

A Report

Training Workshop
National Election Study (NES) 2009

Submitted by
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Acknowledgement

Regular elections in due time are the litmus test of a democracy. It is a matter of deep satisfaction that the Election Commission of India has held elections since independence without a failing. Not only this, ECI has preserved the results of all elections since the very first general election to Lok Sabha held in 1952 in its archives. Besides ECI, some research institutes/agencies/organizations have also developed data archives of election statistics. The Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) is one of the few institutes/organizations, which has systematically preserved the results of all the elections. The election statistics compiled by CSDS is/has been widely used for research purposes by scholars all over the world. This is mainly because of the way the data sets are prepared and archived. The data is compiled in such a format that is user friendly, giving wider latitude to the researchers for analyzing the data the way they might wish, which the ECI format does not offer. Besides aggregate election data which is of immense value, CSDS has since long been collecting data on public opinion and attitudes on various socioeconomic and political issues both at national and state levels.

The data sets generated by CSDS over the years have in great demand from scholars within and outside the country for writing their research papers and Ph. D thesis. However, specialization of CSDS on studying political behaviour is well known. The National Election Study Series (NES) conducted uninterruptedly by the CSDS beginning in 1996 Lok Sabha elections (although such studies were also conducted for 1967 and 1971 general elections to Lok Sabha) till the recent one in 2009 Lok Sabha elections have enabled the scholars to understand the dynamics of electoral behaviour in India. Over the years, the NES series has enlarged the sample size for yielding robust data. The achieved sample of NES 2009 was over 37000. There is hardly any social scientific survey that can claim to have a data set with such a big sample size. Apart from the NES series (NES 1996, 1998, 1999, 2004 and 2009), CSDS has also conducted Assembly Election Study Series for most of Indian states.

Large scale survey based studies involve multiple processes such as sample and questionnaire design, translation of questionnaires into regional languages, training of investigators, actual field work, data punching, cleaning and analysis and so on. Unlike other research agencies, CSDS has the tradition of not subcontracting the fieldwork to any agency, rather engages the college and university students for conducting field work. For the latest NES (2009), the field-investigators were drawn from colleges and universities across the country. The supervisors and coordinators who supervised the entire field

work operation in their respective state were also drawn from colleges and universities, most of them happened to be teaching faculties.

Given the importance of field studies in empirical research and specialized techniques required for conducting one's own research, Lokniti/CSDS this time took initiative to educate scholars on the knitty-gritty of empirical research, which is rarely provided by Indian universities. However, given the vastness of work and resources required, CSDS approached ICSSR for financial grants and it generously granted financial assistance. We place on record our sincere thanks to ICSSR for providing valuable financial help. We sincerely acknowledge that the training workshops on survey research conducted at regionally varied centres/places would not have been possible, if the ICSSR grant was not forthcoming.

We also place on record our gratitude to Lokniti network members who took pains to attend the workshops and invested their time and expertise to turn the workshops wonderfully successful.

Thanks are also due to many departments of different universities and colleges which not only encouraged their students to participate in the training workshop and to involve in NES 2009 but also provided necessary infrastructure for holding these workshops.

We express our sincere thanks to the participants. We would like to note here that the sheer enthusiasm and keenness with which they got involved in the training workshops were beyond our expectation. This makes us believe that they learnt what we aimed at providing them.

Sincere thanks are also due to the Lokniti team at CSDS who worked extra hours in preparing schedules of training workshops and working out logistics for the same. Many of the Lokniti central team members also traveled to different states for conducting training workshops.

Last but not the least, we express our gratitude to the respondents covered in the survey conducted after the training workshops. In a way, their willingness to be interviewed was a litmus test for the investigators we trained in the workshops. We place on record our sincere thanks to them for making the entire project (NES 2009) a grand success.

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1. Introduction

Free and fair elections are the backbone of any democracy. The study of elections in turn provides not only a pulse of the change in patterns of democratic participation, but also an indication of the health of the democracy. *Election survey* is the method and process through which we can find answers to questions on opinions and attitudes. Without a survey the answers to these questions could be quite conjectural or impressionistic, and at times far removed from the actual truth. Election surveys are much more than just about finding the vote share assessment of political parties and seat forecasting, as popularly perceived. The purpose of conducting election surveys is to find out the voting patterns of the electorate, reasons for their participation or non participation in elections, their electoral preferences and choices, as well as opinions on issues that voters felt were important.

While there are different kinds of election surveys, the most common is the *exit-poll*. Exit-polls, involve interviewing voters immediately after they cast their vote, often outside the polling centre. With the proliferation of electronic media in the 1990's exit-polls have become quite popular in India as they are often used in predicting the winners and losers *before* the election results are declared. The reason is simple, people are eager to know which party is likely to win elections and by how many seats. These exit-polls are fraught with the risk of leaving out some sections/sub samples of the population completely due to their reliance on quota sampling techniques for sample selection. Thus the sample-frame of exit-polls is in most cases unrepresentative and suffers from both coverage and sampling error. Furthermore, exit-polls focus on a few key questions that can be quickly answered without being able to gather robust information on attitudes and opinions of the electorate.

