

**Department of Sociology**  
**University of Allahabad, Prayagraj**

**Organize**

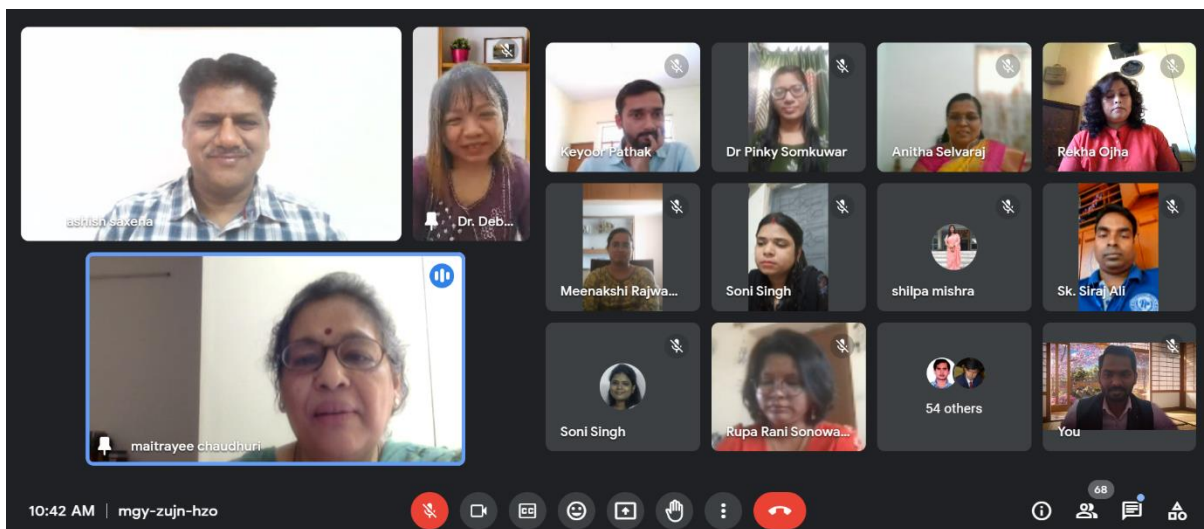
**Online 14 Days Refreshers Course**

(From 27.03.2023 to 09.04.2023)

On

**“Advanced Research Methodology and Technical Writing”**

The Department of Sociology, University of Allahabad organized an online interdisciplinary refresher course on “Advanced Research Methodology and Technical Writing” under the aegis of UGC-Human Resource Development Centre (HRDC), University of Allahabad from 27.03.2023 to 09.04.2023. Prof. Ashis Nandy, Renowned Political Psychologist Critic & Post-Colonialist was the Chief Guest while Prof. Maitrayee Chaudhuri, Former Chairperson, Centre for the Study of Social System, Jawaharlal Nehru University & North-South Dialogue Director, The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington was the Guest of Honour for the Valedictory Program on 09.04.2023

