

One-Day Offline Workshop on Research Methodology: Strengthening Research and Dissertation Supervision

25th Sept. 2026

The One-day workshop was conducted by the Department of Sociology, Nagaland University, Lumami, Nagaland on the 25th September, 2026 at the department conference hall. A total of 18 faculty members from sociology departments across various colleges in Nagaland attended the workshop. The workshop aimed primarily to address the issues and difficulties college teachers face in the supervision of MA dissertations and the conduct of dissertation research to strengthen the research skills and practices of MA Sociology students. Prof. Toshimenla Jamir, the Head of the department welcomed all the participants and highlighted the need felt by college teachers to engage in a detailed discussion on formulating research, conducting fieldwork and writing the social research at master level dissertation.

Session I on Formulating Research Topic, Research Problem, Sociological Framework

The first session focused on formulating research topic, research questions and framing it sociologically. Prof. Temjensosang highlighted how almost all phenomena can be studied within Sociology; be it an animal, vegetable, etc. as long as it touches human society and social relationships. The identification of the research problem involves a topic that is interesting and researchable while addressing a gap or issue in the existing body of knowledge. Clarity, specificity and feasibility with potential for contributing to the discipline needs to be kept in mind.

The session also highlighted framing of research areas and problems students face in regard to specificity and clarity of a proposed study given a limited time frame for dissertation writing. Both over broadening and making it too narrow needs to be avoided with time and data accessibility constraints being kept in mind. The research problem is meant to help in the formulation of the hypothesis or the research questions and objectives, hence it was emphasized that the role of the teachers/supervisors is to help direct the research problems of the student dissertation topics towards clarity, research ability and specificity, and also to make sure that the different variables and theoretical perspectives are aligned. Another important issue visited was regarding how the subject matter of the various theoretical frameworks tends to be highly Eurocentric and hence, it becomes important to apply these euro-centric lenses with caution; attempts must be made to make them locally relevant with regard to context.

Session-II: Literature review, Problematisation and Conceptual-Theoretical Framework

The second session was on literature review as a tool for problematization. Dr. Suraj Beri discussed the common mistakes students make while writing review of literature, gaps in existing research and preparing the conceptual and theoretical framework of the study. The session focused on how to write literature review based on identifying patterns of discussion, agreements, disagreements, among scholars etc. on a given issue/area. The identification of the pattern helps in the identification of the underlying gaps in literature. It also covered that students often fall into the summary trap while writing review of literature instead of

integrating the different literatures into a comprehensive thematic discourse. The need to inculcate the ability to justify one's own research questions among the existing literature as a conversation or debate with the existing studies was emphasized. It was pointed out that the literature review can be chronological and/or thematic, theoretical or methodological.

The discussion then shifted to the topic of the Conceptual Framework. It refers to a specific idea or notion within the research problem eg. waste management, gender, power, etc. The same concept can be viewed from different theoretical frameworks/perspectives. An important thing pointed out was that the concepts need to be adapted to each other and aligned to one's research topic and its context. Often times conceptual framework is mentioned only in the introduction and is not engaged further in the objectives, methodology, findings, etc. which needs to be rectified. The Theoretical Framework on the other hand, is a lens through which we can view various concepts to help formalize research questions and objectives. It was emphasized that the students need to be inculcated with the habit of developing and integrating a theoretical lens before/during the proposal formulation and not after.

Session-III: Dissertation Research Proposal formulation exercise

Dr. Piethli K. Jimo and Dr. Yamsani Srikanth engaged participants during the third session on formulating dissertation research proposal. The participants were divided into five groups to come up with research proposals containing the following: Participants were invited to discuss the specificities and differences among statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, research design and Research methods. The participants were also given sample topic titles ranging from qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, explanatory, descriptive study and exploratory types of research with regionally relevant angles.

A total of 5 groups were formed, named Group-A to E, all of which were given time to discuss and to eventually present their proposals with the given format. All the groups presented their topics, each of which were followed by a session of discussion and comments from the faculties.

Session-IV: Structure of the Dissertation (headed by Prof. Athungo Ovung)

Prof. Athungo Ovung addressed the participants in the fourth session on the basic structure of a research dissertation. He discussed technical aspects of following university guidelines on issues related to the format, a minimum 100 A4 size pages, following Times New Roman, line spacing being 1.5 and referencing using APA 7th edition. The Plagiarism certificate needs to be generated by the supervisor, only using software approved by the UGC. Drill Bit was discussed as being the appropriate software for the same with only 10% similarity index permitted.

The next point of discussion was regarding the distribution of marks. The internals being 20% are for 72 marks with the research proposal defense being 10% (36 marks) and the data collection being another 10% (36 marks). As for the externals, it is to consist of the remaining 80% which reaches up to 288 marks. Within this, the dissertation evaluation consists of 60% (216 marks) and the Viva-voce is for 20% (72 marks), making the grand total of the internals and externals reach up to 360 marks (100%).

Session-V: Supervision and doubt clearing clinic (headed by Dr. Sandeep Gupta)

This final session included the discussion on some of the common pertinent issues that often surface during dissertations by Dr. Sandeep Gupta. Some of them included: vague sample size, weak interview schedules and questionnaires, decorative theoretical frameworks, unintegrated literature review, thin analysis despite data collection, and so on. He elaborated on supervisor checklist as a guideline for guiding students in their dissertations. Some of key issues were on: can the student state the problem in 2-3 sentences without repeating the title? are the objectives specific, limited and achievable in one semester? does the research question call for realistically obtainable data? Is the proposal supported by literature?

The session ended with a doubt clearing session regarding various other issues brought up by the participants which looked into different issues such as mentoring, number of students allotment as per college faculty strength, prospects of internships, changes in the syllabus, etc.





