



Sociological Society, Himachal Pradesh (SSHP)

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An Initiative of SSHP

National Workshop cum Seminar

on

**Understanding Thematic Areas of Sociological Research in
Himachal Pradesh**

On

22nd May, 2021

Report cum Recommendations

About the Initiative

Over a period of time, it is being felt in the academia in social sciences that there are no thematic areas for the research at different levels in higher education. Due to which researches lack direction and policy orientation and not taken seriously by the policy makers at national as well as at international level.

To understand the changing society, it is opportune time for social sciences particularly Sociology to tread the path. At the backdrop, Sociological Society, Himachal Pradesh (SSHP) has taken the initiative to carve out some of the thematic areas specifically in the state of Himachal Pradesh to make Research and Development more focussed. This initiative aimed to suggest broader workable and policy-oriented research themes for the future research in Sociology specifically and for all the social sciences in general.

Workshop -cum- Seminar

The Sociological Society, Himachal Pradesh (SSHP) successfully organised one day National Worksop -cum- Seminar on 22nd May 2021 on virtual mode. The theme of the workshop -cum-Seminar was "Understanding Thematic Areas of Sociological Research in Himachal Pradesh".

The Seminar began with greetings to the delegates and attendees. Dr. Mohinder Slariya, General Secretary, SSHP welcomed the esteemed guests and also announced the theme of the Workshop Cum Seminar. He introduced the keynote speaker Prof. Satish Sharma and the president of SSHP, Dr. Ruchi Ramesh. He also

introduced Prof. O.P. Monga, Dr. RK Kaistha, Sh. GD Mathur, Sh. H.L Dogra, Dr. B.P. Badola members of the consultation committee and Dr. Kewal Krishan, Mr. Dinesh Sharma, Mr. Karam Dutt Sharma, Mr. Damodar Gautam resource persons of the workshop cum Seminar.

Format of workshop -cum-seminar

As the workshop-cum-seminar focuses on some thematic areas in Himachal Pradesh only, hence all the districts of Himachal were divided into four geographical clusters having three districts each.

The format of workshop cum seminar was in two parts:

- (i) Presentation from each geographical Cluster
- (ii) Review by consultation committee of respective cluster

Under the following **consultation committee**, this workshop cum seminar was organised and finally the recommendations made:

Name of the Member of Consultation Committee	Role
Prof. Satish Sharma	Convenor, Consultation Committee
Prof. OP Monga, Dr. RK Kaisth, Dr. Anjouri Sharma	Members from cluster-I
Dr. Arvind Sehgal, Dr. Ajay Sharma, Dr. Surya	Members from cluster-II
Dr. Amarjit Lal, Dr. SL Thakur, Sh. GB Mathur	Members from cluster-III
Sh. HL Dogra, Dr. B.P. Badola, Dr. Sujit Surroch	Members from cluster-IV
Dr. Ruchi Ramesh	President, SSHP
Dr. Mohinder Slariya	General Secretary cum Member Secretary

SSHP thankfully acknowledged the contribution made by the convenor and all the members of consultation committee.

No. of Cluster	Name of Cluster/District	Name of Presenter	Member of Consultation Committee
1	Shimla, Kinnaur and Solan	Assistant Professor Dinesh Sharma	Prof. OP Monga, Dr. RK Kaisth, Dr. Anjouri Sharma (Members)
2	Sirmour, Mandi and Kullu	Assistant Professor K.D Sharma	Dr. Arvind Sehgal, Dr. Ajay Sharma, Dr. Surya (Members)
3	Hamirpur, Bilaspur and Lahul Spiti	Assistant Professor Damodar Gautam	Dr. Amarjit Lal, Dr. SL Thakur, Sh. GB Mathur (members)
4	Una, Kangra and Chamba	Assistant Professor Dr. Kewal Krishan	Sh. HL Dogra, Dr. BP Badola, Dr. Sujit Surroch (Members)

Rationale of the Initiative

In the present scenario, the role of social sciences has become important *to understand the changing society* specifically in developing countries like, India. Sociology can take a lead among all the social sciences to make different aspects of society *understandable rationally, interpretatively* by highlighting some **thematic areas**. It is opportune time to show the *worth of social sciences* particular sociology in a professional way and convince the policy makers rationally that the role of social *scientists* is indispensable.

