument</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Book Review/Review Article – Single or many</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Letter – comment on a published paper/general issue in discipline/obituary</li> </ul>	<p><b>Similarities and Differences between Sections in a Journal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similarities             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conventions, Style</li> <li>• Tone (can be different as well between categories)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Differences             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus</li> <li>• Rigour and detail</li> <li>• Word length</li> <li>• Kind of assessment/review</li> <li>• Speed of decision-making/publication</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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**5.1.14.** His final remarks were on the similarities and differences between different sections in a journal. Every journal provides details descriptions of each of the sections (example: (a) <https://www.epw.in/notes-contributors.html>, (b) <https://ecoinsee.org/journal/ojs/index.php/ees/Sections>). Usually it is only the research articles that are reviewed by those external to the journal. Some journals also follow this process of assessment for literature surveys as well. Again, decisions on



notes, commentaries and book reviews are taken faster than the research articles.



## Session 5.2: Writing Op-Eds

**Resource person:** [Ravi Chellam](#) (Metastring Foundation and Biodiversity Collaborative)

**5.2.1.** Chellam, author of many Op-eds (acronym for opposite editorial) in various newspapers, started the session requesting feedback from the participants on the four Op-eds written by him (and shared beforehand) on the same subject over 13 years: (a) *Sharing the Pride* (*Indian Express*, 2010), (b) *Pride and Prejudice*, *Deccan Herald*, 2011, (c) *Restoring Lost Prides*, *Times of India*, 2013), (d) *A Big Cat Mistake* (*Indian Express*, 2022).

**5.2.2.** He was of the opinion that anyone interested to communicate to a wider audience, should think beyond the scientific writings: on the one hand, even fellow scientists at times find it difficult to follow others' work (given the advancements in knowledge in many sub-domains) and on the other hand, most scientific writings are not universally accessible.

**5.2.3.** He deconstructed the process of Op-Ed writing and publishing. In summary form, it consists of following ten 'rules': (1) be timely or timeless; (2) write with passion; (3) write with authority; (4) write with persuasion; (5) write with insight; (6) write for a general audience; (7) write succinctly; (8) write creatively; (9) learn from others; (10) be patient and persistent.

**5.2.4.** To him, the timing of an Op-ed submission holds key importance. He advised to choose an interesting and timely topic, as it allows more 'speculation' than a scholarly piece. Given that writing is time-consuming and writing an Op-ed will not impact 'h-index' or promotion, it is the passion and not scientific repute of the hosting platform that should drive the work. He explained various characteristics of an Op-ed, with illustrations:

- It is an opinion piece by a guest writer. Mostly, it is invited by the editors.
- It makes a clear argument about a topic that is usually in the news. He suggested focusing on those on which the author has expertise: "You can write authoritatively only in *your* research area".
- It should be short and focused: the usual length is 750-800 words.
- Increasingly, Op-eds are incorporating graphics, charts, photos, audio or even comics.
- It must be weaved around a central idea — a 'thesis' — that forms the main argument. This is a key requirement. A given piece should not have more than one central argument.
- It should be easy for the readers to relate to the piece and understand. In short, the audience — for whom it is written — must be kept in mind.
- Though it is a 750-800 words piece, it is important to identify and highlight the takeaway from the piece in the form of two or three sentences: newspapers often use this as a 'blurb' or use a different font size for this text.
- It is usual for the editors to decide the headline, but still two three alternative options may be shared capturing the main argument.
- Clear communication is the key attribute in Op-ed; else, it is not Op-ed. Clarity of thought

on the part of the authors is reflected in the expressions. Reasoning should be clear. Avoid jargon as well as ‘beating around the bush’.

- The early career authors or those with no experience in writing an Op-ed may try writing the opening sentences in the form of a single tweet (with 140 character limit).
- While framing the argument, one should remember that it is not a personal essay, and must contain something for the readers to engage with and think about.
- Journalistic investigations without an argument, poems, work of fiction, reviews of books, movies, television shows or other media does not fall under Op-ed.
- Op-ed should serve the readers, and not the interests of the author. It is to be based on facts, but expressed using the perspective of the author, for the benefit of the reader.



**5.2.5.** Subsequently, Chellam shared his views on what the editors may be looking for in Op-eds:

- The purpose is to help people understand the topic in the news more deeply (may be through connecting the different facts). It may not be just the topic but the broader issues at hand. For example, an Op-ed on re-introduction of any large cat will contain some text on larger conservation issues (like, prioritization of species by the State for conservation) including the consequence or implications for the broader society (that was previously not available in the public domain).
- An Op-ed is expected to equip the readers with arguments that they can employ when discussing the topic. It may also expose them to matters that they might not have heard before, offer them new perspectives to look at a matter that is already known to them, ideas that can help them to think about the world differently, and may help them to articulate their own perspective better.

**5.2.6.** On the structure of Op-eds, he offered the following:

- An Op-ed should help the reader to engage with the argument, understand and internalise. Early career authors may consider three sections (a) statement of thesis or problem/issue that includes the central argument (what it is all about, 100 words may be), (b) (at least) three reasons why this argument is right or (even) wrong (600 words may be) and (c) conclusion (takeaway message, 100 words). In later years, they may experiment with other ways of presenting. These divisions are not mentioned in the piece, however, and remain invisible.
- Op-eds need structure and a logical flow that makes the reader’s life easier, not harder. Each paragraph should automatically lead to the next one.
- A lede (lead) is the opening sentence or sentences of an Op-Ed. A good lede will draw in readers and persuade them to keep reading (“the hook”). It can be the thesis/ problem statement, but it does not have to be. It is important to get to the crux of the argument quickly, within the first couple of paragraphs.
- A kicker is the last sentence of the article. It should leave readers satisfied that they knew

what the piece was about and that it was worth getting through. Sometimes circling back to the beginning (and by answering the question raised) can help. This section should not introduce a new thought that was not developed further. Neither should it end with a quote from someone else: however, some future steps can be included.

- Op-ed is usually a one-sided, opinionated argument and therefore the author must provide statistics and facts in support of her/his ideas: “it is only facts that boost confidence of the author to write convincingly”. Make sure the facts are right, and be prepared to back them up. Authors should not expect the editors to defend them! The editors may ask the authors to substantiate every paragraph and provide evidence corresponding to every fact. These references/ citations remain with the editor and are not made a part of the piece.
- The more complex the thought is, it is important to make sentences shorter accordingly; may be each no more than ten words.
- Op-eds are supposed to provide perspectives that are definitive in nature, and therefore it should not have many unaddressed questions for which readers will have to find answers elsewhere.
- Use of data and numbers can be helpful but don’t overwhelm the reader with too many of them. Ensure units are consistent (say, kilograms or pounds and not both). Do not use statistical notations like standard deviation, mode, etc.

**5.2.7.** On the matter of writing style in Op-eds, Chellam suggested avoiding a dry, emotionless tone of a typical scientific study. He advised avoiding wrath, harshness, and over-opinionated writing. Avoid use of shallow words, flowery language, needless words, or long sentences, he advised: “your analysis counts; so be critical and perceptive”. His other suggestion was to use one’s own and authentic voice. It follows that the work will attract more attention if it’s intriguing and offers a unique perspective. Creative writing and narrative skills are needed for Op-eds. When used properly, metaphors and similes can enrich the language and aid understanding. Authors should consider writing for a broad audience and assume that the average reader does not have her/his level of knowledge on the topic in question: may use such a language that can be accessible to a 15 year old. Therefore, it may make most sense to peg it to a news or cultural topic that is likely to be of current interest to readers. In his experience, most editors strive to publish a diversity of opinions on their Op-ed page, Chellam shared.

**5.2.8.** The final suggestion from Chellam was to be aware (and cautious) of lead periods and editor response time. Editors may take a lot of time to respond as they receive hundreds of daily contributions. They may not even



answer at all, he warned. Even if it’s accepted, editors may not inform always. Sometimes one may get to know about acceptance only when it is copyedited or even after publication, he said. He concluded the session pointing out that it is important to know the terms on which the work was published, including liability of the author.

**5.2.9.** Chellam shared the following resource on the art of writing Op-eds: Bret Stephens, 2017, ‘Tips for Aspiring Op-Ed Writers’, The New York Times (link: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/25/opinion/tips-for-aspiring-op-ed-writers.html>).



### Session 5.3: Writing for online Platforms

**Resource person:** [C. Rammanohar Reddy](#) (The India Forum)

**5.3.1.** Reddy, started the session noting that over the last 20 years many online avenues have emerged providing authors a new space for expressing research outputs. The requirements, however, can be somewhat different from the print avenues. At the same time it may be useful to point out that many print journals provide electronic access, even before making the printed version available ('pre-print'). Of course, there are 'only print' formats (like many Indian journals), 'pure' online (like The India Forum) or hybrid (like EPW print and EPW engage). Some publications of EPW engage are carried in EPW print version, at times. Over the last few years, a gradual shift to the 'pure' online type can be noticed. This has happened due to many reasons, including miniscule costs of 'digital' printing and distribution and sources of revenue such as (more number of) advertisements.

**5.3.2.** There exist various kinds of pure online journals. Some are more 'academic' than others. But irrespective of the nature and type of avenues, authors must learn to write, communicate, and express themselves, keeping in mind the requirements of the platform. Reddy categorised these journals into the following types:

- Academic journals (especially Open Access ones),
- Online discipline-specific publications (*Ideas for India* for economic policy, *Leaflet* for law),
- Online magazines with space for long-form (usually 2,000 – 3,000 words length) and thoughtful content (*Scroll.in*, *Wire.in*, *Quint* in India); this is the largest category and also posts in video and audio formats,
- Online publications focusing *only* on long-form (*Boston Review*, *Aeon* in USA, and *The India Forum* in India),
- Blogs,
- Letters,
- Newsletter.

To Reddy, blogs can be very useful for the young authors — even just to practice writing. It can also serve the purpose of communicating one's interest in a particular area. It can help editors to identify potential 'new' authors.

**5.3.3.** All types of avenues have many potential benefits and costs. Therefore, it is important to take informed decisions on picking the platform to publish one's work. Proliferation of online platforms, among other things, provides a much greater opportunity for the authors to publish, than it was earlier, say, 20 years ago. Being freely accessible, the reach is much wider. Proliferation and ease of access, together, implies availability of a substantial number of work(s) — this has and also contributed a 'faster' publication culture. Given all these, it is reasonable to ask on the quality and rigour of review of what is published online — it is true that not everything is reviewed in every platform, but most online platforms like *thewire.in* and *theindiaforum.in* reviews every single article submitted to them. Even then, these publications are not included in UGC CARE (including EPW engage). On the other hand, thousands of readers read these online publications enabling a much wider reach. Reddy advised using these platforms to hone one's writing skills and then publish in journals that are recognised for academic progression and promotion.

