



FESTIVAL OF LEARNING

Report on the Workshop on “Capacity Building in Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR)”

Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla University, Raipur

April 20-23, 2016

Prepared by:

***UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research & Social Responsibility in Higher
Education***

The workshop on *'Capacity Building in Community Based Participatory Research'* was organized by PRIA, as part of its UNESCO Chair program from April 20 to April 23, 2016, in collaboration with the *State Planning Commission (SPC), Chhattisgarh*, and support from *Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla University* and *WaterAid*.

DAY 1: APRIL 20, 2016

The inaugural session of the workshop saw a welcome address given by Dr Rita Venugopalan, Director, Centre for Women's Studies, Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla University. Further, the vice-chancellor, Professor S K Pandey welcomed the dignitaries and re-affirmed the commitment of the institution towards fulfilling its social responsibility. He emphasized on the important role of Higher Education Institutions in the society, and said that *'Universities are places which attracts young mind, and therefore, as senior academicians, it is our responsibility to mentor and guide them in a way that when they pass out of the universities, they are capable of facing and solving problems of their society'*.



Pic 1: Prof S K Pandey, underlining the importance of linking universities with the society

Dr Rajesh Tandon, Founder-President, PRIA & Co-Chair, UNESCO Chair, briefed the audience on the history of participatory research, and what processes went into the creation of PRIA. He said that *'Unless we value local knowledge, we cannot create new knowledge'*. He also added that *'We need to redefine our university courses in such a way that community engagement enters the domain of teaching and research; and is not kept as an add-on activity'*.



Pic 2: Dignitaries at the dais: Dr Budd Hall, Prof S K Pandey, Shri Sunil Kumar and Dr Rajesh Tandon (left to right)

Dr Budd Hall, Professor, University of Victoria & UNESCO Co-chair, added to Dr Tandon's reflections on CBPR. He shared that *'Despite the western scientific knowledge over the last 500 years, still, we are lacking the intellectual tools needed to address the challenges we are facing today'*. Therefore, *'unless institutions of higher education find new ways of connecting to the society, our survival in the present challenging times will get difficult; and that collaboration between the worlds of theory and practice is the way forward for us.'*

The last speaker in the session was Shri Sunil Kumar, Vice-Chairperson, State Planning Commission, Government of Chhattisgarh. As a governmental representative, he re-iterated the commission's commitment to support community led initiatives in the state. He shared that *'The major challenge of today's time is that entrenched disciplinarians are not ready to borrow from knowledge democracy, and disregard the fact that knowledge can also come from sources which are different from the already established ones'*. He said that the commission believes that *'If we are to understand the problems of the state, we need to look inwards, and make most importantly, make our universities relevant and accessible'*.



Pic 3: Pic 1: Shri Sunil Kumar, sharing his reflections on 'Community Based Research in Higher Education & its role in development'

The first technical session on context setting & CBPR started with Dr Rajesh Tandon, underlining the essence of the workshop. He said that, *'Over the next 4 days, we hope to work together with you all and develop an understanding of CBPR, and the required skills, so that at the end of the workshop, the students group have with them a specific research project, which they would work on, in the coming couple of months'*.



Pic 4: Dr Rajesh Tandon, facilitating the first technical session of the workshop

Dr Tandon further shared the findings of the global study undertaken by the UNESCO Chair on *'Training the next generation of Community Based Researchers'*. He shared about how there is a high demand for CBR was training across the world, while the training opportunities remained scarce. Dr Tandon also presented the five pedagogical principles which ideally characterize such training initiatives. Further to this, as the workshop was organized in the broad framework of supporting the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) in the state of Chhattisgarh; Dr Alok Pandey, Deputy Director, PRIA & Mr Rabindran David Shelley, Senior Program Officer, PRIA presented a brief on the history, issues, challenges and innovations under SBM. They shared that the SBM guidelines categorically mentioned Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) as the one of the objectives, and about the best practice examples from the community, which can be used as models for ways forward.

Dr Budd Hall, further detailed on the tenets of research, and its principles and value-systems. He shared that 'As no research is objectives, it is our duty as researchers to determine that which side are we on'. He also sang a short song, which said that *'In academics, there are no neutrals there, you either work for status quo or for social change'*.

Further to this, the students were given a short activity in the form of group discussions. They were divided into groups of 8-10, who were asked to discuss about their *'experiences in engaging with the community and the challenges which they faced'*.



