IIPSAA E-Newsletter

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From the Editors' Desk

It is our pleasure to bring out the 5th E-Newsletter of IIPSAA. As usual, this issue integrates the old and the new cohorts of IIPS. It contains the reminiscences of two senior most academicians who served in IIPS for three decades. The memories shared by Prof. T. K. Roy (former Director) and Prof. Sumati Kulkarni (former Officiating Director and Head, Department of Population and Development Studies) provide an inspiring message to the younger students who are currently enrolled at the Institute. Mr. Apurba Shil (young Doctoral Fellow at Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Israel) and Shubhankar Sharma (Doctoral Fellow at Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research and University of Saint Andrews) narrate how IIPS has shaped them as potential researchers. Their academic and extra-curricular activities and campus life experiences at IIPS reveal the potential that IIPS offers to the students. Hope the readers will enjoy the stories of our young and old alumni of IIPS. We are hoping to bring out such inspiring stories in the future issues of E-Newsletters also. This issue also contains the information about the following activities conducted by IIPSAA in association with IIPS for the benefit of young research scholars and Workshop on Ethics and students: Integrity in Social Science and Health Research: Workshop on Scientific Writing: and Run for Population Awareness. You will be happy to know that young alumni volunteers namely Deepanjali Viswakarma, Angad Singh, Labhita Das and Aditi are instrumental in bringing out this issue of E-Newsletter. We thank all of them.

Prof. R. Nagarajan Dr. Harihar Sahoo



INVITED BIOGRAPHY





Remembering IIPS Days!

T.K. ROY Former Director, IIPS Mumbai



I received my appointment letter to join the Demographic Training and Research Center (now IIPS), as a Statistician in its Family Planning Communications and Action Research project, in the month of October 1966. The letter clearly mentioned that my appointment was till February 28, 1967. I resigned from my temporary position as Lecturer in Statistics in Bhagalpur University, where I worked for 11 months after my M.Sc. in Statistics from Patna University in 1965. I joined the institute on 5th of December 1966, starting my career at the institute that was supposed to be only for 3 months, and continued until October 2004, 38 years later, when I retired.

At that time there used to be 15 Government of India Fellowships for the Certificate Course in Demography. Almost all the students, after completing a one-year course, used to get fellowships for further studies in the USA. It was like a stepping stone for getting an opportunity to make one's career in the USA. I did not have any qualification or experience in Demography. Many of my senior colleagues advised me to resign from the job and join the institute as a Certificate Course trainee. But the economic conditions of my family was not very sound. It was a little difficult for me to give up the job with a salary of Rs. 600 and join the fellowship to go abroad? I was always a peace loving, easy going person, a statistician, always bothering, often more than what is necessary, about the quantum of uncertainty!! But I must say that it was a big temptation and even now I am trying to evaluate whether the decision was a correct one. Any good research work in the field that I came across at that time, used to be authored by a Professor working in USA. An opportunity to work with such persons can certainly make a huge difference in a student's life.

Two incidents occurred in the initial few years of my stay at the institute that are still fresh in my memory and they also helped boost my career. One day, Professor Sukumar Mukherjee, who had also been my teacher at Patna University, called me and asked me to do a work. It was to project India's population by age and sex under few different assumptions of fertility and mortality. He said he needed it quite urgently and was very emphatic on completing the job within a week or 10 days. For a demographer now the job would require not even few hours. I had to read the component method of projection first, and then do the entire calculations on, now totally unknown, unthinkable and obsolete hand calculator, the 'Facit' machine. We had no knowledge or access to any computer (though few faculty, including Prof. Mukherjee were using the CDC 3600 computer at Tata Institute of Fundamental Research at Colaba, Bombay) at that time. I remember, I had to spend one or two sleepless nights in interpolating the values of the age specific survival ratios from the Coale and Demeny's Model Life Table. When I carried all the calculations to Prof. Mukherjee, he took out from his desk a thick computer output and told me 'Wait, let me see if you have done it correctly'. I was utterly surprised and frustrated too to see that everything, including the interpolations were already done. I gently expressed my frustration and asked the reason for putting me into all the trouble! He, in his usual jovial manner said, 'now you will never forget the component method of projection'. The exercise gave me a very good understanding of not only the component method of projection but also the life table techniques. True, the availability of personal computers and statistical packages are of immense help, and it is unthinkable now to do research without them. But, as a student the ideal way to learn a technique, I feel, is to work it out step by step, trying to understand how each step helps in attaining the final goal.