**5.3.4.** Writing for print and online journals is different, Reddy opined. Readers have limited attention span while reading online and hence 'read' the two differently. It follows that writers must write differently as well for online platforms, in short paragraphs and using shorter sentences. The writing must not be 'heavy' like a textbook. The length will be shorter, say, 600 words unless it is a long-form. Online platforms have the additional potential for including illustration, data animation, videos and audios that print versions cannot offer. Subsequently he spoke on three questions: why write online, what to write and where to write.

**5.3.5.** He reemphasized the usefulness of these platforms as a place to practice writing. It can help the authors to develop the crucial skill of formulating an argument and offering analysis.

Additionally, one can effectively intervene in the public debate through this mode, quite similar to Op-eds in newspapers. It is true that its direct ‘value’ towards fulfilling requirements for career advancement is limited, but indirectly it can help: someone who has written a number of quality pieces on nutrition, say, may be approached by a journal or newspaper editor to write a commentary or Op-ed, respectively.

**5.3.6.** On the question of contents for online pieces, he advised writing only on matters of contemporary relevance. It can be analyzing current affairs, related to the area of author’s work, for example. On the other hand, a well-researched piece, say, a section of one’s Ph.D. thesis will not fit here, unless, the framework (used in the thesis) is used to analyse a contemporary matter or news. One can also comment on a news event as a citizen or a news report based on a survey (say, carried out by NSSO). In short, online platforms can provide an opportunity to present one’s research, subject to meeting the requirements of contemporary relevance. For ‘pure’ academic research, one should pursue other avenues, like print or hybrid journals. It follows that anything that does not fit the word limit (600 for short articles to 2,000 for long forms) will not be accepted by the editor — this includes literature surveys.

**5.3.7.** Reddy is of the opinion – given the differences among the online platforms – one needs to pay some attention before choosing one as a venue to publish/ release her/his next work. In case someone is more in the need for practicing or leaning skills, blogs (of one’s own) and small websites can take care of it. On the other hand, if one is interested to intervene in a public debate, websites with good reach – the ‘pure’ online ones – will serve the purpose better. Finally, for those who needs ‘publications’ to meet career advancement requirements, the ones with ‘certificates’ (such as ISSN for the journal, DOI assigned to each publication, etc.) will work best. However, for the last type, the ‘lead time’ will be larger than the other two. Irrespective of the avenue, there will be rejections and his advice was to not to fear it but to learn from the experience.

**5.3.8.** On the matter of contents and structure of pieces for online platforms, Reddy suggested the following ‘rules’:

- Online ones are shorter than in print: readers ‘scroll down’ the screen, rather than turning pages.
- Avoid technical language, jargon: just like a longer piece, unfamiliar words can dissuade the readers to read further. Long paragraphs, long sentences, heavy referencing, many footnotes have the same effect of conveying ‘academic weight’.
- Early career authors may target 1,000 word articles to begin with.
- Keep charts/tables to a minimum, as they may be ‘alien’ to many readers.

His general advise was to take a quick survey of the platform first and tailor the writing accordingly. In this way, it is similar to looking at the Aims and Scope of a journal. Exception to these rules is academic /refereed/ certified/ open access journals — they have their own rules.

**5.3.9.** Next, he elaborated on the usefulness of personal blogs to practice writing. Target can be to write pieces of a length of 600-800 words. The author can be the sole reader to begin with — once satisfied with the quality (i.e. rigour) of the argument s/he can share it with family and friends but not the wider audience. Here the purpose is different: to practice on how to build an argument. It follows that these works are not to be submitted for publication. Additional benefit is that it may help the early career authors to surpass the fear of the ‘unknown’, namely, seeing one’s own words in typed form. In a short time, say, by the sixth month, one will be able to witness a change in one’s own writing. S/he will also notice that what was a ‘struggle’ earlier (finding the right expressions), it has become an effortless affair now! But, it will not happen automatically — one has to write on a regular basis.

**5.3.10.** Subsequently, Reddy shared some example of online platforms, each catering to a different requirement:

- Academic: *Ideas for India* (for India), *The Conversation* (for global),
- Popular and news oriented, but serious: *Scroll.in*, *Wire.in*, *Quint*,
- Between the Op-ed and research: *The India Forum*, *Article-14*,

- Online supplements: *EPW Engage*,
- Advocacy: *India Development Review*, *Bastion*, *Mongabay*.

**5.3.11.** Next, he shared his views on using Newsletters as an avenue to share one's work. One example of such an avenue is Current Conservation. Anyone can start it without much out-of-pocket expenditure. It shall have a clear focus, say, domestic violence in India and cover various sub-topics in different issues, say, one on legislative provisions, one on narratives from survivors, etc. It can carry literature surveys on current topics, a summary of recent publications, or analysis of current events using academic lens — the possibilities are unlimited. Even UNDP runs a newsletter, Learning for Nature. Dissemination of a newsletter can take place through an application (for example, Substack) among the registered users, i.e. those who has registered (given consent) to receive this.

**5.3.12.** In his concluding remarks, he shared a number of advices for the participants on writing for online:

- It has some but not many special requirements.
- It opens the author to a much larger world and a much larger readership.
- Personal blogs and newsletters is excellent practice.

He also re-alerted the audience on the challenges: first, one may need to change the writing style a bit; second, one may need to be as patient as print avenues as many are writing (and therefore rejection rates are high). At the same time, he is of the belief that perseverance will pay here. One can start with blogs for oneself and then share it with friends and then with peers, and so on — gaining confidence in each stage. When one is aiming to publish, one must write for the reader and not for oneself — this needs practice, especially those who are not born with such skills.

**5.3.13.** His final points were on the matter of becoming a freelance author. Reddy said that freelance authors have the option of working with clients located anywhere in the world. In this way, they don't feel limited by where they live — they can build a clientele anywhere. On the matter of starting a writing career, he made a number of suggestions: (a) choose your area of writing, say, current issues with which you are most familiar and have confidence; (b) set up a website or blog where you can upload your writing samples; (c) seek advice from the best on how to improve your writing; (d) pitch yourself at the level at which you are most comfortable; and, (e) keep on checking writing job boards, who pays to authors.





## Session 5.4: Writing and Editing Books

**Resource persons:** [Savyasaachi](#) (Formerly JMI), and [Nandan Nawn](#) (JMI, INSEE and BC)

**5.4.1.** Both the resource persons started the session on a common personal note: the primary reason for them to edit or co-edit collections has been to provide an opportunity to early career authors. Nawn shared that he/they had a mandate to encourage first time authors as (one of the) editors of Review of Environment and Development in EPW (co-edited with Sudha Vasani, Department of Sociology, University of Delhi): as a result many authors published their first research article in this Review during his/ their term. He shared that this mandate may be true for many editors across journals.

**5.4.2.** To Savyasaachi, an edited book can follow any of the three templates.

In the first, the editor writes an abstract/ concept note (not just the theme) and solicits essays from the authors identified by her/him. Often established authors are approached in this case. A full proposal with an indicative list of contributors is submitted to the publishing houses for consideration afterwards. It is common for the publishing houses to carry out a review at this stage, both internally as well as from a subject 'expert'.

In the second, only the theme is identified by the editor, and an open call is made. In this 'bottom-up approach' the concept note/ abstract emerges following a discussion among the willing contributors. The young authors may find this as an interesting possibility. Of course, it follows that a lot of hard work is required on the part of the editor (and patience) to ensure clarity, rigour and consistency across chapters. Often a workshop is conducted (at times, with external peers) where all authors present the draft version of their work. This ensures avoiding duplication (if any) and improves coherence.

In both cases it is usual for the editor to act as an internal referee. However, once the full manuscript is submitted to the publisher, a review by an external expert is carried out. Those editors who prefer to engage with authors at multiple levels and times will choose the second type. It is obvious that the time taken in this 'collective endeavour' will be higher than the other one.

There is a third type of edited books, where already published papers by different authors are put together against a common theme. Examples are handbook, reader, anthology, etc. Here, multiple kinds of permissions (connected with copyright, primarily) are to be taken.

**5.4.3.** Nawn shared glimpses of two book proposals where he was one of the editors to show the structure and contents. He shared a variation of the first type of edited books mentioned by Savyasaachi: in it, the commissioning editor of the publishing house will assign the role of a 'series editor' to an academician of repute, who will then locate editors. The editor, in turn will approach the authors. For example, Savyasaachi is one of the series editors of a book series titled 'Social Movements and Transformative Dissent' by Routledge (link: <https://www.routledge.com/Social-Movements-and-Transformative-Dissent/book-series/SMTD>).

To Nawn, this system entirely works on trust, between publishing house, series editor, and editor.

**5.4.4.** Subsequently, the resource persons explained various components of book proposals, discussed the need to find the common thread across chapters, importance of citation rules (similar to journals), among others. They stated that editors of books serve the same role as editorial board members of journals. It is important to remember that the requirements of meeting the expected academic rigour, logical consistency and expositional clarity will be applicable to book chapters just like any publication in journals.

**5.4.5.** Further, the resource persons advised the participants to remember that there is always a chance that initial/ draft submissions will have mistakes and flaws that the author may have missed being 'too close' to the work (having invested heavily in the writing process). Editors' job is to locate the error and rectify them with their set of experienced eyes. Professional book and essay editing services can help in this situation, however.

**5.4.6.** As concluding remarks, the resource persons alerted the audience that the writing process

also includes copyediting and proofreading, which often is not recognised. These two steps aid in making the writing more accessible and ideas more understandable. Early career authors may have a mistaken belief that they are identical, but there are clear distinctions between the two. During the copyediting phase the focus is on identifying and fixing grammatical and linguistic mistakes. Both the resource persons advised reading and rereading the manuscript to look for more serious problems with organisation, paragraph structure, and substance.

## Week 1, Day 6: 07.12.22

### Speaker Quotes:

“Ethics in research calls for extending equal respect to everything — from animals and humans to inanimate objects such as laboratory instruments

— **Prof. Savyasaachi**, Programme Co-Director and (former) Professor, Department of Sociology, JMI

“It is the ethics that play a significant role in ensuring that scientists are held accountable and responsible to societies and communities, which in turn fosters public confidence in and support for science.”

— **Prof. Nandan Nawn**, Programme Director, Professor, Department of Economics, JMI, Former Secretary, INSEE and Member, Biodiversity Collaborative

“Plagiarism is the practice of taking someone else’s work or ideas and passing them off as one’s own”.

— **Dr. Murari Tapaswi**, (Former) Chief Librarian, National Institute of Oceanography, Goa

“There are pressures on the scientists to publish their research findings. Otherwise they may become irrelevant (“perish”) – this fear is global in nature”.

