

Course title: Social Research Methods				
Course code: MPD 173	No. of credits: 4	L-T-P: 33-12-30	Learning hours: 60	
Pre-requisite course code and title (if any):				
Department: Department of Policy Studies				
Course coordinator(s): Dr Swarup Dutta		Course instructor(s): Dr Swarup Dutta		
Contact details: swarup.dutta@terisas.ac.in				
Course type: Core		Course offered in: Semester 1		
Course description The course aims to build scientific perspective, attitude and skills for systematic enquiry by developing understanding of philosophical foundations of research, various elements of research design and methods and tools for data collection and analysis. The course will enable comprehension of principles and elements of research methodology, to formulate research problem, objectives and questions. It will introduce students to various methods, tools and techniques related to social research. The focus of the course would be designing studies for applied research. It will also guide them to deal with various ethical and methodological concerns in doing research. The course will also discuss the limitations, benefits, appropriateness, and challenges of using qualitative and quantitative techniques in applied research. The course has a strong practical component. Field visit is an essential part, which will help students understand the real challenges of conducting social research				
Course objectives				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide an understanding of various perspectives and methods in social research • To equip students with tools for data collection • To enable students to undertake independent social research 				
Course content				
Module	Topic	L	T	P
1.	Foundations of Social Research The main aim of this module is to understand the nature of approach that must be considered for social science research. In simple terms, the students will be oriented about the social science research process and the ways in which data should be collected, analysed and used. In first discussion, concept of research paradigm will be explained, followed by methodology and methods of research. In the second part of the discussion, various types of research and research ethics will be discussed. Hence following topics will be covered in this module <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding its epistemological roots and methodological options • Introduction to Different Perspectives and types of research • Dealing with ethical concerns 	4		
2.	Designing Research Purpose of this module is to make a framework or blueprint for conducting the research after getting proper understanding on research philosophy. It details the procedures necessary for obtaining the information needed to structure or solve relevant research problems. Through this module the students will be competent enough to understand what research problem is and what is not. Eventually, they will be able to formulate hypothesis, objectives and research questions, reviewing literatures, etc. The students will also be oriented with the research ethics, which is the integral part of research process. The following topic will be covered under this module: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining the Research Problem and Objectives • Literature Review (both theoretical and empirical) and gap identification • Developing Research Questions • Hypothesis & Types of hypotheses • Research Design and Sampling 	8	2	2
3.	Methods and Tools The purpose of this module is to understand various tools and techniques of data collection. The researcher requires respective tools or techniques to serve the purpose of the research. Tools may vary in complexity, interpretation, design and administration. Each tool is suitable for the collection of certain type of information. One must select from the available tools those which will provide data s/he seeks for testing hypothesis or answering specific research questions. The following topics will be covered accordingly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnographic Approaches [Fieldwork and Participant Observation, Interview] • Focus Group Discussion • Survey and Questionnaire Design 	17	8	26

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Study • Participatory Approaches [Participatory methods and power relations] • Participatory tools: social mapping, wealth ranking, preference ranking, community action planning techniques/PRA Field Exercises (Transect walk, time lines, chapatti diagram, resource mapping, institution & stakeholder mapping)/Appreciative enquiry /Process and practice of the above methods, strengths and weaknesses and its relevance and application to needs assessment process • Mixed methods in social research 			
4.	<p>Data Analysis The purpose of this section is to understand the procedures to analyse the qualitative information that has been collected during empirical data collection. The analysis is usually based on an interpretative philosophy. The idea is to examine the meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data. In this module various steps of data analysis will be covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative Data Analysis • Qualitative Data Analysis • Making sense of multiple perspectives: approaches and techniques for analysis of qualitative data (students will use data and transcript from their own exercise) • Data validation • Identifying needs and policy priorities • Identifying limitations of research • Report Writing 	4	2	2
	Total	33	12	30
Evaluation criteria:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment-1 (20%): Submission of Research Proposal: The students will submit a research proposal. The proposal should contain research background, and problem statement, literature review, objective and research question, methodology, significance of research, limitation of research. [last week of September] • Assignment-2 (50%): Submission of Research Report: the students will conduct a small fieldwork in the Delhi and NCR by choosing a topic. The students must incorporate both quantitative (survey methods) and qualitative (interview/FGD/case study) methods and tools for primary data sources and review of literature for secondary data analysis. The instructor will provide the guideline of the report writing. [End of November] • Major exam (30%): the major exam will specifically focus on students' overall understanding on research processes. A case study will be provided for writing a research proposal which will essentially contain research background and significance, objectives and research questions, research methodology and limitation of the research. 30% [first week of December] 				
Learning outcome				
At the end of the course, students would be able to do the following–				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the Assignment 1 the students will be able to write research proposal and initiate a process in order to carry out independent research pertaining to any specific issue. They will be able to design a research, justifying use of various methods/tools to carry out the same • From the Assignment -2, students will be enabled to conduct fieldwork and data collection. They will not only collect the qualitative and quantitative data but also analyse and present it in a form of research report. • In the major exam, the students will analyse a case study and will prepare research design by analysing it in very limited time. 				
Pedagogical approach				
Pedagogical approach: In order to support active learning, the lectures in this course are supplemented with a large number of tutorials and practical work. The emphasis of these tutorials and practical hours (field visits) is to encourage the active involvement of students in undertaking tasks that help them better understand concepts / methods / tools in social research. Students practice and learn by doing. Interviewing, focus groups, participatory exercises and survey method are practiced, and evaluated, in the form of role play, in-class activities and group exercises.				