In contrast to exit-polls, a survey in which the respondents are interviewed after voting ends and before the results are declared (this is especially so in the Indian case), also known as post-poll survey, are more reliable estimators of opinions and attitudes. This is primarily because any sample *randomly* selected from the electoral list for election survey ensures a representative sample without sampling error. Post-polls are much more scientific in nature. Also, the emphasis in post-polls is not merely on

questions of voting choice, but the focus is on the opinions and attitudes of the voting age population, both those who voted and those who did not.

The National Election Studies (NES series), of Lokniti, at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi, have been monitoring the patterns of electoral participation as well as the changing social and political opinions and attitudes of the voting-age population since 1967. While the NES gathers information about how Indians voted, this is not just a study of voting behaviour. These surveys treat elections as an opportunity to capture the most accurate snapshot of the political behaviour, attitudes and opinions of Indian citizens on diverse issues such as the health of the economy, national security, democracy and diversity.

1.1 History of National Election Studies in India

The NES in 1967 could be credited as the first survey-based national level study of political opinions and attitudes in India on a large sample. This was followed by another national-level study conducted at the time of the 1971 general elections. During the 1980 Lok Sabha elections, while the CSDS designed the all-India survey, the Indian Institute of Public Opinion (IIPO), Delhi, conducted the fieldwork. Although strictly not a part of the NES series, this survey can be used to partly fill the gap in the series. During the 1980s there was a break in this election series data with the CSDS reviving the series in 1996. Since then the NES survey has been conducted during every general election, making them the longest running National Election Surveys in India.

While the surveys between 1967 and 1980 can be considered to be the first generation of CSDS surveys, the NES 1996 marked the beginning of the second generation. This Study was undertaken in three waves - pre-election, mid-campaign and post poll using a panel design sample. Panel sample means going back to the same respondents for gathering their opinion. Additionally, Lokniti also undertook an exit poll with a much larger sample of 17,604. This study was widely reported both in academic circles and in the media. At the time of the 1998 Lok Sabha elections, two waves – a pre election and a post-poll survey – were carried out as part of NES. This involved revisiting the panel of

respondents sampled for the NES 1996. Yet another general election followed in 1999, and the centre reverted to the earlier practice of conducting only a post-poll survey, as this yielded a data set with longest shelf value. In the NES 1999 the same panel of respondents, as NES 1996 and 1998 were interviewed. Thus, a total of six waves of surveys of a nationally representative sample of the electorate were conducted during a three-year period.

The NES 2004 marked the beginning of the third generation of CSDS surveys. This study was a post poll survey. The earlier practice of drawing a self-weighted national probability sample was replaced by a probability sample drawn at the state level. The sampling frame reflected the changing reality of politics. A representative sample at the national level was achieved through an aggregation of the probability samples at the level of the states. Accordingly, the sample size was enlarged by nearly three times as compared to the second generation NES to allow a representative sample at the level of the smaller states. The expansion in the coverage of NES has had several corollaries. The number of languages that the questionnaire was translated into increased. Also, for the first time, systematic attention was paid to the issue of ‘dialects’ of the major languages. For the first time in the NES series, the questionnaire had stated specific questions designed keeping in mind the local political issues so as to help in state-level analysis of the survey data.

NES 2009 continues the precedent set by the 2004 Study and is the largest and the most comprehensive social scientific survey of an Indian General Election and perhaps of any election in the world. In all 59,650 persons were approached and 36,629 interviews could be completed. In addition to increasing the sample size, some new innovations were also introduced in 2009. They were: *firstly*, for the first time in a national level survey five sets of questionnaires with ‘split sample’ were randomly administered to the sampled voter; *secondly*, the questionnaires carried additional survey modules on a range of different themes, covering topics such as the economy, security, communalism, democracy and social values and *finally*, substitution of respondents which was allowed during 2004 was not allowed in this round of survey under any circumstances, making this survey more robust.

These innovations and the training exercise associated with the NES 2009 are discussed in the current Report.

The NES series are now the most comprehensive information database of social and political change in India and these surveys have been cited and used extensively for political science research (Jaffrelot, 1996; Shastri et al 2009; Mitra and Singh, 1999 Varshney, 2003; Yadav 1999 and 2004, Yadav-Palshikar 2003 and 2009; Special Issues of the *EPW*, 1999 and 2004, *JISPE*, 2003, to name a few) as well as research that has covered non-political science related issues (for example, for social mobility studies: Kumar et al, 2002a, 2002b; Vaid and Heath, forthcoming to name a few)ⁱ.

1.2 National Election Study 2009

The recent NES 2009, a post-poll survey conducted across the country during the Lok Sabha election in April and May is the largest round of the NES surveys to date, and has the distinction of being the most in-depth survey of any election in India, and possibly abroad. While maintaining the highest methodological standard and the best practices and protocols of international survey research, the recent NES has introduced many innovations for improving the quality of these particular surveys and of survey research in general

NES 2009 is one of the largest collaborative research projects in the country, shared by over 35 social science academicians, and supported by research scholars and students across the country. National Election Study 2009 was made possible by the keen interest and financial support extended by two premier organizations of higher education in India, the ICSSR and UGC.

Training in research methods, while a part of the core curriculum at the graduate level, is relatively theoretical and often lacking a practical component. This lacuna has led to the shortage of experts particularly in the field of survey research. The funding provided by the ICSSR towards the NES 2009

ⁱ For a more comprehensive discussion of the NES tradition since 1967, see the Special Issues of the *EPW*, September 2009 and November 2004.

has provided much needed financial support to enable the comprehensive and rigorous training of students and younger faculty in survey research and fieldwork techniques.