The other episode relates to my transfer to another research project of the institute known as Computer Simulations, soon. The project, at that time, was headed by a very admirable person, Dr. K. Venkatacharya. I consider it my good fortune that I got an opportunity to work with such a person. He was totally dedicated to his research work. The aim of the project was to develop a replica of the Indian population in computer, so that it represented the population of India (as per 1961 census) in terms of its socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. The age specific fertility rates could be derived on the basis of the age specific fecundibilities, and other parameters like proportion of pregnancies that terminated in live birth, still birth or abortions and the non-susceptible periods associated with each type of pregnancies. The model could be effectively used to understand the impact of family planning programmes on fertility or any assumption regarding the future progress of the programme. The model could also provide the impact of a change in a parameter, like, say, changes in proportion of abortions or age at marriage patterns, on fertility. The model was known as COMPSIM. A description of the model can be found in an old volume (around 1972-75) of Sankhya, Series B. I learnt computer programming then. Everyone in the project was proficient in FORTRAN IV language. I must mention about another person, Shri R.T. Deshpande here. He was a simple graduate but an expert programmer. We learnt the computer language just by working with him. Even Dr. Venkatacharya used to consult him, in case of any problems in programming. It was unfortunate that a person of Mr. Deshpande's caliber (in those days persons with good knowledge of programming was rare), worked as a technical assistant for a long time. We used to write our own programmes, get the punch cards prepared and carry the deck all the way to TIFR to run it. We had to wait all day to get results for one or, if fortunate, two runs, and often used to get frustrated to find some silly mistakes in the programme, like missing a comma or forgetting to end a 'do loop'. Similarly, it gave immense pleasure to find a successful output with results as per our expectations. It was altogether a different experience, and taught a person like me, who was hardly interested in studies and spent a considerable amount of time in playing games, the value and interest in research.

Yes, since childhood I was interested in sports. The table tennis board at the hostel (the unique single storey building now demolished, where I stayed for about two years) was a huge attraction for me. I remember once we, I along with quite a few trainees went to the city to witness a table tennis match between the number one players of India and Japan. It was a fantastic match and we got so inspired that after returning we played table tennis almost the whole night. We also used to play carrom board and badminton quite regularly. A sports club at the institute was started, and I remember we were successful (courtesy Mr. S.S. Patkar, an enthusiastic staff member and a good friend) in inviting Bollywood stars like Mr. Abhi Bhattacharya and Ms. Tanuja as Guest, who distributed the prizes on our Annual Sports Day. I have photographs receiving shields from them for the best sportsman of the year!!

My 5 years tenure as Director of the institute flew by quickly. My long associations with the institute from Lecturer to Director acted both as an advantage and disadvantage. I was quite close and friendly with many of the staff members. I always got their support. But I could never think of me as a director and was over conscious about their expectations. I followed one principle. That is, I should not do anything knowingly that would harm others. Rather, I should try to help others to the extent possible. During my tenure, quite a few faculty members left the institute for better opportunities. Although I personally wanted them to stay and serve the institute, I did not come in their way. I only tried my level best to concentrate and strengthen the teaching and research activities at the institute.

Second round of the National Family Health Survey was in progress. A number of faculty members, including me were quite busy with the survey. I feel NFHS was a boon for the institute, and I particularly got benefited from it. I may mention that I began my teaching at the institute by taking classes on Sampling. Although, it used to be only a 5 hours course and there was hardly any scope of discussing the multistage sampling design necessary for large scale sample surveys, it gave me lots of satisfaction and opportunity to read more on sampling. Later in 1983-84, I, along with Prof. Rama Rao and Dr. Rajiva Prasad, got an opportunity to conduct a survey on Fertility and Family Planning in Goa. Entire sampling design for the survey was done by us, and we spent 3-4 months with the field teams for the data collection in Goa. NFHS was, however, a different experience. During the first round of the survey, a 21 days workshop on Sampling Methodology was organized mainly by Prof. Vijay Verma, a well-known sampling expert. It was actually a group discussion that facilitated finalizing the Sampling design for the survey.

It was a good exercise to learn the nuances of a large scale sample survey design. The survey made a profound impact on the demographic research. Lots of both teaching and research activities previously were directed towards the indirect estimation of fertility. Their importance gradually faded. The focus somewhat shifted towards understanding factors influencing fertility and mortality, particularly infant and child mortality. The survey received immense popularity and has become a regular feature. With each round of the survey increasing demands have been made to widen its scope. Measuring parameters to facilitate understanding status of women, domestic violence, prevalence of HIV/AIDS etc. have been gradually introduced. Not only this, NFHS-4 attempted to provide district level estimates for the country. With 640 districts (that existed at that time) being the domain of the study, sample size to be covered increased six fold. Collection of data from more than 600,000 households using a questionnaire that is sufficiently long is a difficult task. Recruitment of a large number of investigators with adequate skills and training them on a uniform basis itself becomes a strenuous job. Investigators play a crucial role in a survey. They are the only link who helps getting the required information from a respondent. Unless they are properly skilled and have a minimum sense of responsibility towards the work, it will be difficult to maintain the quality. Any lax on the training and supervision of their work can lead to an increase in the non-sampling errors and can take a heavy toll on the quality of the survey data. It is true that the district level estimates of the demographic parameters are useful and needed for the efficient management of different programmes. But getting them through a large scale survey like this is a risky proposal. One should explore alternative methods for their estimation. Small area estimation techniques could be an effective way to get the district level estimates.