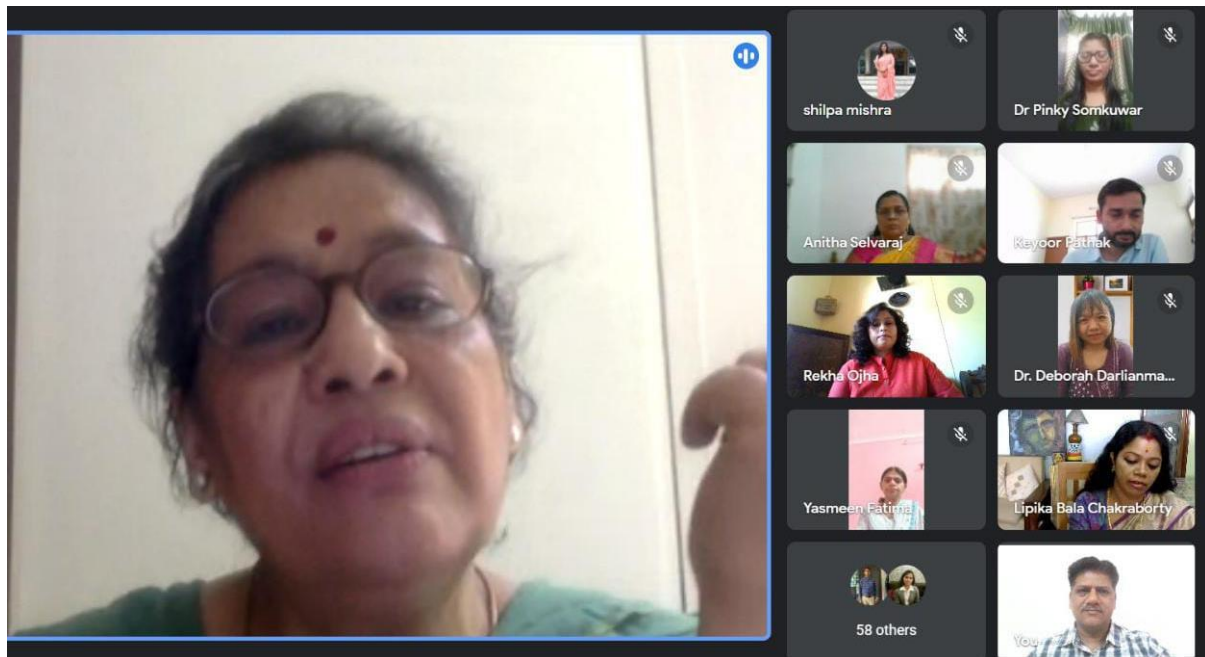


Prof. Ashish Saxena, Head, Department of Sociology & Director, UGC-HRDC, University of Allahabad delivered the welcome address and threw light on the relevance of the ‘Advance Research Methodology and Technical Writing’ in today’s world. He said time has changed so one need to look into the society with a new insight and methodology.



**The Chief Guest Prof. Ashis Nandy, Renowned Political Psychologist Critic & Post-Colonialist** in his valedictory address eschewed the methodological extremities of trying to do a perfect scientific study through the rigorous collection of statistical data, on the one hand, and attempting a purely theoretical treatise, on the other. Neither could be a fully competent mode of fruitful research, according to Prof. Nandy. Instead, he insisted that the researcher should find a creative and imaginative middle-ground between the two methodological extremities—a combination of the two. This contention he set about demonstrating through the research he has just concluded on partition violence specifically, but more generally on the ontology of political and genocidal violence. In the process, characteristically, Prof. Nandy made a number of counterintuitive observations which have the potential of raising not a few academic hackles. He cast doubt, for instance, on the victimological narratives of partition, arguing that there could be more than just unrelentingly passive victimhood in the lives of refugees. Instead, he exhorted us to think—as he did his respondents during fieldwork—about whether they had in fact at times received succour from their enemies. Building on this premise, he asserted that psychology as a discipline does not recognize pure villains in human beings (except perhaps in cases of clinical psychosis). A killer, he said, was normally not his usual self during the act of killing. It is his life-experience which sometimes morphs his personality into that of a killer during a certain phase of his life—a trait that he normally, assiduously tries to edit out from his later life through justifications of self-defence, mortal exigency, momentary insanity caused by trauma, or what you will.

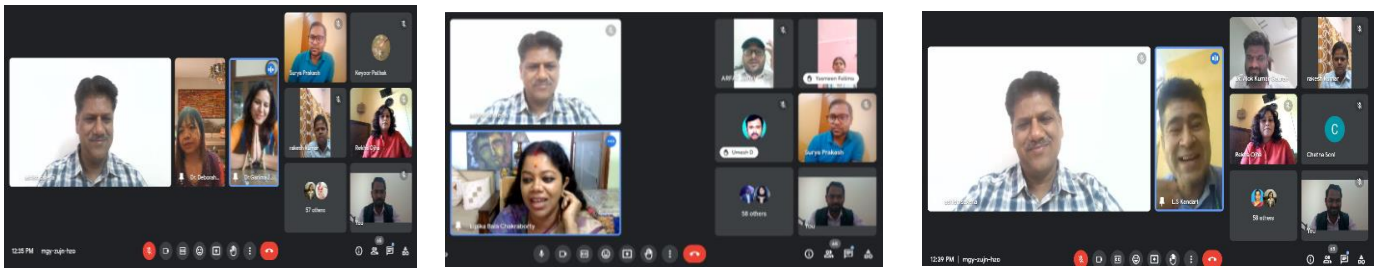
Therefore, the speaker explained that he—as a person who has experienced two genocides (in 1947 and in 1971)—was more interested in understanding how the grounds for a genocide are created. And, for that, Prof. Nandy asserted that he endeavours to work with grounded (possibly, non-canonical) theories. Flying in the face of tenacious convictions in the social sciences, the maverick social theorist declared: “The more sophisticated your theory is, the more difficult it becomes to test.”