The present report discusses the funding sources for the NES 2009 which allowed for both design innovations and training exercises on a large scale (section 2); a discussion on the pressing need for research training and capacity building in the social sciences (section 3); details on the trainer's workshop (section 4), and the trainee or student's workshop (section 5); a discussion of the profile of the trainees/students (section 6); and it ends with a discussion on the feedback received from the participants of these workshops on the training exercise and the final fieldwork conducted (section 7), and a concluding section (section 8).

2. NES 2009: Funding and Innovations

The funding for the NES 2009 was provided by the ICSSR and UGC, India's premier social science bodies.

The **University Grants Commission (UGC)** granted Major Research Projects to 22 scholars of Lokniti network from different Universities and Colleges in the country. This financial support received from UGC made it possible for the scholars concerned to collect the data in their respective states. For other states which did not have financial support from the UGC, the study was financially supported by Lokniti which generated funds from the media, in particular the Hindu and CNN-IBN.

In addition to the UGC funding, the **Indian Council of Social science Research (ICSSR)** provided financial support to Lokniti for the research design and training components of the NES 2009. The financial support provided by ICSSR helped Lokniti in ensuring that the design of the NES 2009 conformed to the best international practices of survey research and that the training of investigators was rigorous and comprehensive. With this funding, Lokniti was able to organize meetings with experts and social scientists across the country, design research instruments, conduct training workshops for trainers in different universities and colleges, and train students on survey research methods as well as conducting field investigations. Thus, around 2000 field investigators were trained in 39 research training workshops held for this purpose.

The following two sub-sections discuss the ways in which ICSSR funding helped with both the design as well as the training components of NES 2009.

2.1 Design Component

As a result of ICSSR funding, the NES 2009 was able to follow established as well as many new and innovative elements. These elements are as follows:

- a) Organizing a committee of social scientists for designing five sets of questionnaires.

A group of carefully selected experts from the political and social sciences, including among others: Rajeshwari Deshpande, K.K. Kailash, Sanjay Kumar, Sanjay Lodha, Suhas Palshikar, Sandeep Shastri, D.L. Sheth, V.B. Singh, K.C. Suri, and Yogendra Yadav were invited to discuss the design of the questionnaire of the NES. Due to the use of *split sample* (discussed below), these experts rigorously debated the questions to be included in each of the five-set of questionnaires.

b) Each set of questionnaires was translated into the local language.

All questions in the interview schedule were carefully phrased to avoid the interviewee being led to give any particular answer. In addition, the interview schedule was translated into twenty languagesⁱⁱ. This translation was done to ensure that the survey could cover the widest linguistic population in the country. These translated questionnaires also ensured that consistency in meaning was maintained in local languages. The translation process too was carefully monitored by a group of experts so that a question in one state did not have a different meaning in another.

c) Use of ‘Split Sample’ and five sets of Interview Schedules (*Appendix I*).

For the first time in NES history, a ‘split sample’ was introduced. This basically means that rather than the same interview schedule being administered to all respondents, five such sets of schedules with common questions as well as a comprehensive list of background questions, along with certain *set specific* questions were randomly administered to the respondents. These additional set specific survey modules were on a range of different themes, covering topics such as the economy, security, communalism, democracy and social values. This split sample has provided us with a very diverse database on opinions on issues beyond those dealing with political and electoral processes.

d) Pre-testing of survey instruments before finalizing them.

To test the questions to be used in the final NES, a pilot study was done in eight states in March 2009.

A total of 466 voters randomly sampled from the voter list were interviewed in these eight states. The

ⁱⁱ Languages in which the interview-schedules were translated: Assamese, Bengali, English, Garo, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Khasi, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Mizo, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Tripuri, Urdu

list of survey instruments tested in these pilot surveys included the sampling frame, respondent list, ballot box, dummy ballot papers and the interview schedules. These pilot surveys provide a dual benefit of not only testing the questions and survey instruments to be used in the final survey, but also provide feedback on how the field investigators handle the interviews. The final instruments and the manual for field investigators were revised in light of this feedback.

e) Use of Dummy Ballot Paper

In order to record voter preferences, the NES uses the innovative method of using a dummy or ‘secret’ ballot. The respondents were given this ‘secret’ ballot paper designed to look like the list of candidates on the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), on which they could mark their choice. These were then placed in a sealed ballot box. This process was followed to ensure that the voters interviewed knew that their responses would remain confidential. This process also serves a second purpose, in that it allows the respondent to recall the exact button they might have pressed on the EVM as these ballot papers are designed to look like the actual EVM they would have used while voting. This has a *recall* advantage over solely reading a list of candidates to the interviewee which may not help them in perfectly recalling the name of the candidate they voted for.

f) Manual for Field Investigators with revamped state-specific caste list (*Appendix II*).

Before conducting the survey for the NES 2009, a comprehensive manual was developed to guide the Field Investigators (FIs) in their field work. One significant aspect of this manual was the inclusion of a revamped and expanded state-specific caste-list. This list is an improvement over lists previously used in surveys of jatis and communities in each state. Experts worked towards ensuring that all jatis, big or small, in each state which may not be present in another state, were included in this list.

g) Record of “respondents not interviewed”

During the survey, if the Field Investigators (FIs) were unable to contact or conduct an interview of any respondent on the respondent-list, they were required to keep a complete record of ‘respondents not interviewed’ in a pre-designed format. This information helps us in locating any trends in the demographics of the people who the FIs were unable to contact or those who refused to answer the survey.

h) Strict Probability sampling with non-substitution.