So, with the aim to **create professional sociologists** by doing *better sociology*, SSHP felt that there should be some discussion and consultation on **various thematic areas** specifically in the state across the ideologies with a focus to make this *wonderful science of society* really **working for the society**.

At the backdrop of above discussion, **Sociological Society Himachal Pradesh** (SSHP) is going to organize one-day **workshop cum seminar** on 22nd May, 2021. The presentation will be made before the **consultation committee**. The initiative aims to suggest **broader workable and policy-oriented research themes** for the *future research* which can be used for research at all levels and will be helpful to *make professional social scientists* in general and *sociologists in particular*.

A request will be made to *all the universities, research institutes, IITs, NITs, Colleges having Sociology* in the state to consider the outcome at least for **next five years** and use them in *all research related activities*. The **cultural exchange program** for the students and faculties will also be under consideration. All seminars/conferences/workshops/ symposia organized by either SSHP or any *institution* anywhere in the state may be based on *those themes* and it will be brought out in the form of publication.

The workshop will focus on **possible thematic areas** for research focusing on local realities of the region by also keeping the international scholarships of different countries and institutions, so that we can prepare our students for those scholarships. Further, the outcome of the workshop will convert into **Thematic Groups** in latter stage with an aim **to cater international/national academic requirements** of professional sociologists/social scientists.

To be specific, presentation from each geographical cluster will be made in the presence of consultation committee of the respective cluster. After the presentation of each cluster one of the members of the consultation committee will deliberate upon the theme briefly. Finally, the convenor of the committee will consolidate all the presented/discussed themes. The recommendations of the convenor of consultation committee will be the final mandate of the workshop and will be considered for implementation.

The question and answer will be taken before the final presentation by the convenor. The Q&A session will be of 20 minutes and will be responded by the presenter and members of consultation committee of respective cluster.

The Workshop cum Seminar was organised as per the following programme:

Time	Description of the Event	Presentation by
04: 55 PM	Joining Virtually	
05:00 to 05:02 PM	Welcome of the Attendees	Dr. Mohinder Slariya, General Secretary, SSHP
05:02 to 05:07 PM	Brief of the Workshop cum Seminar	Dr. Ruchi Ramesh, President, SSHP
05:07 to 05:12 PM	Introduction of the Presenters, Convenor and Members of Consultation Committee	Dr. Mohinder Slariya, General Secretary, SSHP
05:12 to 05:27 PM	Presentation from Cluster-I	Dinesh Sharma
05:27 to 05:30 PM	Q & A Session from Chat box only	
05:30 to 05:45 PM	Presentation from Cluster-II	Karam Dutt Sharma
05:45 to 05:50 PM	Q & A Session from Chat box only	
05:50 to 06:05 PM	Presentation from Cluster-III	Damodar Gautam
06:05 to 06:10 PM	Q & A Session from Chat box only	
06:10 to 06:25 PM	Presentation from Cluster-IV	Kewal Krishan
06:25 to 06:30 PM	Q & A Session from Chat box only	
06:30 to 06:35 PM	Presentation by the member of Consultation Committee from Cluster-I	By one of the members
06:35 to 06:40 PM	Presentation by the member of Consultation Committee from Cluster-II	By one of the members
06:40 to 06:45 PM	Presentation by the member of Consultation Committee from Cluster-III	By one of the members
06:45 to 06:50 PM	Presentation by the member of Consultation Committee from Cluster-IV	By one of the members
06:50 to 07:10 PM	Presentation by the Convenor, Consultation Committee which will be considered as SSHP Declaration on Thematic Areas of Research	Prof. Satish Sharma
07:10 to 07:15 PM	Vote of Thanks	Dr. Mohinder Slariya

All the presenters as mentioned in the list above, had presented their understanding after the consultation with all teachers working in their respective geographical segment before the presentation in the workshop cum seminar. All the presenters; Assistant Professor Dinesh Sharma, Assistant Professor Karam Dutt, Assistant Professor Damodar Gautam and Assistant Professor Dr. Kewal Krishan represented their geographical segments and suggested some themes for research. After the detailed discussion with the mentors of the respective segment, finally the consultation committee under the Chairmanship of Prof. Satish Sharma suggested themes and sub-themes which can be considered for the better sociology in the valedictory session.