While delivering the Presidential Address, the Guest of Honour **Prof. Maitrayee Chaudhuri, Former Chairperson, Centre for the Study of Social System, Jawaharlal Nehru University & North-South Dialogue Director, The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington** spoke on “Theory and Method: Some Reflections”. She said that there are a few concerns that invite her into “doing theory” (which incidentally is also the title of the book she co-edited with Manish Thakur in 2018: *Doing Theory: Locations, Hierarchies and Disjunctions*). These concerns could be grouped together from her lecture as follows: **One** is a commitment to social theory and the need to engage with it if we are to practice social sciences in any serious fashion. This in turn rests upon an understanding that sociology/social anthropology (even as we recognise them as disciplines that study common sense) is especially equipped to debunk taken-for-granted knowledge or common sense, which is usually partial and often prejudiced and discriminatory. The practice of a theoretically mindful sociology is therefore critical for a just and democratic society. Social theory, in other words, is intensely political. **Two**, an understanding that there is no immaculate

conception of social theories. They emerge in specific historical contexts and are constitutive of economic, political, social, cultural, institutional, and intellectual processes. We need to understand not only the contexts within which theories emerge, but also the entangled routes through which they travel. This demands a careful examination of the contexts of production, circulation and reception of theories. *Three*, pushing the argument further that theories emerge and travel in specific contexts, we need to examine disciplinary histories and the varying influence of theories and understandings of Indian social sciences. The absence of theorising in some fields and its presence in others within Indian social sciences reflect this complex history. *Four*, we need not necessarily share acquiescence to any one theory. No theory is ever entirely useless, and we need make no assertion of a “vision of the white heat of theoretical progress, in which bad ideas are exposed and discarded and new ones take their place overnight” (Jonathan Spencer).

What we should share is that social theories, like any other social entity, are made, critiqued, reconstituted, and deployed differentially and unequally. Theories are neither sacrosanct nor given, and it is an imperative theoretical task to examine and re-examine them. *Five*, there is an intrinsic relationship between theory and method. In research, it becomes absolutely imperative to cognise every methodological issue, for they have deep consequences for theoretical ramifications and signal possibilities of new vistas in social theory. It is this link between theory and method that is unfortunately given a miss in both our dominant teaching and research practices. It is with this understanding that researchers should seek to unravel the social, intellectual, institutional, and regular processes that have gone into the making and practice of theory. *Finally*, Prof. Chaudhuri asserted that theories matter: some shape and legitimise hegemonic worldviews; some can debunk and render explicit the limits of the same. They offer us the lenses and methods to critique not only the common-sense knowledge that we have, but also to understand the complex social processes that give rise to the conditions within which theoretical knowledge is produced.



The participants thanked **Prof. Ashish Saxena and his team** for successfully organizing the 14 days refresher course on “Advanced Research Methodology and Technical Writing”.



**Dr. Keyoor, Faculty, Department of Sociology, University of Allahabad and The Course Co-ordinator, UGC-HRDC, University of Allahabad** presented the report of the 14 days refresher course. Further, the participants appreciated the Course Co-ordinator for his meticulous and diligently way of organising the said refresher course. **Dr. Deborah Darlianmawii, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Allahabad** moderated the Vaedictory Session while **Dr. C. Sathish, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Allahabad** delivered the final vote of thanks.