— **Dr. Chander K Singh**, Associate Professor, TERI School of Advance Studies

“To avoid allegations of plagiarism, it is most important to understand the citation styles and follow them”

— **Mr. Johan Mohamad Mir**, Information Scientist, Dr. Zakir Hussain Central Library, JMI

### Narrative

#### Session 6.1: Ethics in Academic Writing: A General Introduction

**Resource persons:** [Savyasaachi](#) (Formerly JMI), and [Nandan Nawn](#) (JMI, INSEE and BC)

**6.1.1.** Savyasaachi started the session sharing a trajectory of the relationship between the observer and the subject or object being observed. To him, a change can be noticed at the end of nineteen sixties: the observed started to exercise her/ his agency — it was an epistemological turn. This has consequences for the research ethics. Ethics in research calls for extending equal respect to everything — this calls for care. Likewise, ethical writing shall respect a variety of viewpoints on a subject. In fact, ethical writing shall demonstrate inclusivity, respect, and awareness of diversity. It follows that ethical writing will respect the sources of materials used in the research, and therefore will acknowledge them properly, namely, following the requirements of citation styles. In the same manner, ethical writing shall avoid bias and will not use any exclusive



language (sexist, racist, homophobic, etc.) besides avoiding plagiarism. All these make the argument of the writer more credible and convincing, he concluded.

**6.1.2.** Then, he spoke in detail on two matters, formation of a complete argument and use of precise words. For the former, it is essential to include a wide range of perspectives as this will help strengthening the claims made by the author besides making the contribution stand out. Towards this end, he advised, consideration of other people's thoughts and opinions carefully and critically but with due respect, without bias, besides describing opposing viewpoints fully and accurately. For the latter, he suggested picking an opposing viewpoint worth disputing rather than a 'straw man' that can be exposed quickly. To ensure precise wording, Savyasaachi suggested avoiding use of euphemisms, value-laden language, and words with excessive emotion.

**6.1.3.** Nawn started with noting the codification of research ethics in higher educational institutions over time. To him, this is influenced by the requirements of the journal publications as noted by previous speakers, Pranab Mukhopadhyay and Chander K Singh. Setting up an Institutional Ethics Committee in all Universities has become a mandatory requirement as per NAAC Guidelines. To him, the developments in the production and 'enclosurisation' of new knowledge (through stronger intellectual property rights) warranted the codification, similar to ISI marks for products. This 'trust' is necessary for functioning of the 'market' for knowledge products, as Akerlof's classic work on 'market for lemons' have shown.

**6.1.4.** Subsequently, he provided an overview of the next few sessions on various aspects of ethics in academic writing. He suggested consulting Academic Integrity and Research Quality available at [https://www.ugc.gov.in/e-book/Academic%20and%20Research%20Book\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.ugc.gov.in/e-book/Academic%20and%20Research%20Book_WEB.pdf) (UGC, 2021). In his concluding remarks he mentioned that the principles such as mutual respect, trust, and accountability are of fundamental importance in ensuring fulfilment of ethical norms.

## **Session 6.2: Varieties of Plagiarism and how to Avoid it**

**Resource person:** [Murari Tapaswi](#) (Formerly, National Institute of Oceanography)

**6.2.1.** Tapaswi started the session stating that plagiarism is a globally recognized problem and frequently arises in academia. It has serious repercussions: there have been scandals at prestigious colleges, resulting in suspensions and even expulsions. One must learn how to avoid it, as stealing someone else's ideas or expressions can violate copyright at times, with serious consequences, including penal actions. The first step is to have a thorough understanding of the numerous varieties of plagiarism, he said. While numerous tools are available today to check plagiarism (even without having technical skills), but awareness on plagiarism is still poor.

**6.2.2.** When one copies a complete piece and presents it as one's own, it is an instance of global plagiarism, he said. A student buying a paper written by someone else is an example of this type. Many people don't realise that paraphrasing is a form of plagiarism that involves rewriting someone else's work and calling it one's own without giving due credit, Tapaswi alerted. Individual who came up with the idea must be credited, even if one paraphrases the original work. Because a paraphrase is not a verbatim quote, extent of plagiarism that included paraphrasing is more difficult to identify but not impossible. Nevertheless, stealing someone else's ideas is still a serious offence. Verbatim plagiarism occurs when one copies text directly from a source without citing it and without using quotation marks. One must cite sources following the citation rules that s/he chose to follow. Mosaic plagiarism, or patchwork plagiarism occurs when one use one's sources as a starting point and then borrow parts of them. This kind of plagiarism frequently occurs when one uses another work's main ideas as the basis of one's own. This can be avoided by using a variety of sources and correctly citing them.

**6.2.3.** Authors must remember to reference the sources for everything other than common knowledge, Tapaswi said. He provided several tips to avoid plagiarism, including developing good research habits, proper time management, and taking responsibility for one's own learning: (a) "don't procrastinate with research and assignments"; (b) "commit to *doing your work*"; (c) "be 100% scrupulous in your note-taking and citation".



## Session 6.3: Research Misconduct; Falsification, Fabrication

Resource Person: [Chander Kumar Singh](#) (TERI School of Advanced Studies)



**6.3.1.** Singh started the session noting that while historically the purpose of pushing scientists to publish was more to do with serving the larger society (new inventions and innovations to improve quality of life), over time this has turned into a measure of academic repute, be it for the scientist or the institution s/he is attached to. Some institutions have started to provide monetary incentives to the authors publishing in journals having ‘impact factor’ beyond a threshold — this has intensified the pressure on the scientists to publish continuously.

**6.3.2.** To Singh, this over-emphasis of publications can lead to both fabrication and falsification of research — conducts such as these damages the credibility of science. For example, citation of a paper that has not followed all the ethical norms will create confusion over scientific truth. In addition, in case there have been commercial uses of the supposed scientific knowledge, damages will be far more. He shared results from many studies that have captured the alarming extent of the problem.

**6.3.3.** Singh identified the following attributes of scientific misconduct:

- Intentional negligence to acknowledge previous works (including own work) — failure to cite the classic works in the relevant domain is an example of this. Of course, one does not expect anyone writing on gravity to cite Newton! Often reviewers suggest adding the foundational contributions in the relevant field. Researchers should be humble enough to realize and acknowledge that they are “[s]tand[ing] on the shoulders of giants”, the tagline of Google Scholar. No researcher can claim that her/his work has not been benefitted from the foundational works carried out by previous researchers.
- Deliberate fabrication of data collected by the researcher — examples are manipulation of photographs in fields such as nanoscience. Significant number of retractions has taken place on this ground in the last few years, noted Singh. Here, researchers literally make up the data. The purpose is primarily to make the data appear more like what was expected. This is different from making errors in the management of data. This misconduct is different to catch, though — it can happen only if another researcher makes an attempt to replicate the results using the same data. It is nearly impossible for any reviewer to verify each of the claims made by an author — it not only takes a lot of time, but the reviewer may not have the necessary infrastructure to repeat the experiment (see, PubPeer at <https://pubpeer.com/static/about> for the mechanisms through which one can raise concerns on ethical conduct by the authors of a paper).

- Deliberate omission of collected data that does not agree with the hypothesis — this deals with how to handle the proverbial ‘outliers’. It is unethical to omit such ‘outliers’ that does not fit with the hypothesis. The correct approach is to report the outlier, give reasons for considering a data point or points as outlier/s and then proceed with the analysis without the outlier/s. It is possible that the ‘outlier/s’ may result from experimental or equipment errors but even then reporting the outlier/s may help future researchers — not to be surprised with numbers that ‘does not fit’.
- Claiming another researcher’s data to be one’s own — this is nothing but plagiarism. Just like the case of text and expressions, for data too, proper citation is necessary.
- Submission of a paper without the explicit consent of all the researchers — there have been many examples of this, as per Singh. Consider a possibility where one of the authors (whose consent was not taken and who get to know about the publication later) does not agree with all the conclusions. In case this person writes to the publisher, it can be lead to problem for all the authors, editor as well as the publisher. These days, some publishers ask the corresponding author to include email address of all the authors at the time of submission. Unless all the authors approve, the editorial process does not start. However, not all the publishing houses have this facility in their submission portal. Singh thinks that it shall be the responsibility of the corresponding or the principal author to ensure that consent has been obtained from all the authors.
- Failure to acknowledge all the researchers who performed the work and/or addition of ‘ghost’ ‘weighty’ authors — while the latter issue is a case of pure ethical violation, the former one is somewhat hazy. There are grey zones on the type of contributions (and extent) that will earn one an authorship. For example, the technicians who maintain laboratory facilities or those who may not have been connected with the experiment but has provided critical insights into the interpretation of the results. One expects the principal investigator to be fair but not too generous (this was deliberated upon by Uma Ramakrishnan in session 2.3) — yet, fairness and generosity are subject to belief systems and worldviews. To address this problem, some publishing houses are increasingly asking for a ‘credit statement’ (an example can be found here: <https://beta.elsevier.com/researcher/author/policies-and-guidelines/credit-author-statement?trial=true>). This statement is expected to be submitted at the time of submission and to be included in the published paper.
- Repeated publication of too-similar results or reviews — this is also known as redundancy. This happens when an author publishes multiple short communications over time and then collates them together in the form of a full length research article. Even if the short communications are cited appropriately in the larger article but with little or no change, it constitutes scientific misconduct as no new knowledge has been produced. This falls under self-plagiarism.

**6.3.4.** A paper titled ‘Scientific misconduct: a new approach to prevention’ by Magne Nylenna and Sigmund Simonsen (2006, *The Lancet*, Vol. 367, Issue 9526, pp. P1882-1884, DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(06\)68821-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(06)68821-1)) contain useful insights in this matter.

## **Session 6.4: Rules for Referencing/ Citation and why should they be followed; Practical with Zotero/Mendeley (hands on)**

**Resource Person:** [Johan Mohamad Mir](#) (JMI)

**6.4.1.** Mir started the session on the need to understand the citation styles and follow them, to avoid allegations of plagiarism. It is most important during the preparation of literature survey, he said. For this purpose accessing Scopus and Web of Science collections is better than Google Scholar in his opinion — as the former two includes only ‘certified’ resources. In fact, for both NIRF ranking and NAAC accreditations, Scopus and WoS collections are used to locate the publications from a given institution.

**6.4.2.** Accessing Mendeley, Science Direct and Scopus can take place through creating an account with the Elsevier. To Mir, downloading the desktop version of Mendeley makes most sense to create the ‘library’. He showed and helped the participants to create such a collection on their laptops. He explained different features of Mendeley.



## Week 2, Day 7: 08.12.22

### Speaker Quotes:

“Students must know the best practices in publishing”.

“One of duties of institutional authorities is to encourage researchers to publish papers in best journals”

— **Dr. Murari Tapaswi**, (Former) Chief Librarian, National Institute of Oceanography, Goa

“Predatory journals do not follow ethical practices”.

“Citation and attributions are not the same”.

“Turnitin or any other similarity check software cannot make a distinction between what is common knowledge and what is not”.

— **Prof. Nandan Nawn**, Programme Director, Professor, Department of Economics, JMI, Former Secretary, INSEE and Member, Biodiversity Collaborative

“Most papers are rejected without going through the peer review; they are rejected at desk”.

“It is not necessary that great research will be always published in high impact journals”.

“Sometime papers published in a low impact journal are highly cited”.