The investigators were asked to interview only those whose names were provided to them. After a review of the experience of partial substitution in NES 2004, it was decided that substitution was not to be allowed under any circumstances. The major reason for reverting to the old practice of non-substitution is that the rate of substitution tends to be uneven in a national surveyⁱⁱⁱ. This lack of uniformity in substitution causes an imbalance in the total sample surveyed across the states. Furthermore, a usual reason for substitution is to protect against attrition of sample size due to low rate of achievement. But, this can be done by increasing the targeted population without having to resort to substitution. This is what has been done in the NES 2009. Therefore, even though the achievement rate is lower in 2009 (61 per cent) than it was in 2004 (77 per cent), where substitution had been allowed, the actual size of achieved sample is much larger in 2009 (36629, compared to 27189 in 2004)^{iv}.

i) Audio-visual for Field Investigator’s (FI’s) training workshop (*CD Attached*).

As part of the training of the Field Investigators, in addition to lectures and interactive sections, a novel audio-visual method was used. The FIs were shown a 30 minute video that highlighted the various “do’s and don’ts” of survey research. This method helps to visually re-enforce the techniques learnt by the FIs in their training workshop.

ⁱⁱⁱ The All India rate of substitution in the 2004 NES was 8.5 per cent. However, this varied widely from zero per cent in Sikkim to about 20 per cent in Goa and Mizoram. See the Lokniti Team’s Methodology discussion in the EPW, November 2004, for a discussion on this substitution procedure and its variance across states.

^{iv} The achievement rate in 2009 varies from 37 per cent in Arunachal Pradesh to 85 per cent in Karnataka.

j) “Back-checking” of data.

A new feature of the NES 2009 has been the introduction of a rigorous back-checking procedure after the completion of the survey. Under this, five percent of the respondents who completed the original questionnaire were approached to check that their responses to the original questionnaire were correctly coded in our database. This procedure further authenticates and validates the robustness of our data collection exercise and ensures that our data meet the highest standards of international survey research.

k) Documentation of Field Investigators feedback on the Training workshop and on field investigation.

The NES 2009 has been the largest survey on elections in India to date. To make this survey a success it was crucial to ensure that the Field Investigators were well trained for the fieldwork and any issues that may crop up in the field were smoothed as quickly as possible. For this, a rigorous training workshop was held for the FIs across the country (these workshops are discussed later in this Report). As part of the training exercise, we collected valuable information through a brief survey of the FIs about their experiences of the training workshop as well as their experiences of the field investigation itself.

The support received from ICSSR not only aided in the improvement in the design of the NES, but it also helped in making a qualitative difference in the training of investigators as well as in conducting the fieldwork of the study as is discussed in the next section of this Report.

2.2 Two Tier Training

The main objective of NES 2009 was to empirically study the voting behavior and attitudes of Indian voters, and to map the specificities of the Indian democratic experience. For conducting a national study at such a large scale spread across all the states, the training of teams at the state-level and introducing initiating students to survey research was essential. Thus, a second objective

of the NES survey was the capacity building of young researchers with regard to survey and fieldwork training.

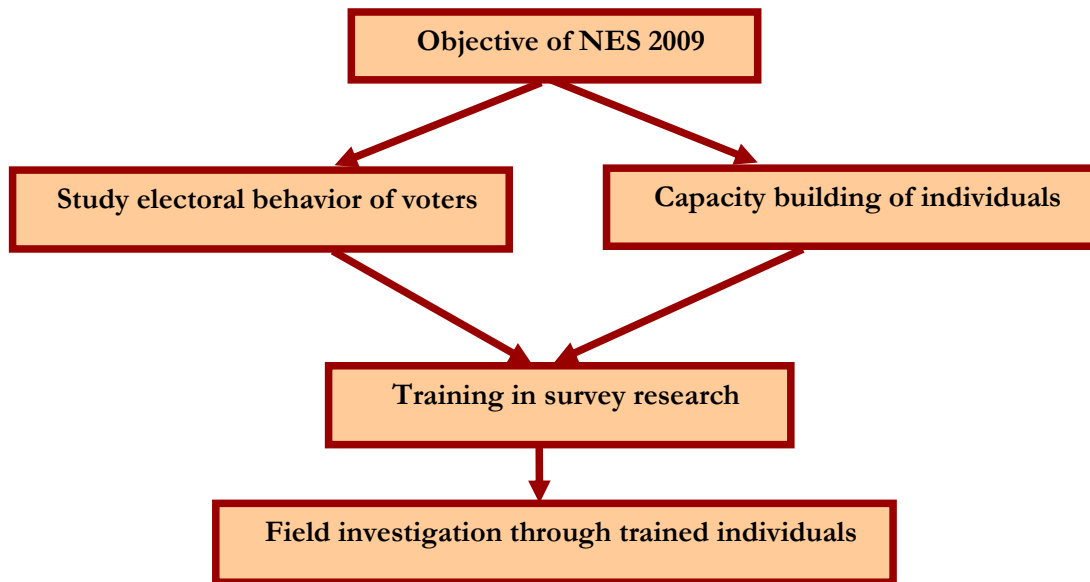


Figure 1.1 Importance of Training Workshop

The training was conducted at two levels:

1. **Trainer's Training:** Members of the Lokniti network, which includes coordinators and supervisors who teach in universities/colleges in every state, were trained in research and survey method at three locations in the country. The trainer's training workshop was of two days duration.