Last century saw a significant increase globally in the life expectancy at birth. Research is continuing, in many countries, to take it further and well beyond 100 years. There is also a need to understand the extent to which the added years of life is spent in a healthy state. I feel there is a need to have a large scale survey to specifically focus on the morbidity condition of the population. Another area where the survey effort can be fruitfully directed is to understand the pattern of migration in the country, both internal and international. Quite a few of the states have attained below replacement level fertility since long. Whether the widening age structural differences between states, particularly the southern and the northern states is influencing the migration pattern, and the problems and prospects therein should also be investigated.

I must end by mentioning that I consider it my good fortune to have gotten an opportunity to work in such an institution. The facility to do both teaching and research simultaneously is its real strength. An important index to evaluate the quality of an institution is to see the contribution made by its trainees. It is so heartening to see the wonderful contributions being made by the past trainees of the institute.

I wish good luck and all the success to the faculty, staff and trainees of the institute.

T.K. Roy



Joining IIPS: A Turning Point in My Life

Sumati Kulkarni

Former Professor and Head, Department of Population and Development Studies & Former Officiating Director, IIPS



Back in 1965, I was to join IIPS (then DTRC) as a student for the Certificate course, but I opted to take a job at the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics in Pune because I wanted to pursue a career in economics and more importantly, I didn't like the weather in Bombay at all. As the luck would have it, even at Gokhale Institute, I was placed in the Demography Section. Finally, after working for 6 years as a Research Assistant to Prof. Kumudini Dandekar, the doyen of Indian Demography, I joined IIPS in 1971 as a Lecturer. Later, after I got married in 1973, we came to live on the IIPS campus and lived there until my retirement in 2001. In my professional as well as personal life, this proved to be a very happy period as compared to my earlier chequered career full of many compromises.

Formative Years Before joining IIPS

I come from an educated, middle class family of moderate means in Sangli, (Maharashtra). My father was a teacher who thought it was important to educate his daughters as much as his sons. As a topper in Sanskrit during my S.S.C exam, I was awarded two prestigious scholarships which one could avail only by joining the arts course. Hence, despite being a bright student and doing very well in Maths and Science, I had to forgo my naïve ambition to be a doctor since we could not afford to forego even that meagre amount of monthly scholarship nor was it possible for my parents to send me to Pune or Mumbai for studying medicine. Hence, I graduated in Economics and Political Science, after which I worked as a school teacher for 3 years and side by side worked as a college lecturer in Economics in a small taluka place.

Soon after, on a rainy day, completely drenched in the torrential rains, I reached Bombay University to appear for the DTRC interview for the certificate course fellowship and got selected. Next week, in my interview for the post of a research assistant at the Gokhale Institute in Pune, I inadvertently mentioned this. That one sentence decided my future, because when I joined Gokhale Institute, with dreams of doing research in Economics, I came to know that I was placed in the Demography Section, headed by Prof. Mrs. Dandekar, a hard taskmaster and a strict disciplinarian. I learnt a lot from her while working on the research projects and studied Demography, under her guidance from the books by Barkley, Cox, Wolfendon etc. and from papers in the international journals. In parallel, I also completed a one year pre-PhD training course on research methodology. Discussions in Saturday seminars not only enabled to develop analytical ability but gave me exposure to various economic issues, which later helped me in teaching 'Population and Development at IIPS. Soon Mrs. Dandekar went abroad on a long leave to take up U.N. job and I had to shelve aside my plans for Ph.D. The only relief was the opportunity given to me in 1970 by Prof. Mathur, the then director to teach a two semester course on Demography to M.A. Economics class in Pune University and to take a few lectures on Demography in the institute's Pre-Ph.D. training course. Prof. Amitabh Kundu, who was a student for that course (and a friend in the campus) still jocularly introduces me to others, as his first Demography teacher. Nothing much, however, was happening in our demography section in terms of research. So I decided to move on and applied for a lectureship in IIPS. In the interview Prof. Agarwala, the then director of IIPS said 'You don't have any formal training in technical demography'. I gathered my courage to say 'Due to the rigorous training under Prof. Dandekar, I am confident I will be able to answer the questions even on technical demography' I could compete well with the trained candidates and got selected.