— **Dr. Chander K Singh**, Associate Professor, TERI School of Advance Studies

### Narrative

#### Session 7.1: Publication Ethics and Best Practices in Publishing

**Resource Person:** [Murari Tapaswi](#) (Formerly, National Institute of Oceanography)

**7.1.1.** Tapaswi started the session with the following question: what is meant by best practices in publishing, what are the items in the list and why should authors know about them? After explaining meaning of duties, responsibilities and ethics in the context of publication processes, and how they help maintaining public faith on science, he discussed the relevant guidelines and duties of all connected with the publication processes: authors, editors, reviewers, copyeditors and publisher.

**7.1.2.** He explained various elements of the guidelines issued by Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), the gold standard that every journal included in international indexes such as Web of



Science and Scopus has to follow. He explained each of the ‘core practices’ recommended by COPE:

- Journals to have processes for handling allegations of misconduct,
- Policies for authorship and contributorship and processes to handle disputes,
- Policies and processes for handling complaints and appeals against editorial board and even the publisher,
- Clarity on scope of conflict of interests and processes to handle such conflicts of each of the ‘stakeholders’ namely, authors, reviewers, editors, journals and publishers,
- Policies on making available data for replication,
- Policies and processes on ethical oversight,
- Policies on copyright and publishing licenses,
- Clear journal management structure,
- Transparency on peer review processes,
- Processes for post publication discussion, corrections and retraction.

**7.1.3.** He also expressed some concern over the Scopus list as in the past it included journals with questionable credentials (before removing them). On the matter of identification of a journal following best publication practices he suggested looking for attributes like ISSN, adherence to the declared publication schedule, and peer review process.



**7.1.4.** Subsequently he discussed the standards set by ‘White Lists’ such as Scopus, WoS, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and UGC Committee on Academic Research Ethics (CARE). Some of the best practices as recommended by DOAJ were explained:

- Title of the Journal need to be distinct / Unique, consistent with the stated scope of the journal and consistently displayed on the article, issue, volume and website.
- ISSN — both print and electronic, if available-is verifiable on ISSN database, and clearly and consistently displayed on all platforms.
- Declared publishing schedule is adhered to
- Details including physical address of publisher or owner are verifiable.
- Clear statement of commitment to the declared peer review policy.
- Publication Ethics Statement.
- Guidelines for the Authors.
- Scholarly content in sync with the declared Aims and Scope.
- Names and Affiliations of the members of Editorial Board with verifiable contacts.
- Availability of names and affiliations of authors and contact of corresponding author.
- Digital preservation (only for Scopus and DOAJ).

**7.1.5.** In his concluding remarks Tapaswi advised participants to identify the journals that do not follow best practices and standards and refrain from publishing in them. None of the ‘white lists’ are perfect in his opinion — the responsibility of locating journals adhering to ethical norms lies with the authors.

## **Session 7.2: Violation of Publication Ethics and Misconduct, Authorship/ Co-authorship, Publication Misconduct, Complaints & Appeal Provisions**

**Resource Person:** [Nandan Nawn](#) (JMI, INSEE, Biodiversity Collaborative)

**7.2.1.** Nawn, in the following session, started with the last remark made by the previous speaker: how to check authenticity of journal? Drawing from his experience as a former Managing Editor of *Ecology, Economy and Society—the INSEE Journal* he used a variety of examples from the website of this Scopus indexed and UGC CARE included journal. He referred to several attributes of clone, fake and predatory journals and provided suggestions on how to identify these attributes.

**7.2.2.** On the question of using applications such as iThenticate, Urkund, Turnitin, he mentioned that scope of each differs: except Turnitin, no other has access to publications behind paywall. Further, variations in the length of string used to check the extent of similarity can yield different numbers. As a result, the similarity percentage can differ when same work is tested through multiple applications.

**7.2.3.** He also referred to the variety of what is popularly known as ‘Impact Factor’ and explained why the number differs across platforms. Due to reasons similar to difference in similarity percentages, the h-index differs across platforms such as Google Scholar, Scopus and Web of Science. In his further remarks he made a useful difference between publishing and releasing, arguing that in India only those with a license from Registrar of Newspapers of India can publish anything: the rest can only release. Using the COPE guidelines, he showed the requirements of authorship and difference between authors and those who should be acknowledged.

**7.2.4.** Referring to the provisions included in the INSEE journal website, he discussed the provisions that every journal included in international indexes has to follow on the matter of complaints on violation of publication ethics by anyone in the entire publication process, besides penalty and appeal provisions.

## **Session 7.3: Initiatives at HEI regulatory bodies in India to instil publication ethics**

**Resource Person:** [Nandan Nawn](#) (JMI, INSEE, Biodiversity Collaborative)

**7.3.1.** Nawn, in this session, discussed various provisions of UGC regulations on the matter of plagiarism (including self-plagiarism). In this context he pointed at the difference between citation and attribution, identified the circumstances when prior permission from the copyright holder is necessary before quoting verbatim a text with a length above a certain number of words.

**7.3.2.** Subsequently, he theorized self-plagiarism using the concept of a pure commodity, propounded by Karl Kautsky. While referring to the UGC regulations on Academic Integrity, he pointed to the responsibilities of higher education institutions on making students and teachers learn the fundamental aspects of plagiarism as the regulation calls for, including but not limited to difference between similarity percentage and extent of plagiarism.

**7.3.3.** During the subsequent discussion he commented that copying a text without proper attribution which is not copyrighted is also plagiarism, and thus interpreting plagiarism as just a matter of violation of copyright is not correct. Even ideas and not just expressions of others, if used in the text, must accompany proper citation, he concluded.

## **Session 7.4: How to choose a forum for releasing or publishing your work?**

**Resource Person:** [Chander K Singh](#) (TERI School of Advanced Studies)

**7.4.1.** Singh, in his initial remarks pointed out that maximum papers are rejected by editors (‘desk rejection’), i.e. before the review by external peers. Editors usually take a decision on the basis of title, abstract and keywords.

**7.4.2.** ‘Cost of production’ of a paper in a journal is quite huge: this includes both time and out of pocket expenses. In case one opts the ‘open access’ route in an otherwise behind-the-paywall journal, one has to make more payment in addition. Of course, post publication, the author(s) gets reputation and prestige in return; but the publishing houses often get substantial revenue through charging a fee to access the paper. It is not necessary for best quality research to be always published in high impact journal. As a corollary it is not necessary that all papers in a reputed journal will be highly cited. Sometimes papers in a low impact journal also are highly cited.

**7.4.3.** There are about 35,000 peer reviewed journal and about 15,000 predatory journals, today, as per Singh. In case one adds the predatory ones, the number will cross a lakh for sure. The obvious question is how to choose the one, best suited for a given paper. Impact factor should not be the deciding factor, as many subjects (such as mathematics) do not have high impact factor journals (see, Source Normalized Impact per Paper developed by Scopus at <https://blog.scopus.com/posts/journal-metrics-in-scopus-source-normalized-impact-per-paper-snip> to partially address this)

**7.4.4.** Every *real* journal necessarily includes its Aims and Scope — it provides useful information for the author to decide whether it includes the area of one’s research. The areas that are mentioned will not be very narrow. Else, the journal will not be able to get the required number of papers. It is important to choose a journal only when the submission falls within the Aims and Scope. The next thing to note is the kind of areas that the journal has published papers in recent times, say, last two years.

**7.4.5.** Further, he discussed the different attributes of a manuscript and types of submissions (beyond research article), such as letters, rapid communications, short communications, review papers and perspectives. In top journals, even letters receive a DOI number and are cited.

**7.4.6.** Singh shared reasons for rejection stated by the editor of a high impact journal: (a) out of scope of the journal, (b) format not according to the Guideline for Authors, (c) inappropriate (or no) suggested reviewers, (d) inadequate response to reviewers, (e) poor English and (f) resubmission of rejected manuscripts without revision.

**7.4.7.** To improve the publication potential he shared the following advice: (a) ensure that a clear, useful and interesting message is conveyed through the submission; (b) ensure the logical flow for the reader; (c) economise on the words as journal space is precious.

**7.4.8.** Further, he spoke on variations within the journal landscape: open versus closed access, and OA with and without APC. He was of the view that APC can be exorbitantly high at times, but various international journals offers waiver in case authors are from low or middle income countries. Also, a number of learned societies run OA journals, without any APC. Examples are one by the Indian Society for Remote Sensing and by the Indian Society for Ecological Economics (INSEE).

**7.4.9.** In his concluding remarks, he alerted the participants on how to identify a predatory journal.





## Week 2, Day 8: 09.12.22

### Speaker Quotes:

“Scientific knowledge must satisfy three requirements: observability, repeatability and verifiability”.

“If you have to sell your work, do it in the best possible way”.

— **Prof. Nandan Nawn**, Programme Director, Professor, Department of Economics, JMI, Former Secretary, INSEE and Member, Biodiversity Collaborative

“The music may not make sense if the audience is with different aural abilities”.

“Consider research presentations to portray an adventure/mystery that you have ventured to solve”.

“Know your audience. Make a positive preparation (do not prepare in fear) and communicate to the right audience.”

— **Dr. Nilanjan Ghosh**, Director, Centre for New Economic Diplomacy, & ORF Kolkata Centre, Observer Research Foundation, and President, INSEE

### Narrative

#### Session 8.1: Publication process in a journal: a general introduction

Resource Person: [Nandan Nawn](#) (JMI, INSEE, Biodiversity Collaborative)



**8.1.1.** In this session—based on his experience of setting up a journal and running it for several years — Nawn provided an overview of the process of publication and significance of each stage: submission, review, copyediting and production.

**8.1.2.** He pointed out that most common reasons for desk rejection are absence of the following in the research paper: substantive research question, new insights and new findings. In the first stage, i.e. submission, special emphasis is placed on the Aims and Scope of journal (to ensure ‘fitness’ of the submission), contents of the cover letter, abstract (strict adherence to word limit and number of keywords as per the Author’s Guidelines), submission of anonymised text for reviewers, font style and size, footnotes, references, and attributes of display items such as maps, tables and figures, besides a declaration stating that the content is free of plagiarism and also copyright free. As a reference he used <https://ecoinsee.org/journal/ojs/index.php/ees/Guidelines>.

**8.1.3.** He shared that the first stage is usually handled by the journal office or managing editor. Alongwith a report on the plagiarism check test, a recommendation is made to the Editor-in-Chief or any of the editors (in case more than one) on adherence to *all* the items mentioned in the para above. The editor takes the next decision — whether to reject or forward it to the concerned Associate Editor. In most journals all sections except research paper (say, Book Review) are handled by a designated Associate Editor. These sections are reviewed internally. On the other

hand, research papers are reviewed externally as well as internally. Irrespective of type of review, the recommendation by the concerned Associate Editor is placed before the editor or Editor-in-Chief, as the case may be. S/he will take the final decision. In most of the journals it is the editor who communicates the decision to the author. In case it is rejection after or without review, usually some suggestions are made.

**8.1.4.** Once a submission is accepted for publication, author(s) will have to submit a declaration on copyright free nature of the content, Nawn said. In many journals, at this stage authors will be asked to transfer the exclusive copyright to the publisher — often authors do this unknowingly, that creates problems later, he said. Subsequently, the submission is reviewed by the copyeditor, who may raise ‘author’s queries’ and suggest some changes.