The objectives of the workshop were as follows:

- Training on sampling methodology and the need for stratified random sampling technique used in the NES 2009.
- An orientation programme for conducting fieldwork interviews, stressing the need for rapport building with respondents to collect accurate information.
- Training on how to use the questionnaire and the field manual with a comprehensive and detailed interviewing guide.

- Training on standard and accepted fieldwork procedures to be practiced during the NES fieldwork operations.
- Training on rigorous quality controls at each stage of fieldwork and data processing to ensure consistently high standards of data collection.
- Discussion on the method of fieldwork supervision and the procedure of ‘back-checking’ for data authentication to minimize data falsification.

2. **Training of Students:** The trained network members then recruited students as per their requirements from their universities and colleges, and in turn trained them in survey research and field investigative techniques. Under this training module more than 2000 students were selected and trained by Lokniti network members across the country. The three-day workshops focused on training students in how to conduct face-to-face interviews for NES, and also on various aspects of survey research techniques. Not only was this training necessary for rigorous data collection; but, it served a second purpose as well. The training, along with fieldwork experience, helped the students in terms of general capacity building and acquiring research skills which will be useful in their academic career.

In this broad framework, the intrinsic relationship between the structured questionnaire, designed primarily to collect peoples’ opinions in order to assess their participation in the political domain, and the Field Investigators, who generate empirical data through field investigation, is very significant. During the workshops, trainees for field investigation were inducted into the process of social science research and transformed into *Field Investigators* (FIs). Since the objective of data collection under NES 2009 is slightly different from conventional survey research, the training of FIs was not only on interview techniques, but also focused on other equally important aspects of the research process. In fact, it establishes trainees as the practitioners of survey research, who in effect study ‘democracy and elections’.

The objectives of Training Workshop for students under NES 2009 were as follows:

- Introducing survey research to students to develop their research skills and to build their capacity as practitioners of survey research.
- Discussing the sampling method and the strict adherence to procedures for interviewing sampled respondents and recording the reasons for non-substitution.
- Discussing the importance of data collection in survey research and the use of right communication skills and methods during fieldwork.
- Maintaining objectivity during fieldwork investigation and avoiding researcher's bias by following right interviewing techniques and fieldwork communication.
- Training on using survey instruments and numerical coding on conclusion of the fieldwork.

Workshop Details: The trainers training workshop were held at three centres in the country. The location, format and training module used in these workshops is discussed in section 4 of this Report. The training workshops for students regarding survey research and method of data collection were held at 39 locations across the country. Details of these workshops are given in section 5 and the location details in *Appendix III*.

3. Need for Research Training and Capacity Building

Research methodology forms a part of the course curriculum at postgraduate and higher levels in most colleges and universities in India. Except for the subject of economics, the teaching of research methodology in the social sciences is very basic in nature, and is confined often to the theoretical level. Thus, students are taught broadly about the various methodologies of social science research and its components like sampling, method of data collection and data analysis. However, they rarely get a chance to apply these methods in actual fieldwork. As a result, most research done at the university level is usually based on data drawn from secondary sources. Due to these reasons, in the few cases when fieldwork is carried out, it is not necessarily done scientifically due to the faulty research designs or errors at every stage of the research process. This issue is compounded by the fact that educators themselves have little or no knowledge of the practical application of these research methods.

Additional support for this lack of knowledge and awareness among students of social science about methodological research in general and survey research in particular was collected during the NES 2009 training exercise. As part of the NES, data on the profile of the students/trainees who attended the training workshops and those who went on to become Field Investigators (FIs) of the study was collected. This has allowed us to gauge the experiences of these FIs with regard to survey research.

Table 3.1 Trainees without prior knowledge of survey research techniques/fieldwork

Regions	No Knowledge (percent)
All India	42
Northern Region	39
Western Region	39
Southern Region	40
North-eastern Region	52

Source: NES 2009 Evaluation Form 1^v.N=1402

Question in survey: Before attending this training workshop did you know anything about survey method or had any experience of fieldwork?

^v Evaluation form 1 is discussed in more detail in section 7.

Table 3.1 shows that over four out of ten trainees across the country did not have any knowledge of survey research or any fieldwork experience before they attended the Lokniti training workshop. Students from the north-eastern states were least aware of sample survey techniques.

Moreover, the lack of exposure and experience of sample survey techniques among students in India is also substantiated by an analysis of data on the field investigators' profile collected during the NES 2009. Figure 3.2 shows that a majority of the field investigators did not have prior experience of working in any kind of survey. Also, among the investigators from different regions, over 70 percent of those from the North-east had never worked in any survey.

Table 3.2: Field Investigators who had never worked in sample surveys

Regions	Not worked (percent)
All India	53
Northern Region	51
Western Region	48
Southern Region	47
North-eastern Region	72

Source: NES 2009 Field Investigator's Profile Data; N=1346^{vi}

Question in Survey: Have you ever worked in a sample survey?