Course Reading Materials

Module 1: Foundations of social research

- Scheyvens R. and Storey, D., 2003, eds., Development fieldwork: A practical guide, London: Sage (chapters 8 and 9).
- White, H., 2002, 'Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches in poverty analysis', World Development, 30(3):511-522.

Module 2: Designing Research

- Bryman, A., 2008, Social research methods, 3rd edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Desai, V. and Potter, R. B., 2006, eds., Doing Development Research, London: Sage.
- May T., 1997, Social research: Issues, methods and process, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Robson C., 1993, Real world research: A resource for social scientists and practitioner-researchers. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Scheyvens R. and Storey, D., 2003, eds., Development fieldwork: A practical guide, London: Sage.
- Shirley. White A.1999. The Art of Facilitating Participation: Realising the Power of Grassroots Communication. New Delhi: Sage

Module 3: Methods and Tolls

Ethnographic approaches

- Hammersley, M., 1992, What's wrong with ethnography? London: Routledge. Scheyvens R. and Storey, D., 2003, eds., Development fieldwork: A practical guide, London: Sage (chapter 4).
- Thapar-Björkert, S. and Henry, M., 2004, 'Reassessing the research relationship: Location, position and power infieldwork accounts', International Journal of Social Research Methodology 7(5): 363-381.

Survey methods

- Czaja, R. and Blair, J., 2005, Designing surveys: A guide to decisions and procedures, 2nd edition, Thousand Oaks and London: Pine Forge.
- Grosh, M. and Glewwe, P., 2000, eds., Designing household survey questionnaires for developing countries: Lessons from 15 years of the living standards measurement study. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.
- Groves, R. M. et al, 2009, Survey methodology, 2nd edition, Hoboken: Wiley.

Participatory methods

- Cooke, B. and Kothari, U., 2001, eds, Participation: The New Tyranny? London: Zed Books (chapters 1 and 9).
- Mikkelsen, B., 2005, Methods for development work and research: A new guide for practitioners, 2nd edition, New Delhi and London: Sage (chapters 2 and 3)
- Mosse, D., 1994, 'Authority, gender and knowledge: Theoretical reflections on the practice of participatory rural appraisal, Development and Change, 25(3): 497-526.

Module 4: Analysing data

- Coffey, A. and Atkinson, P., 1996, Making sense of qualitative data: Complementary research strategies, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (particularly chapters 1 and 2).
- Robson C., 1993, Real world research: A resource for social scientists and practitioner-researchers. Oxford: Blackwell (chapter on analysing qualitative data).

Silverman D. 2006, Interpreting qualitative data: Methods for analyzing talk, text and interaction, 3rd edition, London: Sage (sections in part two)

Additional information

Student responsibilities

Attendance: At-least 75% attendance will be necessary to be able to appear for the final exam.

Course reviewers:

- Prof. H.S. Shylendra, IRMA
- Dr Vaibhav Bhamoriya, IIM-Ahmedabad