**8.1.5.** The final (copyedited) version reaches the production stage, where the submission is typeset and sent to the author (or corresponding author) for proofreading. This is the final check — afterwards digital object identifier (DOI) is generated and the work is assigned to an issue. Nawn advised to proofread the printed copy rather than reading it on screen.



## **Session 8.2: Submission and publication of a paper in a journal — processes from the author’s end (hands on)**

**Resource Person:** [Nandan Nawn](#) (JMI, INSEE, Biodiversity Collaborative)

**8.2.1.** Nawn shared the URL of the mock journal portal created on Open Journal Systems platform. He provided a tour of the entire portal to the participants, wearing the hat of an author first, and then of the journal managing editor. He shared his experience in the process of handling INSEE journal and setting up the OJS platform on which this journal is run today.

**8.2.2.** Then, each participant was assisted to make a submission on the mock journal portal. Special emphasis was given to understand the metadata of the documents to be uploaded (such as only .doc, etc.) in line with requirements. In addition, participants received instructions on how to upload multiple documents such as a cover letter, display items, anonymised text, etc.

**8.2.3.** Subsequently, each of the participants was made a handling editor and Nawn assigned each of the submissions to them. They were then given an exposure on the reviewer selection process.

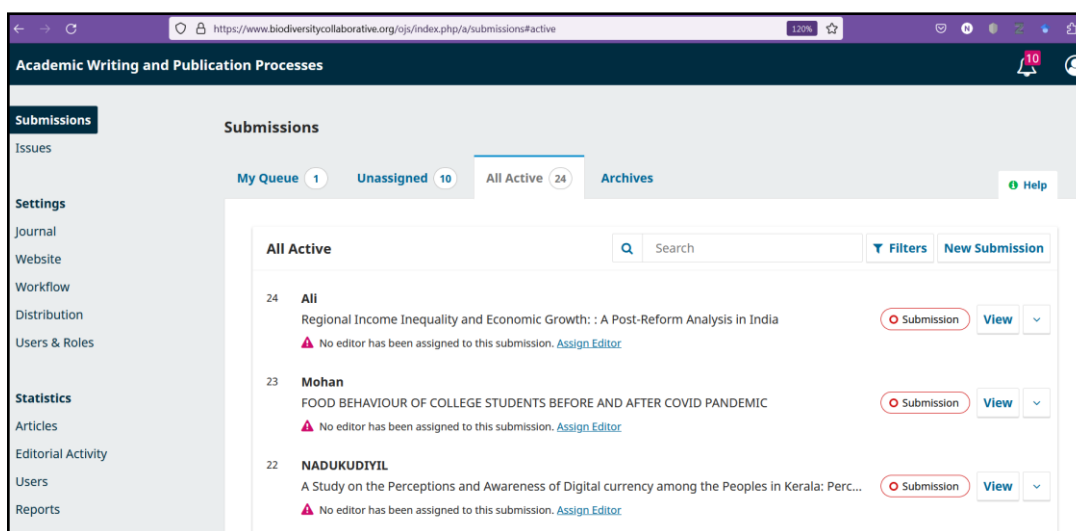
### Session 8.3: Submission of a paper in a journal (hands on)

**Resource Person:** [Nandan Nawn](#) (JMI, INSEE, Biodiversity Collaborative)

**8.3.1.** As a follow up of the previous sessions, Nawn advised the participants to go through the Author’s guidelines of INSEE journal, and prepare the documents accordingly, for submission. He advised use of .doc files instead of .docx while saving the text to minimise formatting issues later.

**8.3.2.** Then the participants were asked to go through Aims and Scope of some journals in the subject area of document to be submitted. They were advised to decide the type of submission they want to make and note the requirement accordingly, before making suitable changes to the draft. Further, they were advised to prepare the cover letter accordingly, i.e. keeping in mind the Aims and Scope of the journal where they want to submit *and* the section (research article, commentary, etc.) for which the submission was prepared.

**8.3.3.** Subsequently, each of the participants made the submission on the mock journal portal.



### Session 8.4: Making effective communications during an oral presentation

**Resource Person:** [Nilanjan Ghosh](#) (Observer Research Foundation, and INSEE)

**8.4.1.** Ghosh, with a rich experience and proven expertise on making effective communications in the domain of policymaking started the session highlighting three stages of research enquiry: negotiation, analytical and communication.

**8.4.2.** He classified charts, pictures, and numbers as the tools for making effective communications. Every word you speak should have a purpose, he said. Focus should always be on the key ideas.



**8.4.3.** He stressed on the importance of asking questions. In his view, question arises from a conflict and must be directed to the right audience in the right approach. In a nutshell, communication must be tailor-made in such a way that it has an influential impact in the arena of policymaking.



## Week 2, Day 9: 10.12.22

### Speaker Quotes:

“Everyone should be well versed with the characteristics, benefits and drawbacks of writing tools: it is important to maintain academic integrity”.

— **Mr. Johan Mohamad Mir**, Information Scientist, Dr. Zakir Hussain Central Library, JMI

“Managing the journal office through artificial intelligence can resolve certain problems of conflict of interest, but there are some other issues which only a human managing editor can handle”.

“Social science is not rocket science, it is only harder”.

“There is a huge difference between common sense and social science. The former is the collection of empirical facts not codified using any theoretical apparatus while the latter consists of systematic knowledge about the society”.

“By memorizing only the factual knowledge, one can succeed as a craftsperson, but not as a speaker”.

— **Dr. Deepak Malghan**, Associate Professor, Indian Institute of Management-Bangalore, and member, INSEE

“Minimize queries, reply accurately”.

“Citations, footnotes and endnotes—use them judiciously”.

“Clarify your pronouns, decrease your prepositions”.

— **Mr. Surit Das**, Freelance Editor

### Narrative

#### Session 9.1: Using tools to improve quality of textual expressions

**Resource Persons:** [Johan Mohamad Mir](#) (JMI) and [Sandeep Sharma](#) (JMI)



**9.1.1.** Sharma initiated the session with a discussion on characteristics, pros and cons of the writing tools such as Quillbot. He pointed out that many such tools are freely available. They usually include tools for spelling check, grammar check, improving conciseness, and modes such as paraphraser, summarizer, among others. Paid version, in addition, includes tools such as tone adjustment, thesaurus searches, unlimited paraphrasing and additional paraphraser modes such as standard, fluency, formal, simple, creative. To Sharma, the pros include stress elimination, enhancement in communication clarity, and increment in productivity by instilling greater confidence. Cons on the other hand include alteration of actual meaning due to paraphrasing, which can be quite costly to the author.

9.1.2. Mir, through a lecture-demonstration, showed use of Quillbot and Grammarly to alter/improve the quality of textual expressions. A hands-on session for participants followed. Mir concluded with a disclaimer that these tools should be used only as a complement and not substitutes to what humans can do.



### Session 9.2 and 9.3: Review process in a journal: a general introduction and Revisions and response sheets

**Resource Person:** [Deepak Malghan](#) (Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, and INSEE)

9.2.1. Malghan, an editor of *Ecological Economics*, titled his presentation in the first session as ‘Validity, Rigor, and Proof in Social Science Research’. To him, requirements in social sciences against each of these three are more than what the proverbial ‘rocket science’ warrants. For example, unlike natural sciences, possibilities to conduct experiments that can yield precise results, alongwith mono-causal explanations, are limited or mostly non-existent in social sciences. In fact, there may not be any reason for the social scientists to emulate or mimic natural scientists against validity, rigour and proof.

9.2.2. To him, journal editors have been evaluating submissions against validity, rigour and proof. After all, all research is provisional — no one can be definitive about the results or conclusions. When a research paper is being sent for review, rather than substantive contributions, Malghan expects the reviewer(s) to share comments on three questions: (a) is the research valid; (b) is the research rigorous enough (i.e. can it be replicated); (c) are there ample proofs against the claims made?

9.2.3. Next, he posed the following question before the audience: “What distinguishes scholarship and rigorous research from journalistic accounts, commonsense and ideology?” One can be an activist and researcher at the same time, but an activist’s ‘pamphlet’ will be different from a researcher’s article — they are analytically two different categories. However, they serve different purposes and it is not a good idea to compare the two. Acknowledging work by Andre Beteille (1996, ‘Sociology and Common Sense’, *EPW*, Vol. 31, No. 35/37, pp. 2361-65), Malghan put forward the following:

- ‘common sense’ is merely a collection of empirical facts, not codified using any theoretical apparatus: it can be wrong and there is more than meets the (untrained) eye. A researcher on the other hand will make an attempt to explain the observed facts (often based on some ‘grounded theory’).
- ‘ideology’ concerns itself with (social) change and transformation — it follows from one’s belief systems and worldview.
- social science concerns with neither common sense nor ideology — it looks for systematic knowledge about society. It must follow some method — even in ‘method in madness’ there is a method!



9.2.4. Subsequently, Malghan differentiated between scholarship, research and action, which to him are analytically different categories as well:

- *Scholarship* is the acquisition of knowledge — it is the primary ‘scaffolding’ underlying the discipline(s) and quite fundamental in nature. For example, a sociologist may want to understand what holds the society together by using some analytical concept like agency. It follows that there are some shared ways to see the world around for scholars within a given discipline. Using an example on ‘stable preferences’ of consumers (distilled through the first semester microeconomics course) and global multibillion dollar advertising industry that is trying to change the preferences, he alerted the audience that one should be careful about the limits of the existing ‘scaffoldings’ of disciplines.
- *Research* involves application of scholarship to understand the world around us, even to challenge the received wisdom or scholarship. These points to the direct, intimate and dialectic relationship between scholarship and research. [Malghan quoted Nichols Georgescu-Roegen, one of the founders of transdiscipline of ecological economics: “By memorizing only a part of factual knowledge one can succeed as a craftsman, but certainly not as a scholar” (1971, ‘Chapter 27: Science: A Brief Evolutionary Analysis’ in *The Entropy Law and the Economic Process*, Harvard University Press)]
- *Action* is an attempt to transform the world around us. One can use one’s scholarship and research to do this. Action-research is an example of such. In this sense, scholarship, research and action are related to each other even if remaining analytically distinct.

9.2.5. To Malghan, journal editors may see the research questions in social sciences through three analytically distinct categories. He offered a taxonomy:

- The simplest one: What *is* (or was)?

— Hard sciences may have served as a model for validity, rigor, and proof for this question (“physics-envy”). Typically, the answers are sought in the form of yes, no or may be. The research questions are to be framed accordingly.

- A little harder: What *can be*?

— This is a technical question but includes real-world institutional constraints.

Most social science journals focus on the two above. However, a more interesting is the next one, which is normative in nature.

- The ‘clincher’: What *should be*?

— For this, social sciences have to look for tools beyond the hard sciences. For answering normative questions, there may not be anything to mimic, at least not for validity, rigour and proof in this domain!