Pic 5: Students engaged in group discussions during the first technical session

After this activity, there was an open floor discussion wherein the students came up with several issues and challenges, which were then answered by Dr Budd Hall, in sequence. Some of the important lessons he taught the students were:

- *There is a need to build a rapport/relationship of trust with the communities, and for that you need to spend quality time with them*
- *There is a difference between 'research in the community' and 'research with the community'. What we emphasize in CBPR is 'research with the community', believing that 'communities are capable of creating and sharing knowledge with or without the help of external researchers'*
- *Choice of methods can either restrict or facilitate the kind of knowledge you generate from the community. You need to have a proper selection of questions and also a variety of other tools, which you can use appropriately, in case the former does not help.*
- *You need not always be in an ideal position while performing research. In the research process, you may be faced with different situations, challenges, power differentials; it is your duty to adapt to the local context and engage in meaningful research.*



Pic 6: Dr Budd Hall, interacting with the students during the open discussion session

Finally, the day ended with comments from Shri P P Soti, Member, SPC, Chhattisgarh, who appreciated the collaborative efforts of the university and the UNESCO Chair for having organized this one-of-a-kind training program on CBPR. He reassured the support of the SPC in the process, and also called on the students and other participants to contribute and provide feedback to the Youth Portal, which was one of the recent initiatives of the SPC.

DAY 2: APRIL 21, 2016

The second day of the capacity building workshop at Pt. Ravi Shankar Shukla University, Raipur started with Dr Rajesh Tandon, sharing with the participants the agenda for the day, and details of the technical sessions. The first technical session of the day was dedicated to '*Arts-based methods in research*', and the resource person for the session was Dr Darlene Clover, Professor, University of Victoria, Canada. In her session, Dr Clover very clearly articulated about the various forms of arts based research, its implications, and its usability in Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR).



Pic 7: Dr Darlene Clover, sharing her reflections on 'Arts-based Research Methods'

Dr Clover shared that, 'Art forms are very good at capturing dynamic living systems and the multidimensionality that we often encounter while doing CBPR'. She also shared that '*Arts are very creative and imaginative means for knowledge making, and can explain aspects which are otherwise difficult to articulate, and that if we are not addressing critical issues or common assumption, we are not advancing social justice through our own research*'. She concluded her presentation by sharing some pictorial depictions of varying situations. She used this to make the students understand about the varied applicability and innovation involved in this form of research.

Further to the presentation, the floor was opened for group discussions among the students on issues like challenges in this kind of research, applicability in the research process, and the considerations that are important to look after, before using these methods. What followed was a good half hour of brainstorming among students in groups, who then came up with a range of issues that marked the use of arts based methods in research. Some of the issues that emerged are:

- *There is a lot of sensitivity involved in this methodology. We need to be very careful of community's values before we use such methods to solve their problems.*

- *Language barriers pose a huge challenge when attempting to use this methodology when working with the communities*
- *While arts based research is not very common, it can be used to good effect, for demonstrating the existential causes behind a particular problem.*
- *The researcher needs to develop appropriate and minimum levels of skills required for using this method meaningfully.*
- *Different arts based methods should be applied to different age groups. For example, while drawing/painting can be used to engage children; others involving more intellectual capacities like role plays can be used when working with adults.*
- *Certain arts based techniques like videography, photography calls for the required technical support.*

To the above issues that were shared with the students, Dr Clover mentioned some crisp pointers about how to apply this method in the field. Some of her important comments were:

- *There is a high degree of ethics involved in using this methodology to serve one's research purpose.*
- *We have to chose the art form which is convenient for the community in question, and also in sync with their values and belief systems*
- *It is a great idea to approach the artists in the communities, and seek their support in fulfilling the research objective through this methodology.*

The second session of day 2 began with the release of the video documentary produced by the PRIA team, working on Swachh Bharat Mission (in association with WaterAid).



Pic 8: Video documentary prepared by PRIA, Chhattisgarh team (in association with WaterAid) being released by Dr Rajesh Tandon, Dr Budd Hal, Ms. Mansha (WaterAid) & Ms. Asha Srivastava (PRIA)

The second technical session focused on building the students' understanding on aspects like research topic, research question, and research design. The resource person for the session was Dr Sumona Dasgupta, Visiting fellow, PRIA. Dr Sumona began the session by underlining two key principles of Participatory Research, which were, firstly, *that language is not the only source of communication with the communities*; and secondly, *it is essential that the researcher observes the power dynamics in the community with whom he is working*.

Thereafter, Dr Sumona talked about the difference between a research topic and a research design, as the former gave a broader perspective on an issue, while the latter focused on a particular doable and feasible aspect under the broad umbrella of the former. She also shared that, *'Social research needs a design/structure before the actual process of data collection and analysis can begin, and therefore a concrete research question needs to be framed before determining the research methods.'* Dr Sumona also articulated the difference between a research design and a research method, as the *'first was a logical question, while the second was a logistical question'*.

The students were then invited to form groups and to think of any broad research topic, and generate two research questions from the same. After exhaustive deliberations and discussions, several groups came up with interesting and enticing research topic and questions, which were shared with rest of the participants. Dr Alok Pandey gave feedback to the students on their ideas, which were complemented by very good suggestions which came from the rest of the audience. He shared that, *'It is important that we learn, and not worry about the right or wrong questions'*.