When I joined IIPS in 1971, contrary to my earlier experience, I found the academic atmosphere in IIPS very encouraging and congenial for the growth of young faculty. Interaction between seniors and juniors was quite informal and friendly and the faculty was easily approachable to the students. Teaching the multidisciplinary class of students coming from different countries in Asia under the UNFPA programme was a new experience to me. Gradually, I adjusted to IIPS and the life in Bombay. Mrs. Bhende and Tara Kanitkar helped me a lot in my first years in Bombay. Our friendship continued until their sad demise a few years ago.

Teaching

A valuable piece of advice from Dr. Agarwala, the then Director, almost shaped the direction of my future career. When I submitted a research proposal on a topic in the area of fertility and mortality, he said 'We have many people to research these topics, but there is a dearth of economists in demography' He encouraged me to work on 'economic implications of population growth'.

Earlier DTRC students used to be sent to the Economics Department of Bombay University to attend lectures but there the link between Economics and Demography was hardly covered. When I joined, teaching of economics related topics was scattered at different places in the one year course in IIPS with a long gap in between. When I pointed this out to Dr. Agarwala, he encouraged me to develop a compact 20-lecture course on 'Population and Development' including population theories. The journal Population and Development (PDR) had just arrived on the scene and I fondly remember how Dr. Rele often discussed PDR articles with me and encouraged me to use them in the teaching. Throughout my career at IIPS, I taught this course but, as the concept of development underwent a big change over the years, from just an economic development to a comprehensive concept of Sustainable Development. I made it a point to incorporate many other dimensions like social development, gender issues, reduction in inequalities, human resource development, environmental degradation etc. in the course content. As a result, over the years, 'Population & Development' became a full-fledged 50-lecture course and many of the above topics are now taught as separate courses. In the meantime, due to the vision and able leadership of Prof. Srinivasan, IIPS got the status of the Deemed University. In 1988, I became Professor in the newly created department of Population and Development Studies and headed it after 1994.

In 1986, based on a short course on 'Health Economics' that I attended at the London School of Economics and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, I introduced an optional paper on 'Health Economics'. During my visit to Beijing and Bangkok in 1994, I found that a course on Business Demography was taught at Beijing University and in Bangkok. Demography course enabled the students to get employed with marketing firms. I thought such a subject would be useful to expand the employment opportunities for our students, and developed a curriculum suitable to our MPS students and introduced an optional paper on Business Demography. For this, I even organised a one-day seminar for networking with Marketing Companies and to understand their requirements. Dr. Pathak, the Director then, was quite supportive in this venture. Just before my retirement in 2001, I introduced a paper on 'Gender Issues in Demographic Research' for MPS and enjoyed teaching it.

Research Projects and Other Opportunities.

Initially along with my work on secondary data to study economic dimensions of population issues, I completed my Ph.D. from the Economics Department of Bombay University. In my thesis,

I examined the relationship between economic value of children, cost of bringing up children and fertility transition by conducting a survey. On the same lines, jointly with Dr. Shireen Jejeebhoy, I conducted a survey on a larger sample from Bhivandi taluka, known for having a sizable Muslim population.

Later I worked on a variety of research projects like Demographic Consequences of an Irrigation Project, Human Development Report of Maharashtra (for UNDP), A study of Health Expenditure, etc. I was also fortunate to be a part of the three country project on 'The relationship between Population and Land Use changes,'- undertaken by the National Academies of Sciences in India, China and USA), For this I studied the gender dimension of this relationship.

I also cherish the memories of my four visits to China (including the visit as a member of the delegation sent by the Government of India to the IUSSP conference at Beijing), two months at the East West Centre, Hawaii for collaborative research on 'Unwanted Fertility in India, and presentation of papers three times in the meetings of the Population Association of America. Those days such opportunities were limited.

Finally, the opportunity to work as the All India Co-ordinator of NFHS-2, especially working with Dr. Fred Arnold was academically and administratively a very enriching experience. The association continued for some time, even after my retirement due to the consultancies given by ORC Macro, and The Population Reference Bureau.

Students

I also fondly remember the experience of guiding the students for seminar papers, M.Phil. and Ph.D. dissertations on a variety of topics. It created a strong bond, especially with the Ph.D. students. Having taught at IIPS for 30 years, I am happy to see our students all over India and in many Asian countries in good positions, doing very well. Some became, later my colleagues at IIPS and good friends.

Library

The IIPS library is one place for which I have had a soft corner in my heart. Right from my first year in IIPS until my retirement I was on the Library Committee and for many years its chairperson. If, over the years, the social science component of its collection has improved, I can say that I was partly instrumental for it. The statue of Goddess Saraswati gifted to me by the library staff always reminds me of the prompt and efficient services provided by Mr. Randeria, Mr. Rao and of course the present Librarian Dr. Mistri and all the present staff.

