

Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health concludes ICSSR-Sponsored Ten-Day Course on “Qualitative Research Course on Conceptual Foundations of Qualitative Research in Critical Health Studies in the Digital Era: Concept, Design, Interpretation and Academic Writing”

The Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health, School of Social Sciences concluded a ten-day research methodology course titled *Conceptual Foundations of Qualitative Research in Critical Health Studies in the Digital Era: Concepts, Design, Interpretation and Academic Writing*, held from 1 to 12 September 2026 at the SSS-1 Committee Room. The course was sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi, and was directed by Prof. Sanghamitra S. Acharya, with Dr. Aijaz Ahmed as Co-Course Director.

The inaugural session opened with a welcome address by Prof. Rajib Dasgupta, Chairperson of CSMCH, followed by Prof. Acharya’s introduction to the aims of the workshop. The inaugural lecture on qualitative research was delivered by Prof. Vivek Kumar, Dean, School of Social Sciences II.

The programme was built as a sequence rather than a series of isolated lectures, each day resting on the one before it.

Day 1: Foundations of qualitative research

Introduction to nature and scope of qualitative research and the distinctions between ontology, epistemology, methodology and method, before situating Critical Health Studies within social sciences.

Day 2: Addressing research problem and research design,

Frame research question, how literature is read, and how coherence is built between the three.

Day3: Major traditions in qualitative research,

Exploration of phenomenology, lived experiences, and grounded theory approaches, including coding procedures.

Day4: Data generation in qualitative research,

Sessions on covering digital ethnography, narrative inquiry, case study and in-depth interviewing, alongside documents, observation, field notes and reflexive recording, and closing with a session on researching vulnerability, suffering and marginality.

Day 5 & 6: Ethics, reflexivity and positionality,

Discussion on ethics in research, publication and on positionality, reflexivity and representation. Also focus of the course into view, examining health, illness and care as social science themes, embodiment, stigma, institutions and inequality, and the application of qualitative methods to health-related inquiry.

Day 7: Data analysis (I & II).

Participants worked through coding and categorisation, thematic analysis and interpretive depth, and memo-writing as a way of developing arguments from data, before comparing analytic approaches and turning to the writing of methodology and findings chapters.

Day 9: Academic writing

Focus on Participatory Rural Appraisal, covering its principles and relevance to rural health research and its tools in practice, including social mapping, transect walks, seasonal calendars, ranking techniques and institutional analysis.

Day 10: Understanding of qualitative software

Hands-on exposure to MAXQDA and ATLAS.ti from project setup and queries through coding, retrieval and visual tools.

The course drew resource persons from across the country, including scholars from the University of Hyderabad, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi, Jamia Millia Islamia, Aligarh Muslim University, MANUU Hyderabad, the University of Delhi, IGNOU, Central University of Jammu, ICIMOD, O. P. Jindal Global University and several Centres within JNU. Participants closed the programme with presentations of their fieldwork, followed by feedback, evaluation and a valedictory and certificate distribution and cultural event.