Pic 9: Group discussions on 'Difference between research topic & research question'

During this exercise, the students were made to reflect on their learning, and develop in them, the skills and the practical understanding that was required to frame research topics and questions. The day ended with another 5-minute group activity where the students were made to reflect on the challenges that emerged in their respective groups during the discussion process. Some of the points they came up with were, *'the challenge of incorporating the interests of various disciplines, the journey from disagreement to agreement, entrenched biases, jumping to methods before deciding on the concrete research questions etc'*.

DAY 3: APRIL 22, 2016

The third day of the capacity building workshop started with two student groups making their presentations on their understanding of research topic and questions, which was carried forward from the day before. This was facilitated by Dr Sumona Dasgupta, Visiting Fellow, PRIA. This was followed by an open discussion where the students shared their understanding and thoughts on the word 'participation'. While varying inputs were received, this was then titrated against the theoretical aspects of 'participation'. Ms. Wafa Singh, India Research Coordinator, UNESCO Chair, used the theoretical concepts to make the students understand its implications, and the similarities between book concepts and their thought process.



Pic 10: Ms. Wafa Singh, sharing her reflections on 'Perspectives in Participation'

Thereafter, Mr. Walter Lepore presented the research design of the recently concluded study on 'Training the Next Generation of Community Based Researchers'. With his presentation, Mr Lepore tried to make a point on how the project conceptualized. He traced the entire process from the motivation to do the research project, the broad topic, specific research questions, and methodology used and finally, the findings that emerged.

He gave the students some very useful tips on how to narrow down from the topic to the questions, keeping in mind, its feasibility and usefulness in the respective context. He shared that, '*We, as researchers are not free from biases, however, what is important is that we understand and recognize them, and ensure that it does not hamper our research work.*'



Pic 11: Mr Walter Lepore, sharing the research design of the study on 'Training the Next Generation of Community Based Researchers'

Further, Dr Alok Pandey, Deputy Director, PRIA, made a presentation on Participatory Rural Appraisal concepts and tried to build the student's understanding on the issue, and its implications. Dr Pandey detailed out some of the common research methods used in participatory research, and demonstrated the same with practical pictorial depictions. He shared that, *'We need to treat our subjects as 'citizens' and not as 'beneficiaries'. We also need to understand as to which of our acts is impacting other's learning and what influence it is having on them'*



Pic 12: Dr Alok Pandey, sharing his reflections on 'Participatory Research Methods'

Further to this, the students were made to perform a group activity, and do a practical exercise of research methods like transect walk, resource mapping, social mapping etc. They made to do a quick reeve of the university premises and prepare a chart of their findings.

The students were seen as very actively participating in the activity, engaging with the task at hand, and most importantly, showed their keenness to learn new things, which could improve their research skills and abilities.



Pic 13: Group activity on PR methods

Some of the other methods demonstrated were Focused Group Discussions (FGDs), and semi structured interviews. These two methods were practiced in a manner that related to the skills that a researcher needs to acquire in order to do CBR & facilitate community knowledge. The fish bowl method was used for doing FGDs, and the students were made to brainstorm on the topic, '*Lack of employment in the state, and the gender inequality in the same*'.

At the end of the exercise, Dr Alok Pandey, who facilitated the session, used audience feedback to reflect on the process from the point of view of the discussants and the audience alike. Some of the major points which emerged are:

- *Need of a facilitator to lead the discussion is extremely important*
- *Keeping personal views exclusive from the topic of the question is essential.*

- *Playing the role of respectful listener is also an important part of an FGD*
- *Need to ensure that the discussions closely follow the topic at hand.*



Pic 14: Students engaged in Focused Group Discussion

The last session, which particularly focused on development of skills, was organized in a way that student volunteers acted as interviewee, while Dr Alok Pandey played the role of an interviewer. Therefore, using the format of a semi structured interview, the students were taught the basic nuances of conducting interviews in the community, and the aspects that needed to be kept in mind.

Some of the major learning's that emerged from this session are:

- *Making the interviewee comfortable in the discussion*
- *Being ready for surprises/unpleasant occurrences*
- *Maintaining the flow of the conversation*
- *Being sensitive towards community values/belief systems*

DAY 4: APRIL 23, 2016

The fourth and final day of the programme started with a session on '*Hindrances of Participatory Research*'. During the session Dr. Sumona Dasgupta shared that at times, research gets affected by the elite, who consider their knowledge supreme. However, the methodology of Participatory Research minimizes the chances of monopolistic practices in the context of knowledge creation and its use. Further, she elaborated on points to be taken care of while doing a research and what all things to be kept in mind while collecting data. The process was supported by experiences of the participants in the process of data collection. In the session, questions were raised about government acceptance of the research reports, and framing of research questions. It was shared that, '*It was necessary to involve the community in a participatory manner before framing the research questions*'. Various participatory tools, methods to select an area with respect to the topic, etc. was also discussed in this session.