Campus Life

In the early seventies, many of us in the faculty were newly married. Over the years, our children grew up together like in a family and the campus provided them a healthy, enjoyable, childhood. Children from all the residential quarters used to play cricket together. I have quite pleasant memories of Ganapati festivals, New Year functions and annual farewell dinners to students.

Retirement and after

After a brief encounter with the IIPS administration, as the Officiating Director, I retired in 2001 as the Head, Department of Population and Development Studies and the All India Co-ordinator of

NFHS-2. The experience and the exposure that I got in IIPS has enabled me to be professionally active even today through my involvement in the work of various organisations, mainly TISS and IIPS during the last 18 years. In particular, I would like to mention my Thematic Paper on 'Social Security for The Elderly in India' published by UNFPA

Some concerns

I am happy that the faculty and students in IIPS are doing quite well. During the last two decades, IIPS has changed a lot but still retains its simple culture. IIPS has always been known for the rigour in the application of advanced statistical techniques of analysis to population data. I understand how crucial population projections are for developmental planning. In the early seventies, apart from KAP surveys by the Family Planning Division, most of the work pertained to the indirect estimation of demographic parameters and statistical models. Now especially after NFHS, large data sets are available on a variety of population-related variables. Lot of work is being done on a variety of topics by applying logistic regression and other advanced techniques of multivariate analysis with respondents' background characteristics as the explanatory variables. Usually the same variables like education or Standard of Living Index emerge as statistically significant. Often these studies, though on policy oriented topics, just look like academic exercises and don't lead to meaningful policy conclusions or recommendation of specific strategies. There is a need to identify new intermediate indicators and collect suitable data.

It is a very happy situation that work is being done at IIPS on a variety of subjects like gender issues, domestic violence, morbidity, environmental degradation, poverty, urban issues, ageing, etc. But the approach and mindset has not changed much, barring a few exceptions. In my classes, I always said that 'statistical analysis can tell you 'how much change' has been there in demographic parameters but in order to know the 'how' and the 'why' you have to go beyond the numbers and study the interrelationship between population and its socio- economic aspects'. I now feel there is a need to go not only beyond the numbers but beyond demography to capture the complexity of these issues. I am aware that for some studies, a qualitative approach is adopted but, with a few exceptions, they tend to be too simplistic as the links with other fields are not truly incorporated.

I also feel that even though the faculty is placed in different departments, it has not led to specialisation by faculty members in specific area. Perhaps they prefer to be all-rounders but concentration on specific areas for a long time generally results into more mature approach based on extensive reading, robust study designs and appropriate methodology. Some restructuring also might help.

Lastly, I wonder why demography has not been able to establish its identity as a separate discipline like other social sciences. Even the new subjects like women's studies, environmental sciences have separate departments in the universities and degrees are awarded in these subjects. At some places, subjects like population education are often taught by teachers, without having any population studies background. I hope IIPS and IASP will play important role in getting for Population Studies the position that it deserves in the Indian social science scenario. I am grateful to IIPS for all the opportunities and experience that I got and wish the faculty and students a very bright future.

Sumati Kulkarni



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IIPSAA CONDUCTED WORKSHOPS



WORKSHOP ON ETHICS AND INTEGRITY IN SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HEALTH RESEARCH

Background of the Workshop

Research involving human participants raises several ethical, legal, social and political issues. Ethics in research represents the norms that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable undertaking. Ethics primarily aims to preserve and promote the integrity and interest of individuals, groups and society, protection of confidentiality, ensuring ethical soundness in research activity, management of risk and interaction between researchers. Specifically, ethical issues are the part of a broader consideration of the roles that values play in the research process through various stages - from the choice of a research area to the writing of conclusion. Conventionally, ethics concentrated on issues in biomedical research to protect the rights of the subjects undergoing the experiment. Moreover, not only biomedical research but also the research in social sciences has been remained the ground of experiments and unethical practices in the past. In the absence of adequate understanding of the methods of ethical principles, rules and regulations, social science and health research are suffering from reliable and authentic data generation, which is the foundation of evidence-based policymaking. In this context, IIPSAA and IIPS organized a Capacity Building Workshop on "Ethics and Integrity in Social Science and Health Research" during 21st to 24th February 2018. The workshop was coordinated by Dr. Dipti Govil, Dr. Archana K. Roy and Mr. Prakash Fulpagare.

Workshop Objectives

The primary objectives of the workshop were (a) to strengthen the capacity of the researchers in identifying and applying the principles of ethics in implementing and management of social science and health research; (b) to make researchers aware about the existing national and international principles and guidelines on ethics; and (c) to enable the researchers to design and execute social and health research with ethical reasoning.