The need for workshops on survey research with a focus on components like sampling, data collection and coding was expressed by trainees all over the country and is discussed in section 7.

To overcome this lacuna, there is serious need for training among social science teachers as well as students as well as an exposure to actual fieldwork providing more hands-on experience. As part of the training agenda of the NES 2009, training was conducted in two stages: first, the state coordinators and supervisors were trained to be effective "trainers" themselves; second, students and young researchers were trained as field investigators. The details of these workshops are provided in the next two sections of this Report.

^{vi} The Field Investigator's profile data was collected by CSDS after completion of the fieldwork. This feedback aimed to gauge not only the profile of the investigators, but also collect information on any problems associated with fieldwork. This data helps to provide useful feedback about the training process and provides ideas for future workshops. This profile data is discussed in more detail in Section 7 and the profile Performa of the field investigators is included as Appendix IV.

4. Details of Training Workshop for Trainers

The training workshops for trainers were attended by state coordinators and supervisors.

4.1 Locations

These workshops were held at the following three locations:

- **Workshop at Delhi (March 28th and 29th 2009)**

Participating States: Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan

- **Workshop at Hyderabad (April 1st and 2nd 2009)**

Participating States: Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa

- **Workshop at Guwahati (April 1st and 2nd 2009)**

Participating States: West Bengal, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and Mizoram

4.2 Format of Workshop

Day 1

Session 1

This session was a broad introductory session about how NES 2009 was different from earlier rounds of the NES series. The following new elements of this NES were highlighted during this session:

- The verification of sample from the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) was discussed.

- Five sets of questionnaires developed for the NES 2009 were discussed. Also, the reason behind the division of the questionnaires into five-sets was also discussed.
- The new front page for the questionnaire and its importance was emphasized. This new front page was designed to collect information on the background of the field investigators. This allowed an investigation into whether the interviewer's background has an impact on the answers received and data collected.
- Modification in Background questions. Salient features of the questionnaire were highlighted.
- The Lokniti Audio-visual film to be used for the training of field investigator's was introduced.
- The new Manual for Field Investigators was introduced.
- The importance of evaluating the Field Investigator's training workshop based on FIs feedback was discussed.
- The introduction of five percent *back-checking* of data after conclusion of fieldwork was discussed.
- There was an open house *Question and Answer* session.

Session 2

This session had the following components:

- Discussion on the overall Sampling of NES 2009.
- Discussion on the sampling of Polling Stations (PS) in sampled Assembly Constituencies (AC); with the sampling of 3 PSs in each AC
- Discussion on the sampling of respondents from the latest electoral rolls of the selected PS.
- Emphasis on the rule of *No Substitution* and a discussion on the reasons behind it.

- Importance of filling the “Format of those who could not be interviewed” was highlighted.
- Use of the “Blank Respondent List” prepared for NES 2009.
- Emphasis on strict adherence to Interviewing sampled respondents only.
- There was an open house *Question and Answer* session.

Session 3

This session had the following components:

- The common questions in all the 5 sets of questionnaires were discussed.
- Use of Ballot Paper and Ballot Box was discussed.
- There was an open house *Question and Answer* session.

Session 4

- Logistics and survey operations were discussed.
- The Lokniti Audio-visual (AV) was screened which would later be used during the FI training workshops.
- The use of this AV during the training workshops was stressed*
- There was an open house *Question and Answer* session.

Day 2

Session 5

- Presentation on the "Evaluation and Feedback on Field Investigators (FIs) Training Workshop conducted by Lokniti".
- *Set A and B* specific questions from the questionnaire were discussed.
- There was an open house *Question and Answer* session.

Session 6

- *Set C and D* specific questions from the questionnaire were discussed.
- There was an open house *Question and Answer* session.

Session 7

- *Set E* specific questions from the questionnaire and background data questions were discussed.
- There was an open house *Question and Answer* session.

Session 8

- FIs Handbook was discussed in detail.
 - There was an open house *Question and Answer* session.
- * On the first day of Field Investigator's training workshop, Laptop, LCD projector and Screen were required for screening the Lokniti Audio Visual. Where these were unavailable, a TV Monitor and a DVD player were used instead.

5. Structure of Training Workshop for Students/Researchers

Day 1:

Session 1

In the broad introductory session the participants and trainers introduced themselves to each other. This was important as it gave all the trainees an opportunity to know about each other and also allowed the trainers to discreetly evaluate the communication skills and capacity of the students.

- The State Coordinator/trainer then introduced CSDS to the participants and provided a brief record of institutional progress and projects undertaken.
- This was followed by an introduction about **Lokniti** - Programme for Comparative Democracy.
 - Lokniti was established in 1997 as a research programme of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), New Delhi. Lokniti has the following objectives:
 - Monitoring on a regular basis the working of Indian democracy with special attention to the participation of marginalized people,
 - Developing a comparative understanding of democratic polities in different historical and cultural settings,
 - Engaging with scholars in other parts of the world with a view to creating an alternative to the dominant perspective on democracy in a global context, and
 - Training a new generation of scholars and public intellectuals who can intervene in the discourse on democracy.
 - By bringing various projects of the CSDS on elections and party politics together under a single programme, Lokniti seeks to engage with the global debates on democracy. In an age where globalization of democracy has come to mean an universalisation of a thin checklist model of managerial governance and cultural homogenization, the worth

of a participatory model of plural democracy, a model that recognizes multiple paths to realizing the rich ideals of democracy, cannot be over-emphasized.