Pic 15: Dr Sumona Dasgupta, sharing her reflections with the students

This was followed by grouping the participants, according to their respective universities, wherein the groups planned the topic of research, which they would pursue in the upcoming months. Here, the students and faculty members, together, identified the topic, key questions related to that particular topic, methods of data collection (including sample) and time plan.

Thereafter, they presented their research design before the audience, which included Shri. P P Soti (Member, State Planning Commission). Shri Soti gave a very careful listening to the research presentations, and also shared his feedback on the same. The participants shared following topics during the session:

- *Citizens perspective to Solid Liquid Waste Management in Urban and Rural Chhattisgarh (Guru Ghasi Das University, Bilaspur)*
- *How art can help in the promotion of Swachh Bharat Mission (Indira Kala Sangit Vishwavidyalay, Khairagarh)*
- *Use of Biodegradable waste and How can CBR be used in village khooparvala (Hidayatullah National Law University, Raipur)*
- *Waste management system in vegetable market of Raipur city (Indira Gandhi National Open University)*
- *Awareness of men and women Raipur slum regarding govt. programmes (Sunder Lal Sharma Open university, Bilaspur)*
- *Positive negative reinforcement regarding sanitation (Pt. Ravi Shankar Shukla University Raipur)*
- *Dairy farming in Bastar with contribution of children, woman in marketing (Kamdhenu University, Chhattisgarh)*
- *Responsibilities of villagers in Gram Panchayat development planning – Abhanpur (KushaBhau Thakare University, Raipur)*
- *Toilet construction in least amount (Lakhanpur Engineering College, Sarguja)*
- *Health of Bastar Woman (School of Regional Studies, PRSU, Raipur)*

In the valedictory session of the workshop, Shri Soti opined that the '*efforts made by participants during the workshop were commendable*'. He also shared that '*this is the first time in my life that I am witnessing a programme wherein there students and faculty and making joint presentation of their research ideas on a common platform*'.



Pic 16: Shri P P Soti, sharing his feedback with the students

In his concluding remark, Prof. S K Pandey, Vice Chancellor, Pt Ravi Shankar University, Raipur, shared that *'there is need to develop a dynamism and vibrancy among the students and faculty members so that they can identify the issues related to community development and can work those issues for the betterment of the society.'*



Pic 17: Group photograph of the workshop participants

NEWS COVERAGE



Participants from different varsities of State attend UNESCO's workshop at PRSU

■ Staff Reporter
RAIPUR, Apr 23

"THE major challenge of the today's time is that entrenched disciplinarians are not ready to borrow from knowledge democracy and disregard the fact that knowledge can also come from sources, which are different from the already established ones" stated Planning Commission Deputy Chairperson Sunil Kumar in the workshop Capacity Building in Community based Participatory Research here on Saturday.

Kumar also said that the Commission believes that if we are to understand the problems of the State, we need to look inwards, and make most importantly, make our universities relevant and accessible. This 4-day programme was organised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in association with the State Planning Commission Chhattisgarh and Pandit Ravishankar Shukla University, Raipur from April 20 to 23. Around 87 participants from 10 Universities of the State attended this workshop.

In the inaugural session of the workshop, Professor S K Pandey, Vice-Chancellor of Pt



Workshop on Capacity Building in Community based Participatory Research underway.

Ravishankar Shukla University, re-affirmed the commitment of the institution towards fulfilling its social responsibility. Dr Rajesh Tandon, founder President of PRIA and Co-Chair of UNESCO, said unless we value local knowledge, we cannot create new knowledge.

Dr Budd Hall, Professor at University Victoria and UNESCO Co-Chair, added to Dr Tandon's reflections on CBPR. He said despite the western, scientific knowledge over the last 500 years, still, we lack the intellectual tools needed to address the chal-

lenges we are facing today.

Sunil Kumar, Vice Chairperson of the State Planning Commission, Government of Chhattisgarh, reiterated the commission's commitment to support community led initiatives in the state.

On the first day of workshop, findings of the global study undertaken by the UNESCO Chair on 'Training the next generation of community based researchers' was shared. Dr Alok Pandey and Ravindra David Shelley presented a brief on the history, issues, challenges and innovations under

SBM.

On the second day, Dr Darlene Clover, Professor, University of Victoria, Canada, clearly articulated about the various forms of arts based research, its implications, and its usability in Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR).

On the third day, some group exercises to develop their skills on various tools and methods of participatory research were done. On the fourth and final day, participants developed their research proposals and presented before the State Planning Commission.