Summary of Sessions

The workshop was inaugurated by the then Officiating Director, Prof. Ladu Singh. It was organized in eight topical sessions, which included lectures by the subject experts, group discussion, activity-based learning, case studies etc. The first two sessions on the first day were taken by Dr. Sunita Sheel, Independent Researcher, Pune and Working Editor, Indian Journal of Medical Ethics (IJME). In the first session, she spoke about the 'Ethics, politics and professional issues in social science and public health: Importance, history, challenges and learning'. In the second session, Dr. Sheel elaborated on 'National and international codes, laws, rules and regulations of ethics and statements of professional principle and data management'. Dr. Amar Jessani, Independent Researcher and Consultant, Pubic Health and Bioethics, Mumbai and Editor, IJME was the resource person in the third session who spoke on 'Research integrity and misconduct: Plagiarism, authorship credits, conflict of interest and publication ethics and data management' particularly on data sharing, biomarker and destroying data, using pseudonyms etc. On the second day of the workshop, Prof. Mala Ramanathan, Achutha Menon Centre for Health Science Studies, SCTIMST, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, deliberated on the 'Bio-ethics theories and principles and the protection of research participants'. She elaborated on principles, anatomy and comprehension of informed consent; need, challenges and ethical dilemmas of privacy and confidentiality; and risk and benefit assessment. On day three, Prof. Sivakami, Chairperson, Centre for Health and Social Sciences, School of Health Systems Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, spoke on 'Ethics in research methods and design'. She covered ethics in designing quantitative and qualitative research and in experimental and intervention research; challenges and mechanism to deal with them; and ethical issues arise during fieldwork. In the following session, Prof. Usha Ram, Department of Public Health and Mortality Studies, IIPS, Mumbai, highlighted 'various aspects of the mentor and trainee relationship'. On the fourth day of the workshop, Prof. Arokiasamy, Department of Development Studies, IIPS, Mumbai spoke on 'Research ethics boards/committees: Roles and responsibilities'. He elaborated about functioning and issues faced by Research Ethics Boards and Committees and procedure and approval process. A total of 11 participants completed the workshop successfully. The workshop ended with the distribution of certificates to the participants and a formal vote of thanks proposed by the workshop Coordinator, Dr. Dipti Govil.

WORKSHOP ON SCIENTIFIC WRITING



IIPSAA organized it's 10th workshop on 'Scientific Writing' during 20-24 December 2018 in collaboration with IIPS. The workshop was coordinated by Dr. Dipti Govil and Dr. Kaushlendra Kumar. The prime objective of the workshop was to build capacity of the young demographers in scientific writing. The workshop was comprised of 19 sessions which were taken by 9 resource persons from various fields. All the sessions were interactive and cocktail of both theoretical concepts and practical exercises. A total of forty-three participants (8 external participants and 35 research scholars from IIPS) completed the workshop.





- Take home messages from the workshop were: 1) everyone should take the rejection of the papers positively and see it as an opportunity of improvement;
- 2) publication is a game, and everyone has to play;
- 3) don't let the research finding go waste, use them in making difference;
- 4) every small piece of research should be placed in public domain;
- 5) research should be done in proper ethical frame;
- 6) preparing mind-map is must before starting the research work; and
- 7) researcher should be thirsty for sharing and don't be secretive.

IIPSAA ACTIVITY

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RUN FOR POPULATION AWARENESS

The IIPS Alumni Association (IIPSAA) in collaboration with IIPS organized the first ever marathon event namely; "Run for Population Awareness" on October 7th, 2018. The event aimed to create the awareness on various issues of the population including the need for daily physical activity for good health and wellbeing of people of Mumbai. The event was open for all who were associated with the IIPS and students residing in nearby areas. Around 250 participants including students, faculty, staff and alumni participated in the event.

The run was sponsored by IIPSAA and IIPS. Bombay Running Crew were technical partners and Myposhn, Mumbai was the support partner for conducting the marathon. IIPSAA provided T-shirts to 220 registered participants. Since it was the inaugural race, the run was arranged for short distances of 2 kms and 5 kms in Deonar, near the IIPS campus. Mumbai traffic police and local police helped in managing the traffic during the run.





STUDENTS' CORNER

IIPS has brought versatility to the approach I had on social development. In particular, the quantification skills provided by the institute is immense. Those who are contributing to the development sector would endorse this. The one year course on population studies in itself gave me wider exposure to demography angle of social issues. This, in many ways, has contributed in addressing societal needs. With the knowledge I and many like me gained from here, are able to move in the path of near wisdom and contributing in bringing out new research findings. For instance, the recent conference at Cape Town is one best example the skills IIPSians have. About 10 percent of total conference participants were alumni or students of IIPS.