- The participants were then briefed on the survey initiatives of Lokniti and its other research projects. This was made interactive by inviting comments from participants who had been part of earlier surveys and additionally getting inputs from the State Supervisor.
- The next focus of the opening session was exposing the participants to the importance of survey research in social sciences:
 - Introduction to the importance of Survey: The importance of survey research methods was also discussed during this session. Sample survey as a research method has a long tradition in India, which has become more popular after the proliferation of electronic media. It is not only being used as an information and data collection tool by academic researchers and market surveyors, but also by the media. Survey research is a scientific method for gathering information and data that is more credible and representative from the end-users perspective. The purpose of sample survey is to obtain primary information from a few respondents in order to describe the characteristics and opinion of hundreds, thousands or even the whole population in any country. Surveys are used to estimate the characteristics, behaviors, attitudes and opinion of any segment of population on any issue or issues. The sample is selected in a scientific way to represent the universe of study so that the observations collected and compiled from the sample can be generalized to the entire population being studied. Thus, survey is a scientific method to collect information by interviewing respondents from a representative sample instead of the whole population.
 - Introduction to the fundamentals of Lokniti surveys was provided: The surveys conducted by Lokniti focus on cross-section randomized samples, intensive training workshop of field investigators, face to face interviews of respondents, use of

structured questionnaires administered in the language understood by the respondent and strict monitoring and quality control checks. For election studies a special feature has been the use of secret ballot paper and ballot box for voting questions.

- Highlights of the NES series were presented to the trainees
- The resource persons were encouraged to cite as many examples as possible. Examples of “what is a sample” and how the sample must represent the universe it represents were provided. The trainees were encouraged to ask questions. Inputs from those who had experience of surveys were also shared with the participants.

Session 2

This session had the following components:

- Overall sampling of NES 2009 was discussed
- Method of sampling the PS in sampled state ACs was discussed (3 PS in each AC).
- Method of sampling respondents from the latest electoral rolls of the selected PS was highlighted.
- Non substitution of sampled respondents and reasons for it was stressed.
- Importance of filling the “format of those who could not be interviewed” was stressed.
- Emphasis on strict adherence to interviewing sampled respondents only was re-stressed.
- Importance of face-to-face interviews was highlighted.
- “Do's and Don'ts” of field investigation were discussed.

Session 3

Common questions in all five sets of questionnaires were discussed first. This session also focused on the reasons for a question being classified as a *common* question.

The discussion featured covered the following topics:

- This discussion involved every field investigator reading out, or rather asking, a couple of questions to the FI seated next them. The answers given by the FI was then discussed and which answer option was to be encircled in the questionnaire was decided. For most of the questions answer options were not to be read out during the interview. Instructions for questions where answer options were to be read out were given in the questionnaire but during the workshop this was pointed out and explained. There was a discussion on the details requested at the top of the questionnaire, including for example PC/AC/PS information; a discussion on the boxes on the side of the questionnaire, the cover page of the questionnaire and its importance was stressed. The main questionnaire and background data needs were also emphasized.
- Use of Ballot Paper and Ballot Box - The use of ballot paper and ballot box was explained to the FIs during the training workshop. The ballot paper for the voting questions was stapled at the back of each questionnaire and a common serial number was written behind both the questionnaire and the ballot paper. For example, if at one polling station a FI had to do 10 interviews then he had 10 questionnaires with: number 1 written at the back of the first questionnaire and the attached ballot paper, 2 written at the back of the second questionnaire and the attached ballot paper and so on. This was very important as after the completion of all 10 interviews, the FIs had to take out the ballot papers from the ballot box and match them with the questionnaire based on the common serial number. This was needed to record the party voted for in the questionnaire. Thus, the serial number at the back of the ballot paper helped the FI in finding out which ballot papers belonged to questionnaire.

- Coding of Questionnaires: The coding of the questionnaire was to be done after the interview was completed. *The FIs were requested not to code the questions during the interview as their time is valuable.*
- Throughout the questionnaire, 9 (99) was given as the code for *Not Applicable (N.A.)*. This was used for questions that were not applicable to the particular respondent and were hence not required to be asked.
- At the time of coding the FIs had to refer to the *CODE BOOK* for coding questions where it was clearly mentioned “consult codebook”.
- In order to familiarise them with the code categories in the code-book, FIs were asked to familiarize themselves with the questions in the questionnaire.
- The coding had to be done carefully with the numbers written boldly and clearly, as this information has to be entered in a database.

Session 4

- There was a screening of the Lokniti Audio-visual (AV) for FIs.
- PowerPoint Presentation was made on the “Do's and Don'ts” of interviews (*Appendix V*).
- PowerPoint Presentation was made on the “Do's and Don'ts” of coding. (*Appendix VI*).

Day 2

Session 5:

- In this session questions in *Set A and B* of the questionnaire were taken up for discussion.
- The pattern was similar to that of session 3.

Session 6:

- In this session questions in *Set C, D and E* of the questionnaire were taken up for discussion.
- The pattern was the same as it was in session 3.

