
Scientific Writing *and* Publishing *in* Social Work

Editors

Ilango Ponnuswami

Abraham P. Francis

Nonie Harris



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Dedicated to

All the participants of the Three Day Residential Scientific Writing and Publication Workshop jointly organized by the Department of Social Work, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu and the Department of Social Work and Human Services, James Cook University, Australia in January 2013 at KKID, Coimbatore.

Disclaimer

The contents of all the articles included in this volume do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editors. The authors of the articles are responsible for the opinions, criticisms and factual information presented. The contributors are also responsible for ensuring the proper adherence to the scientific rules of writing and copyright regulations. This publication has been brought out by the editors only with the sole aim of enriching the indigenous literature on professional social work and encouraging social work students, junior social work professionals and young faculty involved in social work education and research in order to enhance their career growth prospects. While the editors have tried their best to carefully review, format and make necessary corrections in the manuscripts, if there are still any lapses, the readers are requested to kindly condone the same.

Editors

Acknowledgement

It is with a great sense of hope, excitement and accomplishment that we would like to present this book to the readers, especially the social work students and researchers. There have been a number of people who have been instrumental in bringing this book project to fruition. We would like to first of all acknowledge the loving providence of God, who protected us and blessed us with some fantastic colleagues and friends to work on this project. Likewise, support and assistance have come from many corners for which we are indebted and grateful.

This book is the outcome of an intensive Three Day Residential Scientific Writing and Publication Workshop jointly organized by the Department of Social Work, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu and the Department of Social Work and Human Services, James Cook University, Australia. The editors would like to gratefully acknowledge the support and encouragement of Dr.(Mrs).K.Meena, the then Vice-Chancellor of Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli. Besides, this book would not have been possible without the help and assistance of the students and colleagues at James Cook University. Our colleagues, Dr. Debra Miles, Peter Jones and Ines Zuchowski provided us with support and encouragement.

During the course of this project, we have been blessed to have come into contact with so many research scholars and promising young and enthusiastic academics hailing from different social work institutions in India. Some have been able to contribute to this book, while others offered us words of appreciation, encouragement and moral support.

On the production side, we wish to thank Mr. M.H Ramesha, the Director of Niruta Publications, Bangalore and his efficient team for their professional support, comments, suggestions and commitment to seeing this work being published.

As you can imagine, this has been a long but passionate journey for our families too. We gratefully acknowledge their contribution and for their silent understanding and we believe that is the strength of our work!

Editors

टाटा सामाजिक विज्ञान संस्थान
Tata Institute of Social Sciences



Foreword

I am delighted to write the Foreword for this edited book on Scientific Writing and Publishing in Social Work. Interestingly, this volume has emerged from a knowledge building exercise through an intensive Three Day Residential Scientific Writing and Publication Workshop that was jointly organized through a cross-national collaboration of the Department of Social Work, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu with the Department of Social Work and Human Services, James Cook University, Australia during January 2013 at KKID, Coimbatore.

The research papers that are collated in this book cover a range of issues which span different vulnerable and marginalised sections of populations in India and Australia. Some of the social problems that have been researched and the findings put together in the chapters in this book cover contemporary issues of child abuse, women's issues, domestic violence, mental health, disability, addiction and so on.

There is increasing consciousness about the need for knowledge development in social work, specially on indigenous knowledge. We need greater collaboration and synergy between social work educators and practitioners to document practice and develop theory based on social work praxis.

We are also compelled to ensure that this material is disseminated to all regardless of language, class, caste, gender, disability or any other form of discrimination. This means a great effort in all our countries to capacitate our young faculty to undertake quality research based on the field realities and to develop indigenous theoretical frameworks which can be taken to the classrooms.

I am sure this book will be used by many professional social workers, practitioners, researchers and educators in India and Australia who want an understanding of some of the cultural contexts in which social work is practiced and researched. There is imminent need to extend this process of developing capacities of our young professionals through workshops, mentoring and supporting them to conceptualise and publish what they do in the field.