To Malghan, when one puts together this taxonomy with ‘common sense’ and ‘ideology’ it is easier to see why social sciences are harder than natural/ hard/ rocket sciences.



**9.2.6.** Subsequently, he shared interesting insights from Donald E. Stokes’ work (see, display item). Author was looking at the ‘Nobel prize’ winning researchers’ work(s) to locate what kind of question that the winners had in mind. Stokes found that most Nobel laureates’ work(s) belonged to the ‘practice’ or Pasteur’s quadrant (yes, yes). To Malghan, social scientists should focus their research on this quadrant too, but from the vantage point of their own discipline(s). Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen’s 1971 classic belongs to this quadrant: addressing a practical problem (energy crisis) and asking for fundamental changes in the discipline of economics at the same time (‘new knowledge’), he said.

Research is inspired by		Considerations of use?	
		No	Yes
Quest for fundamental understanding	Yes	Pure Basic Research (Bohr)	Use-inspired Basic Research (Pasteur)
	No		Pure Applied Research (Edison)

Source: Adapted from ‘Figure 3-5: Quadrant Model of Scientific Research’ in Donald E. Stokes, 1997 *Pasteur’s Quadrant: Basic Science and Technological Innovation*, Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press), p. 73

**9.2.7.** Malghan noted that often authors receive a rejection letter from the journals stating that the contribution is interesting but lacks theoretical insights (‘new knowledge’). To him, one way to look it is to locate the evolutions in theoretical science from ‘taxonomic filling’ to ‘logical filling’ over time. But even then, ‘logical filling’ model cannot account for several phenomena in the natural sciences and most, if not all of what social science studies. To explain further he used the phrase ‘qualitative residual’ a la Georgescu-Roegen (Section 3, in Chapter IV: Measure, Size, and Sameness: Some Object Lessons from Physics in *The Entropy Law and the Economic Process*, Harvard University Press). While physical laws contain cardinal variables, in social sciences it is almost always ordinal ones. For example, it may be possible to put *jatis* and *varnas* in a social hierarchy (howsoever defined and challenged), but it will be foolish to measure the distance between the two ‘data points’.

**9.2.8.** Then, he compared the role of a social scientist as a medical doctor and as a scientist looking for rigorous validation of hypothesis. A medical doctor, to him, has few theories but with loads of carefully honed intuitions. S/he will not try to fit a model and run a regression to locate causality; instead, on the basis of symptoms and diagnostic tests will arrive at a conclusion (medicine, surgery, etc.). On the other hand, it is the bio-medical profession who runs ‘controlled’ experiments to locate mono-causality. To achieve this, by construction, one has to leave the innumerable details that may otherwise ‘contaminate’ the result. Social scientists can replicate this kind of ‘experiments’ on the field (Randomised Control Trials) to locate and measure causal effect *x* of instrument or intervention *y* (say, impact of health scheme A on poverty levels in location B). In the process, the scientist will have to leave all the necessary details, by construction. But can it contribute to the larger question of poverty, one wonders. To Malghan, it is better for the social scientists to be a little modest and be like medical doctors rather than trying to be bio-medical scientists. Doctors do an important job!

**9.2.9.** The final remarks was on the difference between conceptual models and operational models, drawn from a diagram capturing the relation between intertemporal allocative efficiency and intergenerational asset distribution from Richard B. Howarth and Richard B. Norgaard, 1992, ‘Environmental Valuation under Sustainable Development’, *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 82, No. 2, pp. 473-477. Conceptually, the contribution was novel, foregrounding the trade-offs between pathways (first efficient and then sustainable versus first sustainable and then efficient). In it, the measurements were made in terms of utils, an abstract matter that can only be placed on an ordinal scale. To Malghan, this model is of little operational value, as one is not sure how to transfer utils from one generation to the next. This is a typical attribute of social science research — motivation may come from the conceptual plain (“new fundamental knowledge”) but one is not clear what to do with the new knowledge as it may be of little practical application. Malghan is of the view that in the journal publication world, conceptual models receive a ‘premium’ but the ‘real’ social science will warrant dialectic relationship between conceptual and operational models (‘Pasteur’s Quadrant’).

**9.3.1.** He started the second session explaining the hierarchal structure in the Editorial Board of a typical international journal and the responsibilities at each level. Usually it has either two or three tiers. At the top will be the Editor-in-Chief or just an Editor or even a group of Editors. This is more of a practical requirement to ensure parity across publications within each category (such as research article, commentary, etc.). Most journals also have a Managing Editor, who does not take any substantive (academic) decision: her/his primary role is to ensure ‘technical compliance’ (word count, parity between figures and tables uploaded and those mentioned in the text, plagiarism check, etc.) of submissions with the guidelines, prior to placing them before the editor(s). The third level is a set of Associate Editors (or Editors, in case there is an Editor-in-Chief).

**9.3.2.** Malghan ‘deconstructed’ the proverbial ‘black box’ of ‘inside’ of a journal with particular reference to the processes behind the decisions. After being satisfied with the compliance, the Managing Editor places the submission before the Editors, who then takes a decision whether to reject it outright (‘desk rejection’) or send it to an Associate Editor. Typically 80 per cent papers are rejected at this tier. The concerned Associate Editor can then decide to recommend rejection or send it to the external reviewers and recommend the decision (accept/ major revision/ minor revision/ resubmit as a new submission/ reject) in consideration with the comments received from the reviewers. Only rarely the recommendation by the AE is changed by the Editor. Typically more than 80 per cent papers are rejected at this second tier. In short, of the 100 papers received, 4 reach the ‘peer review’ stage.

**9.3.3.** Malghan shared some interesting insights connected with conflicts of interest on the part of Editors and Associate Editors. Should s/he take the responsibility of a submission made by a colleague or a co-author? Even if COPE Guidelines are clear on this, it is not clear on many other possibilities, say, a doctoral student of a colleague who happens to be known to the Editor or Associate Editor. It depends a lot on the part of the members of Editorial Board to take a conscious decision on this. This can be true for the reviewers too. Increasingly, pre-print version of the submission is uploaded by the authors (at times it is asked by the journals). It follows that even if on paper the review system is supposed to be double-anonymous (neither author nor reviewer should know the identity of each other), it will take only a few seconds for the reviewer to know the identity of the author: just googling a few sentences will do!

**9.3.4.** At times, journals perform a ‘stress test’ to check if the system (in place) is able to take care of both false positives (a bad paper written by a big name) and false negatives (a good paper written by a hitherto ‘unknown’ author), in Malghan’s experience. The idea is to check the extent to which ‘subjective biases’ are at work. In his opinion, while it may be impossible to eliminate these altogether, it is best to recognise that it exists.

**9.3.5.** While journals are not obligated to make a ‘reasoned argument’ behind rejection, some editors make it a point to offer some comments on the reasons and even at times, suggestions to improve. This is particularly true at the tier 2 rejection. At this stage the Associate Editor (or Editors) is expected to read the entire paper. Some journals make it mandatory for Associate Editor’s to write at least 200 words on the grounds for rejection.

**9.3.6.** The time constraints faced by every member of the Editorial Board is real and binding. It follows that when an Editor sends a paper to the Associate Editor, s/he will be weighing whether this submission is worth the time to be taken in the process of reading (and taking a decision) by her/his colleague. After all, there are many other competing submissions. An identical question will be in the minds of the Associate Editor as well, at the time of sending the paper to the reviewers. After all, almost always it is difficult to get good reviewers. It may be noted that neither the editor, associate editor nor the reviewers are paid employees of the publishing company. They offer their time freely for a commitment that can vary from creating a public good (‘new knowledge’) to helping new authors find a place to showcase their scholarship.

**9.3.7.** On the process of review by external peers, Malghan points to a marked mismatch between ‘demand and supply’. It is extremely difficult, at times, to get three good reviewers (the most common number). The most thoughtful reviews usually come from those reviewers who are in the

‘personal network’ of the Editor (or Associate Editor). But then, no such reviewer can be burdened with a substantial number of papers, as soon s/he will refuse to review! Again, for an Editor who has to send 100 papers for external review per year, there must be 300 potential reviewers in her/his personal network with the same specialisation as the journal — this is almost impossible. In recent times, AI has started to contribute to the process of locating potential reviewers. Howsoever reasonable such recommendations are, a good editor should evaluate them rather than sending to the top three in the list. Again, many reviewers refuse to review — this has serious costs (in terms of quality of the review). Many reviewers often focus on technical matters (say, a possible endogeneity) rather than the ‘validity, rigour and proof’ over the substantial argument or the main thesis. Some reviewers even write a long review commenting on comma, full stop and other copyediting matters, instead of evaluating validity of the argument. There exists a system of rating the reviewers by the editors on the quality, but it may not send the required signal to the reviewers to improve the quality. Malghan’s sincere request to everyone was not to refuse when requested for a review; in case, one has to, it may be done immediately so that precious time is saved. Malghan has noticed a fall in the time given to reviewers: when he joined the journal, it was 12 weeks, and later it came down to 10 weeks, while now it is 3 weeks. Nawn interjected at this point to say that except a miniscule of reviewers, everyone responds only after the first reminder!



**9.3.8.** Due to a fall in the quality of reviews, the Editor’s work has increased: after all s/he will have to take a decision (after the review by external peers) whether to accept, ask for revision (minor or major) or reject and resubmit recommendation. At times reviewers may even contradict each other. A good Editor will summarise all the comments received from the reviewers and her/his own and place it before the Editor-in-Chief to take a decision. Ordinarily, this summary should contain how well the submission is fitting with the journal, if there are some insurmountable problems in the paper and if there are areas where some revision is required.

**9.3.9.** It follows that authors must make attempts to make a decent impression through the first 500 words, the cover letter, title and abstract, as they will be read most intensely. These four places should cover every substantial claim that is being made: why the question that has been raised and addressed is important; why the question is being raised? May be the author should stand in front of the mirror and read the first para. Author will be able to realise herself or himself if the paper is ready to be submitted. Also read the last two paragraphs carefully — they are important for the review process, Malghan suggested.

**9.3.10.** He shared his experience (as author and editor) on the ways in which authors usually address the comments and suggestions received from the editors and reviewers before speaking in detail on the importance of ‘response sheet’. To him, Editors (like everyone else in the journal ecosystem) take their job quite seriously — they will expect the authors to take the comments shared with them seriously as well. His advice to the authors was to be respectful in the responses as well. A typical response sheet will look like a memo with four columns: serial no of the



comment by reviewer (1, 2, 3); comment; response (including no action needed); specific changes made with page and line number of the original paper. None of the comments should be left unattended. These will certainly help the Editorial Board member. After all, most scarce commodity in the entire journal ecosystem is time!

### **Session 9.4: Post-acceptance processes: copyediting, response to queries**

**Resource Person:** [Surit Das](#) (Freelance Editor)

**9.4.1.** Das, who has served as the copy editor in several journals including EPW and INSEE journal, started with an overview of one of post-acceptance stages namely copyediting and responding to queries. Drawing from his rich experience he shared several advises for authors to keep in mind in order to minimize errors in this stage, including how to address the queries from the copyeditor. He explained different types of queries.

