

## **Call for Applications from the Research Scholars in Rural Studies**

### **Ten-Day Research Methodology Course**

#### **"Research Methods in Rural Studies: Women's and Marginalized Perspectives"**

***Theme: Rural Studies: Histories, Methods, and Field Realities***

***Dates: 10.11.2025 – 21.11.2025 Venue: Berhampur University, Berhampur***

### **Jointly Organized by**

**Vina Mazumdar Memorial Fund, Centre for Women's Development Studies  
and Women's Studies Research Centre, Berhampur University, Odisha**

#### **Vina Mazumdar Memorial Fund:**

The Vina Mazumdar Memorial Fund (VMMF) was established at the Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi, in memory of its Founding Director, Prof. Vina Mazumdar (28 March 1927 – 30 May 2013). A pioneering Scholar in Women's Studies in India, Prof. Mazumdar was an influential academic, eminent social scientists and activist who championed engagement with marginalized women and young scholars to understand social realities. As one of the first women academics to integrate activism with scholarly research in Women's Studies, she left an indelible mark. The VMMF, supported by contributions from her associates and family, organizes various research and workshops in her honor, including this course in collaboration with the Centre for Women's Studies, Berhampur University.

#### **Centre for Women's Development Studies (CWDS)**

Centre for Women's Development Studies (CWDS) was established in 1980 with a commitment to women's rights and to the discipline of Women and Gender Studies. In 1984 CWDS was recognized as a research institute supported by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi. Our work is informed by the idea that all social processes are gendered, and understanding gender therefore is an integral dimension of social science research. The Centre aims to advance knowledge through interdisciplinary research and innovative pedagogical practice.

#### **Women's Studies Research Centre, Berhampur University**

Established in 1989 as one of the 22 UGC Women's Studies Centres, the Women's Studies Research Centre (WSRC) at Berhampur University focuses on research and sensitization programs. Its vision is to address systemic inequalities and promote inclusivity in academia. The mission involves developing curricula and programs that integrate gender perspectives and critical thinking. Recognized for its impactful activities, the Government of Orissa granted WSRC permanent status on April 1, 1997. The Centre has successfully integrated women's issues into teaching and research across various disciplines.

#### **Ten Day Research Methodology Course on Rural Studies - Rationale and Objectives**

Rural studies in India are shaped by layered histories, socio-economic transformations, and cultural legacies that continue to influence rural lives. At a time when urban studies dominate the scene in the Social Sciences, it is important to re-ignite academic focus on the multi-faceted reality of rural India. This course has been conceived with the following objectives:

- Understand the rural dynamics through **historical, gendered, and marginalized perspectives**.
- Map the many social, economic, political and cultural changes shaping the rural landscape from the perspectives of marginality and gender.

- Re-engage with the shifting definitions of what constitutes the rural in contemporary times with a focus on regional differences.
- Introduce participants to **emerging interdisciplinary research methodologies**, including digital tools and participatory approaches.
- Critically analyse how issues such as erratic agriculture, migration, livelihood challenges and its interconnections with **class, caste hierarchies, and gendered labor** etc. reproduce inequalities.
- Explore the links between **ecological change, environmental health, and community well-being**, highlighting how women and marginalized groups in rural areas are disproportionately affected.

**The program will cover the following thematic strands:**

**1. Histories of Rural Societies in India**

- Pre-colonial to contemporary transitions in land, resources, livelihoods, and rural hierarchies.
- Shifts in farming practices, irrigation systems, cropping patterns, and forest use.
- Oral histories, peasant movements, and women's movements as critical sources.

**2. Socio-Economic and Political Transformations**

- Land reforms, modernization, and changing labor systems.
- Migration, urbanization, education expansion, and labor market restructuring.
- Global and national policies shaping rural lives.

**3. Changing Agriculture, Ecology, Disaster and Vulnerability**

- Climate as a *threat multiplier* deepening social inequalities and disproportionate impact.
- Traditional disaster management practices and their transformation.
- Technology, Changing Land use, environmental health and its gendered implications.

**4. Methods and Emerging Research Tools**

- Comparative and interdisciplinary approaches in rural studies.
- Digital ethnography, participatory GIS, and Big Data analysis.
- Critical ethics: digital divide, data sovereignty, and questioning the emphasis on techno-solutionism

**5. Research Methods in Rural Studies**

- **Ethnographic Surveys**, mixed methods, recent developments in methodologies etc in interdisciplinary rural studies with a macro and micro data analysis and report writing.

**Participants: Who Can Apply**

The course invites scholars and researchers working on rural studies in Social Sciences with **a gender and marginalized perspective**. Specific areas include, but are not limited to:

- Rural employment and rural–urban migration.
- Agricultural change and water management.
- Land use, caste dynamics, and gendered labor.
- Climate change impacts on Dalits, tribal communities, women, and persons with disabilities.
- Education, technology, and their influence on rural livelihoods.

## **Pre-Course Assignment**

It is mandatory that the participants submit a short note (1-2 pages) **on regional history from a gendered and marginalized perspective** that are critical in understanding changes in rural areas where the studies are conducted or proposed to be conducted. The note may cover:

- Key historical, cultural, and social features of the region.
- Shifts in livelihoods, land use, agriculture, and ecology.
- Changes brought by migration, policies, or technological transitions.
- Any other significant facts, issues, histories specific to the region.

This exercise will ground research discussions during the course in contextual realities and strengthen analytical frameworks.

## **Expected Outcomes:**

By the end of the program, participants will:

- Develop a nuanced understanding of rural societies across historical and contemporary contexts.
- Acquire methodological skills to integrate intersectional and interdisciplinary approaches in research.
- Learn to apply digital and participatory tools responsibly in rural research.
- Contribute to building a network of scholars advancing inclusive rural studies
- Mentor the scholars on the emerging methodologies in Rural studies post- RMC

## **Selection Process:**

Applications are invited from across India with a focus on regional representation, and disciplinary diversity. The selected candidates will have to confirm their participation within three days from the date of intimation. Waitlisted candidates will be invited in case of any drop out among the selected candidates.

CWDS will reimburse third AC train fare and provide boarding and lodging from 9th Nov to 22nd Nov 2025. Ten day compulsory attendance is required and no leave will be permitted.

The application form uploaded may be filled and submitted well in advance. It may also be shared among others for a wider reach.

For further contact write to [cwds@cwds.ac.in](mailto:cwds@cwds.ac.in)

**Director**