Vimla V. Nadkarni

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October 8, 2013

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Scientific Writing and Publishing in Social Work

Ilango Ponnuswami¹

Abraham P.Francis²

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About the Book

Scientific Writing and Publishing in Social Work is an edited book arising from an intensive Three Day Residential Scientific Writing and Publication Workshop jointly organized by the Department of Social Work, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu and the Department of Social Work and Human Services, James Cook University, Australia during January 2013 at KKID, Coimbatore. This book is largely a collection of research papers from participant social work researchers with additional contributions from Australian and Indian social work students, academics and practitioners. This book offers a cross national cultural perspective in writing about social work research. It is an outcome of a productive collaborative research partnership which focused on mentoring students at the beginning of their research careers.

The values of social justice and human rights connect the writings of these research scholars as they explore, with a new lens, a range of social issues such as child abuse, women's issues, prisoners' rehabilitation, adolescents' resilience, mental health, domestic violence, life skills education, disability , addiction and, more generally, frameworks for research and practice.

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Introduction to the Book

Ilango Ponnuswami¹

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The context

As a visiting scholar of The Cairns Institute, Professor Ilango Ponnuswami from Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, India had the opportunity in 2012 to work and collaborate with staff of Cairns Institute as well as social work academics of James Cook University (JCU) in North Queensland, Australia. These collaborations led to recognition that many of the challenges and dilemmas of scientific writing and publication were relevant to both the Indian and Australian contexts and that a meaningful cross-national collaboration would potentially enrich the learning experiences of students and staff in both locations. Subsequently the editors of this book, Professor Ponnuswami, and Dr Francis and Dr Harris from JCU, conducted a three day residential Scientific Writing and Publication Workshop (in January 2013), for social work faculty members and research scholars, at the Karl Kubel Institute of Development Education (KKID) in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. This book is a tangible outcome of this international, academic collaboration and, most importantly, is the result of the KKID participants' scientific writing endeavors begun at the 2013 workshop in Coimbatore.

This international collaboration directly aligns with James Cook University's Faculty of Arts Education and Social Sciences' (FAESS) Faculty Plan. The Plan specifically commits the Faculty to activities and endeavors that "increase links with other Universities in the tropics and encourage staff and student collaboration and exchange" (PC2.3). The international collaborative activity and publication outcome also align with the JCU's commitment to creating a brighter future for life in the tropics through a project that contributes to "the experience of new cultures,

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particularly ... a new educational culture, [and] is also an opportunity for some creative thinking about how new knowledges are formed and generated” (McGinty, Koo and Saedi, 2010, p. 518).

Research and Writing in Social Work

As social work educators we, the editors, shared a common belief that the activities of research, writing and publication are fundamental to who we are as social work practitioners and that it is an incredible privilege to be involved in the process of creating knowledge – which is what the research and writing processes allow us to do. We recognize that social work practice is changing and that research is now an integral part of practice. The need for practitioners to be able to engage in research is becoming more important both for clients, organizations and communities. We should assume that research and practice are not mutually exclusive and that as practitioners committed to social justice and human rights, we are also researchers (and writers and publishers) who embrace these same commitments.

The Australian Association of Social Workers states that: ‘Research is key to the continued development of the theory and knowledge base of social work practice’ (2008, p. 6). This professional practice standard emphasises the importance of the creation of an evidence base to inform our practice; that as social work practitioners we continue to monitor and evaluate what we do in a structured way; and that through these processes we are accountable for the quality and effectiveness of our practice. Practitioners also need to undertake research to determine the needs of clients, to test new ideas and to confirm practice wisdom. Research underlies the accomplishment of all of these expectations. However, as McMahon (2008) reminds us, undertaking research although important, is not sufficient- “doing research is a process of self-empowerment for the individual researcher but empowerment can begin and end with the individual unless the message gets published and broadcast to the wider context” (McMahon, 2008, p. 49). Giving written voice to our knowledge should be our priority.

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Declaration

The idea of editing a book on “*Scientific Writing and Publishing in Social Work*” originated at the intensive Three Day Residential Scientific Writing and Publication Workshop jointly organized by the Department of Social Work, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu and the Department of Social Work and Human Services, James Cook University, Australia during January, 2013 at KKID, Coimbatore, India. This book is largely a collection of research papers from participant social work researchers with additional contributions from Australian and Indian social work students, academics and practitioners. The views, ideas, arguments and data presented in these forthcoming chapters belong to the respective authors. The intention of the editors has been to provide an opportunity for beginning social work research scholars to show case their early publication endeavors. The editors are responsible for the overall design and structure of this book.

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