**9.4.2.** On the matter of choosing the keywords (usually five), he suggested avoiding those that are already included in the title and abstract. These three — title, abstract and keywords — to him, make the first impression to the editor. He further advised minimum use of abbreviations as far as possible.

**9.4.3.** As a writing tool he provided an example of ‘The Writer’s Diet’ (a plug-in to MS-Word) by Helen Sword. He urged the participants to go through the work of some of the ‘must read’ authors such as Wendy Laura Belcher, Lynn P Nygaard and Valerie Matarese. He concluded the session by urging the authors to consider responding to queries raised by copyeditors as quickly as possible.



### **Week 2, Day 10: 12.12.22**

#### **Speaker Quotes:**

“Knowledge come from an evidence based research”.

“Knowledge translation encourages researchers to go beyond the research and academic group”.

—**Dr. Shailly Kedia**, Senior Fellow and Associate Director, Centre for Sustainable Development Research and Leadership, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), New Delhi and member, INSEE

“Social media if leveraged well can get you a lot”.

“Be mindful about the repercussion”.

—**Mr. Shreyas Joshi**, Communications Associate, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), New Delhi

## Narrative

### Sessions 10.1 and 10.2: How to communicate research beyond the ‘academia’? and How to improve visibility of your works?

**Resource Persons:** [Shailly Kedia](#) (TERI and INSEE), and [Shreyas Joshi](#) (TERI)

**10.1.1.** The aim of these sessions was to encourage the participants to improve the visibility of their works through use of a variety of such platforms that are perceived as outside of academia.

**10.1.2.** In her initial remarks, Kedia highlighted the importance of knowledge creation, knowledge translation, knowledge synthesis, knowledge products and associated tools. She highlighted the significance that knowledge translation holds while communicating about research. Among the practices she included diffusion and dissemination as its core elements. Moreover, various rules for knowledge transmission were also discussed to simplify the process of putting thoughts into words.



**10.1.3.** She mentioned problem identification, research planning and design, data collection, analysis and findings as some of the conceptual areas within knowledge creation. She used an inverted pyramid figure to depict the knowledge-to-action framework (ref: Ian D Graham, et al (2006) ‘Lost in knowledge translation: Time for a map?’ *Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions* Vol. 26, Issue 1, pp. 13-24, <https://doi.org/10.1002/chp.47>). Before concluding the session with a video, Kedia highlighted the demand-driven and supply-driven as two types of research processes with co-production and issue identification as related variants. At the end, she engaged the participants through a hands-on session on knowledge translation using research problems identified by the participants.

**10.2.1.** In the second session, Joshi showcased the relevance of social media platforms in disseminating one’s ideas to those other than academicians. He discussed multiple ways through which social media can be used as a tool or channel for communication. If leveraged well, it can help the





researchers to gain a lot, he opined. He specified a number of factors to be kept in mind while reaching out to those outside of academia: keep it jargon free; simplify research (rather than making it simplistic); create the context and lastly, communicate in an interesting manner. He used several examples from social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram as illustrations. One was a Twitter thread used by Roxy Roll on improving the visibility and narrative of research.

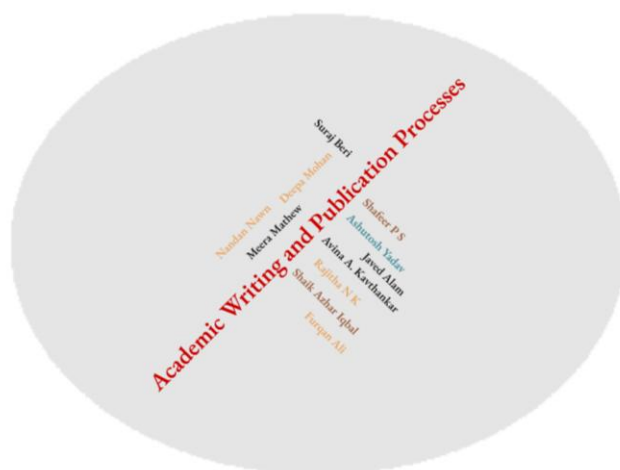
**10.2.2.** Joshi engaged the participants further through a hands-on session for creating ‘threads’. The idea was to find a ‘hook’ (while narrating the story) by dividing a post into ‘beginning’ (should be catchy, anecdotal accounts, quirky facts and must be easy to disseminate), ‘middle’ (meat of the matter) and ‘end’ (building up on conversations). To him, ‘end’ is the part where the author leaves ideas for the reader to think further. Further, he discussed a case study by Ambarish Satwik where research ideas were presented as a conversation between two cardiologists. Another hands-on followed it on creating a thread for a voluntary event.

**10.2.3.** The most important message from these sessions was as follows: short films and videos are some of the examples through which knowledge synthesis can taken place in an effective way. Translating research to brochures, policy brief, article and videos for public are less active tool for knowledge dissemination as against tailoring them through targeted workshops.



**Session 10.3 and 10.4: Visual tools: wordcloud and datawrapper (hands on) and Creating Author Profiles (hands on)**

**Resource Person:** [Nandan Nawn](#) (JMI, INSEE, Biodiversity Collaborative)



**10.3.1.** In the first session Nawn showed use of different apps/ tools that allow ‘playing’ with data and words and in the second one he shepherded the participants to create ‘author’s profile’ on different academic platforms.

**10.3.2.** Nawn used wordclouds and datawrapper in the first hands-on session. The basic idea was to make research more attractive, catchy and presentable through the freely available tools. He helped the participants to understand the architecture of wordclouds platform that allows the users to create insightful pictures with the



words that can communicate research output more effectively. Participants explored available options available under ‘theme’, ‘mask’, ‘shape’ and ‘weight’ of words. Nawn also explained trade-off between font size and including all the words.



**10.3.3.** Subsequently, participants were shown how to use ‘datawrapper’ platform, including uploading of data, checking and describing it and visualizing it before creating URLs for data and visualisation. These links can be shared by the host and included in any electronic document, Nawn said. The most interesting feature of this platform is ‘malleability’ of display items, it was pointed out: the display items can change shape as per the orientation of the equipment (say, portrait or landscape).

**10.4.1.** In the concluding session of the day and last ‘teaching’ session of the CBP, participants created their profiles on different academic platforms like ORCiD, Scopus, ResearchGate, Vidwan, etc.



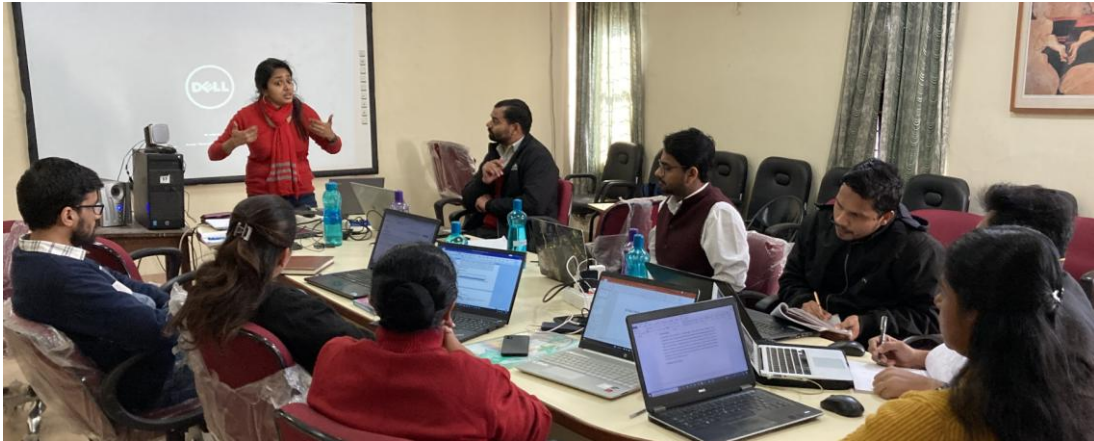
## Session 11.1—11.4: Presentations

### Narrative

**11.1.** Each participant made a presentation of their research output, indicating the type of work (commentary, research article, etc) and the journal for which the output was prepared. A second participant—from a different discipline—played the role of the Editor of the journal for which the presentation was made.

**11.2.** One of the objectives behind this ‘role playing’ was to make the authors understand how the other side (i.e. editor) thinks. It was a learning experience for everyone.











## Week 2, Day 12: 14.12.22

### Speaker Quotes:

“No country could become powerful or strong without playing an active role in the production of knowledge”

“Publication of ideas passed through the strictest peer review process in academic journals is equally important to publication of ideas through popular mediums read by the laypeople”

— **Prof. Prabhash Ranjan**, Professor and Vice Dean (Continuing Education), O P Jindal Global University, Sonapat, Haryana

### Narrative

#### Session 12.1: Written test

ICSSR Sponsored two-week Capacity Building Programme on  
Academic Writing and Publication Processes for early career teachers and researchers  
Organised by: Department of Economics, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi  
(01.12.2022 to 14.12.2022)  
Knowledge Partners: Biodiversity Collaborative (BC) and Indian Society for Ecological  
Economics (INSEE)

#### TEST

Maximum Marks: 60

Time: 1 hour

Answer All Questions

All question carry equal marks

Mark your choice | Question paper contains four pages

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is a dynamic process that includes the synthesis, dissemination, exchange, and ethically sound application of knowledge
- a) Research
  - b) Knowledge translation
  - c) Data collection
  - d) Knowledge management

**12.1.** Participants appeared in a closed book MCQ test. At the end of the test, answer keys were revealed to the participants for self-evaluation.

#### Session 12.2: Feedback on output

**12.2.** Programme director shared his general comments on the research outputs submitted, followed by specific comments on each submission. It was advised that in case the authors intend to publish their work in a journal, they need to read the Aims and Scope carefully, decide on the type of submission and follow the guidelines scrupulously. The three elements of ‘gold standard’ in knowledge production—namely, academic rigour, logical consistency and expositional clarity—was emphasised again. Nawn concluded that these elements are used by all evaluators irrespective of the type of submission or discipline.

#### Session 12.3: Feedback from participants

**12.3.** Participants filled up the forms for general feedback as well as the session-wise one as per the template provided by ICSSR.

Comments on the planning, management and relevance of the programme.....

Planning - Dept of Economics, Jamia has done wonderfully planned the CBP 2022. It covered key areas of Formulating Research, Executing it, planning different themes, Excellent Resource Persons, Course content and details in each session well suited to the objectives of CBP-2022

Management - The organising team laboriously arranged every thing from, accommodation, to travel arrangements, food quality, venue & instruments required for the CBP. All the members of organising team deserve laurels for

Relevance - The theme of the CBP-2022 is very useful for us 'in getting hands on training for it. research proposals, research writing and Academic Publishing, which is very much required as per NEP-2020. All the participants related to theme, resource persons. & execution.

A representative (and anonymized) feedback from one of the participants.