Valedictory Session

In the valedictory session, the convenor of *Consultation Committee*, Prof. Satish Sharma shared his views on the *professional development of Sociology*. He emphasised that there are some of the *broad areas* which are largely *unexplored* and are need urgent attention of the researchers of all levels. But, for this we need to **develop** methodological and theoretical approach which would produce *adequate and objective* results, which is the need of the hours as well as of far-changing society. Sociology as an independent science, has to play a vital role in the *New Education Policy (NEP)* and must take lead to integrate all branches of knowledge (science) by developing a *multi-disciplinary* approach.

He further emphasised that in Himachal, we have the fields like; *changing institutional system, migration, impacts of urbanisation/industrialization/developmental projects, poverty, modernizing tradition, dev culture* and many more on which research is possible. Not only this, the research and studies can be linked with sustainable development goals (SDGs). A series of series of studies should be developed by involving students of all levels with a focus on *“From Classroom to Field”* perspective which will make student professional sociologists in future as well as the students will learn practically by visiting and working in the field and will come-up with sustainable solutions and moreover, it will make the students of sociology different from the students of other subjects.

Dr. Ruchi Ramesh, the President SSHP presented her valuable thoughts regarding the workshop cum seminar. She emphasised on the worth of social sciences particular Sociology in a *professional* manner and emphasised that sociology should **convince the policy makers rationally** that the role of social scientist is indispensable. She encouraged all the teachers and active members of SSHP to *create professional sociologist* by **doing better sociology**. She emphasized that we discuss and research the diversities of the state specifically and whole northwest region in general. With the acceptance of diversities, original studies must be carried out and we should focus on field-based studies.

At the end the vote of thanks was proposed by Dr. Mohinder Slariya, General Secretary of Sociological Society, Himachal Pradesh.

Future Perspective

The SSHP is looking forward to *create professional sociologist* and to create a multi-disciplinary approach to target all the research themes which are directly or indirectly related to the society. The SSHP aims to highlight the **gap between grassroots realities and the policy making** by highlighting the realities with the help of research. SSHP is looking forward to make necessary changes in the existing curriculum from +1 to Ph.D. in a coherent manner with a scope to change/alter curriculum a bit (maximum 20 percent) at first year of graduation and post-graduation.

The syllabus of +1 and +2 must be an **introductory and simplest** in nature (introduction to basic concepts of sociology and an introduction to Indian society in form of part-I for +1 and part-II for +2). The present syllabus of +1 and +2 is so huge and very difficult to understand and students don't prefer to carry the subject forward in graduation with an impression that the syllabus in graduation and post-graduation would have been very tough.

From first year of graduation onwards, the syllabus should be framed with an approach “*from simple to complex*” with a focus to crack major graduation-based competitive examinations including civil services and specialization should be only at post-graduation level.

SSHP Haripur (Manali) Declaration - 2021

declared on 2nd SSHP Annual International Conference at Manali

THEMATIC AREAS OF TEACHING AND RESEARCH IN SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

On the basis of presentations made from four geographical segments, it can be concluded that there are many areas which can be considered for the research by/for the students of sociology specifically and of all branches of social sciences in general. From presentations, areas of possible research can be; Economy and Society, Forestry and Community, Education and Society, Heritage and Culture, Sociology of Health, Sociology of Tourism, Socio-human Dimensions of Hydropower Generation, Industrial Sociology, Tribes: Sociological and Anthropological Perspective, Trends in emergence of Urbanisation, Cultural Assimilation of Tibetan and People of H.P., Sociology of Pandemic and during Post Covid-19 Period, Development Projects in Himachal Pradesh, Social Transformation of Castes etc.

The experts of consultation committee are of the view that in the backdrop of the fast-changing socio-economic and political scenario and its subsequent impact on society at large there has been growing concern for making higher education relevant. The *New Education Policy 2020* realized the **existing gaps** between “**current state of learning outcomes and what is required**”. Hence, there is a need for major reforms “*to bring about highest quality, equity and integrity into the system from childhood*”. The social philosophy since enlightenment till date, though now more operating through disintegrated autonomous disciplines, has been concerned with *progress, growth and development of human society* at two levels:

1. the production, reproduction and dissemination of knowledge through **teaching-learning and research** in an institutionalized mode, i.e., university and college education; and academia and intellectuals to make interventions by way of presenting progressive policy perspectives for the betterment of the society.
2. The role of the stakeholders, namely; *the state, academics, students and the educational institutions* of higher learning in achieving the outcomes is extremely important.