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K.S Bharath Kumar

Reliance Foundation

Namaste,

It was the summer of June 2015, when I came to Mumbai. I was excited to join one of the best demographic institutes in India but was totally unaware of how things would go. Fortunately, admission was made, and that was the beginning of my 3 years' journey at IIPS. I struggled a bit in the early days. But that's a usual process when you face a new environment. The academic environment in IIPS is very motivating. If you are determined, you will find IIPS as an exciting platform. The students are not pressurized in their study, and I believe in a stress-free environment, one can grow from all aspects. The experiences of these three years, filled with all kinds of memory, is so precious to me. I met people with diverse backgrounds. Some of them and my experiences with them will remain in my mind forever. My experiences with the faculties were memorable, especially with my supervisor. I was fortunate to have such an inspiring person as a supervisor at IIPS. Moreover, IIPS is known for celebrating festivals of all faith. This culture practically introduced me to a beautiful aspect of unity in diversity. In sum, if you take IIPS years out of my life, it would be equivalent to removing significant one-third of my life. Such is the impact of IIPS. At last, "es lebe IIPS."

Shubhankar Sharma

Ph.D. Student Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research and University of Saint Andrews



IIPS insight

There are many things to tell about before I joined International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), but I will share some events from the time when I came to Banaras Hindu University (BHU) to pursue M.Sc. in Health Statistics. However, I found myself under a lot of pressure as I faced difficulties, majorly, because of the language barriers (I didn't understand Hindi and was poor with my spoken English), financial constraints and other things. The thoughts of leaving the course kept haunting me initially. I could barely communicate with the people around me, but it changed after some months. Two years passed, and I finished M.Sc. with distinction in the year 2016. In addition to that, I qualified the UGC-NET exam in 2015 and I felt everything was just moving fantastically. My family was very happy and I felt confident and passionate about my career and life.

I thought of pursuing research but I did not know how to proceed with it. Additionally, with the eloping time, I wanted to earn money and support my family. With this ongoing tussle in my mind, I started exploring for every related opportunities available and gave 2-3 failed job interviews as well, since everybody wants an experienced candidate, right? I got to know about IIPS from some of my seniors at BHU and applied for an M.Phil. degree. I was attracted to IIPS more than the other opportunities because the institute was giving a degree with a stipend of Rs. 6000/month. Thus, getting an admission at IIPS could enable me to pursue my dreams without being a burden to my family. However, as I was not sure about getting admission at IIPS, I joined Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT-B), as a Junior Research Fellow in a project in the year 2016. After working for just 15-20 days there, I got to know about my selection at IIPS. Many people suggested me to continue my position at IIT because of its brand value and other future benefits, but I chose to join IIPS over IIT. I still wonder sometimes if I had not been in IIPS, what trajectory my life would have followed.

Joining IIPS was indeed a big opportunity for my career and I was very excited about the new place, people and its environment. We were more than 50 students in that class. Teachers like Prof. Chander Shekhar, Dr. Laxmi kant Dwivedi and Dr. Abhishek Singh played an important role during this period. Even though I was in M.Phil., I used to attend the demography classes of Dr. Abhishek Singh and Prof. Chander Shekhar with MPS batch since I required to brush up my existing concepts in demography. I remember how Prof. Usha Ram encouraged me during my first presentation in the public health class. The class schedule in M.Phil. was from 14:00-17:00 hours which gave me a lot of time to invest on myself.

IIPS students usually clear UGC-JRF in Population Studies more often than the rest of the universities in India and this thing was always there in my mind before coming to IIPS. Like most of my classmates, I also started preparing for it. The MA/M.Sc. study room was like a holy temple for me, where I invested a lot of time learning new concepts and brushing up the old ones. This time eventually helped me to strengthen my knowledge on the subject, which served as building blocks for my career.

I have always been an introvert, and thus I find it difficult to mingle up with new people. But, surprisingly I mixed up with people in IIPS in no time. I was allotted Room No. 5, Old Hostel, where, I spent a lot of quality time with my friends. There was a television at the first floor in that building, where we used to watch cricket and football games (UEFA-UCL, Laliga, etc.). This place also served as a venue for our late night birthday parties. The environment in IIPS was so lively and exciting that one can never fall asleep before four in the morning. I was also not an exception to the trend. We used to play badminton, followed by late night stroll to a nearby tea stall. In addition to this, I can never forget the endless discussions that we had whole night concerning different issues. Oh! I forgot to mention about the mess managed by the students of IIPS. Several times, I got opportunity to handle the mess duties with fellow students and it was always a wonderful experience.