## Session 12.4: Valedictory Function

### Programme

Introductory Remarks by Prof. Asheref Illiyan, Head, Department of Economics, JMI

Address by Chief Guest Prof. Nazim Husain Al-Jafri, Registrar, JMI

Reflections by participants

Valedictory Lecture by Guest of Honour Prof. Prabhash Ranjan, Jindal Global Law School


Distribution of Certificates to participants

Vote of Thanks by Prof. Nandan Nawn, Programme Director

Reflections by Prof. Savyasaachi, Programme Co-Director

**12.4.1.** Prof. Illiyan offered introductory remarks after welcoming everyone. Prof. Nazim Husain Al-Jafri spoke on the importance of organizing capacity building programmes for improving the quality and enhancing the quantum of research output besides the role JMI has played towards this goal since its early days.

**12.4.2.** Nawn provided a snapshot view of all the 47 sessions of the CBP, before the valedictory




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ICSSR Sponsored Capacity Building Programme on  
**Academic Writing and Publication Processes**  
for early career teachers and researchers

**VALEDICTORY FUNCTION**

14 December 2022 | 15:15 hrs (IST) onwards | Mir Anis Hall, Gate No 15, JMI




Chief Guest  
**Prof. Nazim Husain Al-Jafri**  
Hon'ble Registrar, JMI




Guest of Honour  
**Prof. Prabhash Ranjan**  
Vice Dean, Continuing Education & Director CIITL  
O P Jindal Global University

**Why Should You Publish?**

Prof. Asheref Illiyan  
Head, Dept. of Economics  
SUPPORTED BY




Prof. Savyasaachi  
Co-Director, ICSSR CBP  
ORGANISED BY



GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS  
A SAGA OF 50 GLORIOUS YEARS OF  
Department of Economics  
**JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA**  
A 102-year-old Multi-faculty Central University  
NAAC Accredited A++ Grade | 3rd Ranked among Universities in NIRF-2022

Prof. Nandan Nawn  
Director, ICSSR CBP  
KNOWLEDGE PARTNERS



**INSEE**  
Indian Society for Ecological Economics

ALL ARE WELCOME

function. In his commentary, he emphasised on the diversity among the participants and resource persons, presence of a significant number of PG and Ph.D. students and effective coordination between the host organisation and two knowledge partners.





**12.4.3.** Four participants — self chosen by the participants themselves as their representatives — Meera Mathew (Christ University, Ghaziabad, UP), Avina Kavthankar (Goa University, Taleigao, Goa), Suraj Berry (Nagaland University, Lumami, Nagaland), and Deepa Mohan (Co-operative Arts and Science College, Payamgadi, Kannur, Kerala) shared their feedback and reflections on the experience of participating in the CBP.



**12.4.4.** Ranjan started his valedictory address ‘Why Should you Publish?’ with three core questions — what to publish, where to publish and how to publish — of the entire academic writing and publication process ecosystem. As the last one was dealt with in the sessions before, he proposed to focus on the first two — what and where, which are inseparable in many ways, on which he deliberated upon further with his own ‘stories’ and struggles.

He started with an honest ‘confession’: his first motivation to publish is to build his CV and to improve Academic Performance Indicator (API) scores for promotions, etc. His advice to the young participants and students was as follows: even if one may not agree with API to be the best or even a desirable way to quantify extent of knowledge production, one may take them as given, at least for now, and try to change these rules later in their life, if at all. But accumulation of API scores is not the only reason to publish, Ranjan put the disclaimer quickly.



He placed the larger motivation to publish in the broader context of global business model of publishing industry. He finds it to be skewed towards the global North, be it setting rules of the game or setting the agenda for publication in terms of areas which will receive greater priority. Be it the US, UK, ancient civilizations or even China in the most recent times played as active role in the production of knowledge, he stated. Global South merely consumes the knowledge produced in this process, Ranjan opined. As evidence he mentioned the predominance of foreign authors in the reading list in all courses across disciplines in India. Likewise, geographical spaces in which most influential journals in any discipline are located or countries hosting the most influential authors in any discipline points to global North only. It follows that, to change these attributes of knowledge production-consumption ecosystem, it must be a ‘fundamental duty’ of every academic in the global South to challenge this hegemony of the global North. Towards this end, Ranjan mentioned that, he publishes in those places where global North will be compelled to take notice of his work. His own target is to publish one research paper in every six months in a top rated journal.

The third reason to Ranjan for publishing is to ‘sell’ his ideas to peers, to challenge the existing dominant ones. In this sense, publications are the mediums to interact or engage with the student community, to be a matter of debate among them. After all, many students know author like Upendra Baxi or Prabhat Patnaik only through their writings, he noted. Reaching out to the larger academic community that includes students is important to Ranjan—he prefers not to write *only* for ten people who are experts in his field. This may facilitate students to talk, discuss, debate and may even extend or critique his ideas—he argued. It is only through the critique, newer ideas emanate. In this way, knowledge production becomes a collective endeavour. Writing for a larger



academic community contributes in this process variously.

As a corollary, he mentioned the fourth reason of publishing, namely, to inform the laypeople—anyone who is educated but may not be skilled or proficient to understand his subject, international law. To inform this person about the issues that he thinks are important—for example, the legal issues associated with recent annexation of Ukraine territory by Russia—through popular mediums such as Op-Eds. How many economists read journal articles written by sociologists and vice versa, he asked, pointing at the limitations posed by disciplinary boundaries towards unhindered flow of information of public importance. Not just laypeople, but even policymakers read primarily the articles in newspapers, he noted.

To him, the final reason to publish is to speak truth to the powers. As examples, he provided commentaries on a Supreme Court judgment, economic policies made by the executive or bills tabled in the parliament. To Ranjan, this should be the guiding philosophy behind writing.

**12.4.5.** Subsequently, participants received the certificate from Illiyan, Ranjan and Nawn. The session ended with a Vote of Thanks by Nawn, followed by brief reflections by Savyasaachi.



ICSSR Sponsored Capacity Building Programme on Academic Writing and Publication Processes







[Participants (from Left): Rajitha N K, Shafeer P S, Avina A. Kavthankar, Deepa Mohan, Ashutosh Yadav, Shaik Azhar Iqbal, Javed Alam, Suraj Beri, Furqan Ali, Meera Mathew]



[Volunteers with the Guest of Honour at Valedictory Function, Programme Director and Co-Director | from left: Ahmad Raza, Muhammed Abdul Bari, Tajamul Rehman Sofi, Prabhash Ranjan, Nandan Nawn, Savyasaachi, Isha Sharma, Ilma Rizvi, Saima Darakhshan]

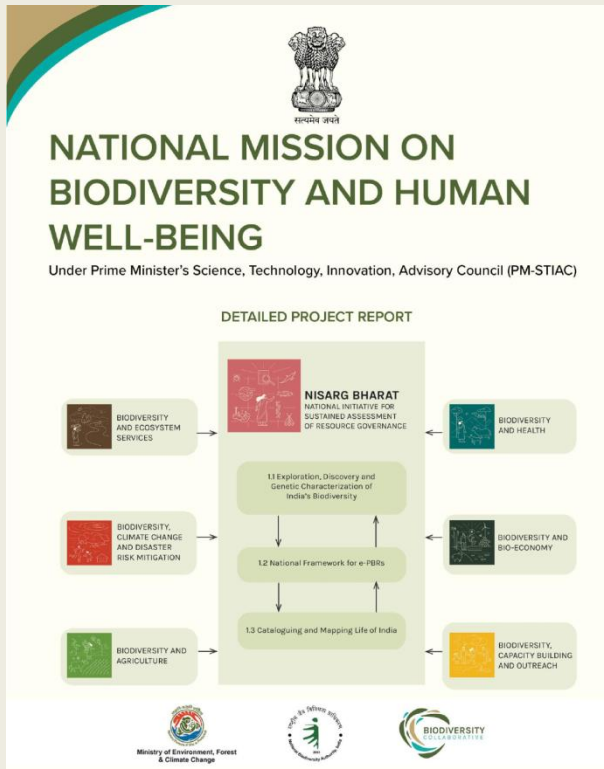


[Group photograph at the end of Valedictory Function]



## Selected activities of Biodiversity Collaborative

### Preparatory Phase Project of the National Mission on Biodiversity and Human Well-Being (NMBHWB)



### Public Engagement and Outreach on Biodiversity and Human Well-being linkages

#### Youth-led Rural Outreach Programme



#### Biodiversity through Art Programme



#### Biodiversity Education Programme



#### Policymaker's Programme on Biodiversity



## Selected activities of Indian Society for Ecological Economics (INSEE)

### Biennial Conferences

1. Ecological Economics for Sustainable Development [22–24 December 1999, ISEC, Bangalore]
2. Water Resources, Sustainable Livelihoods and Eco-System Services [19-21 December 2001, IIFM, Bhopal]
3. Biodiversity and Quality of Life [18-20 December 2003, IIM-C, Kolkata]
4. Ecology and Human Well Being [3-4 June 2005, IGDR, Mumbai]
5. Environmental Governance [21-23 January 2009; GIDR and Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad]
6. Nature, Economy and Society: Understanding the Linkages [20-22 October 2011, CESS, Hyderabad]
7. Global Change, Ecosystems, Sustainability [5-8 December 2013, Tezpur University, and OKDISCD, Guwahati]
8. Urbanization and the Environment [4-6 January 2016; IISc, ATREE and NIAS, Bengaluru]
9. Sustainability, Institutions, Incentives: Voices, Policies, Commitments [8-10 November 2017, KILA, Thrissur]
10. Climate Change and Disasters: Challenges, Opportunities and Responses [6-8 November 2019 CESS, Hyderabad]
11. Sustainable Societies, Ecological Systems and Economic Development [15-17 December 2021, Online]

### Publications



# Glimpses from the various programmes organised to celebrate Golden Jubilee celebrations of Department of Economics, Jamia Millia Islamia



**Inauguration of Golden Jubilee Celebrations  
(16.09.2022)**



**National Workshop on R Programming for  
Social Science Research and Data Analytics  
(16-17.09.2022)**



**Workshop on PROWESS Database in  
collaboration with CMIE (27.09.2022)**



**Workshop on Anti-Plagiarism Software and  
E-Resources in collaboration with Dr. Zakir  
Hussain Library, JMI (29.09.2022)**



**Workshop on Government Budgets  
and Policy Framework in collaboration  
with CBGA 21.10.2022)**



**Workshop on Referencing/ Citation tool in collaboration  
with Dr. Zakir Husain Library, JMI (21.10.2022)**



# Glimpses from the various programmes organised to celebrate Golden Jubilee celebrations of Department of Economics, Jamia Millia Islamia



**National Workshop on Productivity and Efficiency Analysis (4-5.11.2022)**



**Workshop on SPSS for Data Science & Research (10.12.2022)**



**National Conference on Banking and Finance (29-30.11.2022)**



**National Conference on Population and Development (15.12.2022)**



**ICSSR Sponsored Capacity Building Programme on Academic Writing and Publication Processes (1-14.12.2022)**