All need to **come together with specific roles and responsibilities** is very important. While the state has to make available adequate infrastructure and budgetary provisions, the academia and the authorities in governance of higher education **need to work on curriculum** in view of the emerging *societal needs of the present and future*, the students have to carry forward the educational agenda to produce the desired outcomes.

In view of the above, the present declaration lays emphasis on two levels:

I. Academic

1. Development of *multi-disciplinary integrated curriculum*, partly based on books of international standards and latest resources, and partly class-room teaching learning in form of MoU based international and national academic collaborations.
2. Inter-disciplinary methodological, theoretical and conceptual formulations for comprehensive research and analysis which should start from first year of graduation with some laboratory-like (in society) exposure to the students what is being taught to them.
3. Execution of *comprehensive method of evaluation* of students throughout the period of study, their theoretical knowledge, application of knowledge and analytical abilities which will make them sociology oriented in future with a tagline *“commit yourself today and be a professional sociologist in future”*.
4. Research orientation from graduation level onward.
5. Strict norms for *Faculty Recruitment* and continuous performance appraisal policy.

II. Research and Development

1. Identification and prioritization of research areas in the state of Himachal Pradesh falling in the purview of *social sciences, physical and natural sciences impacting the society*.
2. Himachal Pradesh is part of Indian Himalayan range extended up to Hindukush region accepted as lifeline as it provides *natural, physical and other renewable and non-renewable resources* to the Indian society as well as Asian nations, particularly; South-east Asian, the *integrated multi-disciplinary studies on Himalayan resources, ecology and environment* at macro level is highly crucial with the involvement of academic institutions of all HKH countries.
3. **Social-economic development** is crucial to the region due to *sub-regional socio-economic inequalities, inequities, poverty, non-availability of adequate potable water, health issues* like; anemia, under-weight children at birth, and other areas related to health and social well-being. The studies on these *areas from micro level to middle and then macro levels* need attention.
4. **The sustainable development need studies** on *poverty alleviation, reduction of inequalities, universal quality education, health facilities* and other such areas of human concerns need policy perspectives, adequate viable strategies and action plan. Such studies with focus on *development priorities* without jeopardizing *ecology and environment* need serious attention.
5. **Social impact studies** to analyse and assess the ongoing changes in the **social** (family, marriage, gender equality and equity, women and children, religion, customs, traditions and culture, lifestyles, caste, class, development plans, etc.), **economic** (production analysis of agriculture, horticulture, distribution system, people's income and expenditure, standard of living, life chances etc.), **political** sphere (factional politics, pressure groups, PRIs, electoral politics, political affiliations, functioning of

state organs, law and order agencies, and democratization of political processes etc.), form part of the micro studies.

6. **Studies on industrialization, urbanization, sustainability of cities, communities, climate change, ecology and environment**, people's and civil society interventions needs focus.
7. **Modernization of traditions in Himachal Pradesh** with special reference to the institutional context (family, marriage, religion including local deities, caste etc.) are crucial areas.
8. Finally, to carry forward the *academic and research agenda*, SSHP resolves to submit the declaration to the State Government, the Chancellor of Universities in Himachal Pradesh, Minister of Higher Education, the Vice Chancellors of the Universities in the state, and to the departments of studies, especially sociology and social work for the immediate implementation.

SSHP thankfully acknowledged the contribution of all office bearers, executive members, all presenters and other members who contributed directed and indirectly. Specifically, the members of report compilation committee; *Assistant Professor Sh. Minod Singh Guleria (Convenor), Assistant Professor Smt. Kiran and Research Scholar Sh. Ram Bhardwaj* for their tireless efforts to document the proceedings.

Notified with the approval and permission of worthy president, SSHP by

Place: from Chamba at Manali
Dated: 25th November, 2021

Dr. Mohinder Slariya
General Secretary, SSHP