The thing I like most during such tenure was serving foods. Actually, the interesting part in serving food is that you can always monitor the perception of people about the food by observing their expressions, which helped us to make alterations in the menu. Also, through handling the mess you would get to learn a lot about management of manpower and other monetary resources. I never thought that in a city like Mumbai, I could get 4 times meal per day by paying only Rs. 1800-2500 per month. The amount of fellowship, I was getting was enough to manage the whole month and I did not have to take any money from my home which was a huge relief. The lifestyle in IIPS was always exciting with lot of diversities since most of us had different cultural background. We used to have celebrations on occasions like Diwali, Eid, Ganesh Puja, Holi, Mahalaya, Saraswati Puja, Onam, etc.

In addition to that, we used to celebrate New Year, Foundation Day, Christmas, etc. The "Sports Week" month in IIPS is like another celebration time for a person like me. Tournaments like cricket, football, kabaddi, table tennis, volleyball and badminton were organized. I personally preferred to play cricket, football and kabaddi. I was badly injured several times but the excitement always pulled me to play again throughout my tenure at IIPS.

Time fled and I finished the M.Phil. course in the year 2017. Finally, I decided to do Ph.D.; but as I was not having any external source of fellowship to pursue Ph.D., I joined a social research organization in Bangalore in the capacity of a Data Analyst. However, after few months, I got to know that I cleared UGC-JRF. Luckily, the director of the organization supported me and encouraged me to join Ph.D. I came back to IIPS and joined Ph.D. in the year 2017 under the supervision of Prof. Chander Shekhar. Like most of the Ph.D. students, I used to stay outside the campus in an apartment besides IIPS. Since there was a kitchen in my flat, I developed some cooking skills with the help of my flatmates. In Ph.D., I wanted to work on some specific areas of biostatistics but due to nonavailability of data and proper training to handle it, I started exploring Ph.D. opportunities available at foreign universities. It was not so easy for a person like me, who was not aware about the steps to get the Ph.D. outside India. It was indeed a lengthy process with lot of steps to follow. However, at the beginning of 2019, I got the acceptance letter from the Ben Gurion University (BGU) of the Negev, one of the best universities in Israel. It was a nice opportunity with a generous funding (with lot of facilities), university brand and in addition to that, the supervisor from BGU informed me about the availability of data and training for the preferred research domain. I accepted the offer and joined BGU in February 2019.

The journey I have completed until now would never be possible without the contribution of my family and some of my wonderful teachers, friends, seniors and juniors. In addition to this, IIPS has supported me throughout and has given me hundreds of opportunities to experiment with my research, learn and improve on a daily basis. I feel blessed to be a part of such a great institution, which helped me in my transition from being a student to a researcher. IIPS and the time I spent there will always remain close to my heart.

Thank you for all the love and support

Apurba Shil (IIPS Alumnus, 2016-2018)

Doctoral Fellow (2019-2023)-Statistics and Epidemiology, Dept. of Public Health, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Israel

CONFERENCES

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Travel Brochure

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The annual meeting of the Population Association of America (PAA) is one of the prestigious conferences in the field of demography and population studies. I got a chance to participate in the 2018 annual meeting of PAA in Denver, Colorado as a young scientist travel award winner.

Attending PAA was an aspiration and it was a great opportunity to interact with the world's leading demographers and scientists. The conference organizers were very sensitive towards young researchers and there were several sessions on emerging issues. The combination of young and senior researchers on the same desk gave opportunity to interact and exchange research ideas with them. These sessions were fruitful and it was a different experience. Even I got the chance to discuss my research with the wise president of PAA. During my presentation, the chairperson was very supportive throughout the presentation and discussant was full of enthusiasm and excitement for new research idea. I receive important comments and guidance to improve my paper. One of the PAA attractions was an exhibition gallery where several research agencies and organizations were promoting their work. All were keen to promote their work and were excited to entertain every single person.

I was amazed with the Americans the way they welcomed us. There were many incidents where locals were immobile just because we were taking pictures. Their modesty, respect for others and obliging nature were worth to appreciate.

Minakshi Viswakarma Doctoral Fellow, IIPS

I have reached a point in my professional career where I feel that to bring my professional plans to fruition, I need to immerse myself in knowledge-rich academic programmes. These programmes should explicitly deal with data handling, analysis, and visualization. The curriculum of the 6th KOSTAT-UNFPA Summer Seminar on Population, 2019 equipped me with the essential tools to conduct quality research in the field of contemporary public health issues, an area that I have a personal affinity and passion for addressing.

By participating in these workshops, I learned new statistical software and tools which are helpful to me to utilise concrete techniques to present my research findings, more holistically. I got an opportunity to learn the software 'R,' which is superior in terms of range of functions available for use. I am thankful to the authorities at IIPS for permitting me to attend this three-weeks Summer Programme on Population in South Korea.

Parul Puri

Doctoral Fellow, IIPS



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