Session 7:

- A detailed discussion on background data questions, with special focus on caste and occupation codes was conducted
- Field investigator's *Handbook* was discussed in detail

Session 8:

- The Participants were briefed about the mock interview that they had to conduct.
- Each participant conducted one mock interview.
- The State coordinator and supervisor kept a complete watch over this aspect.
- The State coordinator depending on where the workshop was being conducted determined the location of the interview.

Day 3

Session 9:

- Participants sat a test during this session to allow the training team to evaluate the student's learning curve during the workshop.
- Participants were also given a *Feedback Form* to evaluate the training workshop.
- The State coordinator/Supervisor evaluated the participant's level of learning based on the test paper and mock interview conducted.

Session 10:

- The names of participants selected for conducting the field investigation were announced.
- The remaining time was spent on pre-departure logistics – explaining where the participants should go, their schedules, advances and so on.

6. Profile of NES Research Trainees

The selection and recruitment of research trainees for conducting NES was based on well-defined and clear cut criteria which was followed in a uniform and transparent manner in all States. These criteria included:

1. Selection from the university/college of the state coordinator.
2. Male and female students in equal proportions.
3. Graduation as minimum educational qualification.
4. Caste/community should be representative of state demographics.

Though these criteria were followed in the selection of the trainees across India, there were however some practical problems in adhering to these criteria in certain states. Table 6.1 shows that there was a gender imbalance in the selection and recruitment of trainees during NES 2009. The selection of female trainees was less than half of what was laid down in Lokniti's guidelines for recruitment. States in the western and north-eastern region had better gender representation with 36 percent female trainees in both regions. In comparison the selection of female research trainees in states in northern and southern regions was less than 20 percent.

Tables 6.1 Field investigator's gender and occupational break-up

	Percent
Males	77
Females	23
Students not seeking employment	76
Employment seekers/unemployed	8
Employed – full or part-time	16

Source: NES 2009 Field Investigator's Profile Data; N=1346

The reasons for lesser numbers of females recruited and trained during study are believed to be due to localized and state specific problems. The reasons for the skewed gender ratio in recruitment were hypothesised to be due to the following factors:

- In hilly states like Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh the male and female students could not be selected in equal numbers due to logistical problems. The reason was that a substantial number of locations selected for the study were not easily accessible because of hilly terrain and lack of proper modes of communication, perhaps making it harder for women to travel to them.
- In states like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand the number of female students selected for the study was low. This may have been due to the reluctance of female trainees to travel for the field investigation due to lack of security and safety environment in these states.
- In states like Rajasthan and Haryana females may not have applied for recruitment as conducting fieldwork may be difficult due to the conservative attitudes in these states.

The occupational break-up of the profile of NES trainees reveals that more than eight out of ten were students studying in different universities and colleges or seeking employment (Figure 6.1). Only 16 percent of the trainees were working either full time or in part time jobs. Among the trainees who were working, most of them were teachers in universities or colleges. In terms of educational attainment levels, 44 percent of trainees had completed their post graduation courses (Figure 6.2). Another 33 percent of the students were graduates. However seven percent students who were trained during NES were those enrolled in graduation-level courses. These students were recruited to make up the empty places left due to the examination dates in university/colleges clashing with the fieldwork/training dates in some states.

Tables 6.2 Field investigator's educational profile

	Percent
College students	07
Graduates	33
Post Graduates	44
Professional Degree Holders	15

Source: NES 2009 Field Investigator's Profile Data; N=1346; under one percent of the sample has less than college enrolment level education

During the trainee recruitment care was taken that students from different caste/communities were recruited mirroring caste/community demographics of the concerned state. The reason behind this is to minimize caste/community bias of the trainees in conducting the study. The background of trainees as shown in tables 6.3 and 6.4 reveals that students from all sections of the society were selected and trained and they were fairly representative, though students from Upper castes and Christians had a much higher representation compared to their actual demographics at the national level^{vii}.

Tables 6.3 Field investigator's caste/community profile

	Percent
Upper Castes	43
Other Backward Castes	25
Dalits	21
Adivasis	11

Source: NES 2009 Field Investigator's Profile Data; N=1346

Tables 6.4 Field investigator's religious profile

	Percent
Hindu	78
Muslim	10
Christian	9
Sikh	2
Other Religions	1

Source: NES 2009 Field Investigator's Profile Data; N=1346

^{vii} This increase in the sample of FIs from certain categories could be because the selection of FIs was done at the State level and not at the national level, though these figures presented here are aggregated at the national level.

7. Feedback of Research Training and Suggestions

After both the training workshop and the survey fieldwork, students/FIs were requested to fill an evaluation form. The objective of collecting feedback from the trainees and final FIs was to assess the wider context of Lokniti's engagement, both in terms of theory as well as practice, with survey research. Although the focus was on the assessment of content and structure of the training it also took into account some wider issues connected to it. This has not only been a useful exercise in designing better surveys, but also in planning training programmes with the aim of capacity building of students by Lokniti for future surveys.

The feedback was based primarily on the responses of students who were *freshers* before attending the training workshop; became *trainees* after attending the training workshop; and finally, after conducting the NES fieldwork became experienced *survey researchers*.

The feedback aimed at collecting information on:

- (a) The structure and content of the introduction to survey research provided in the training workshops
- (b) The application of the training with regard to fieldwork in the specific context of NES 2009
- (c) The benefits, if any, of the training workshops in enhancing student's knowledge of survey research and their capacity to conduct such research

The two formats primarily used for collecting feedback regarding training and fieldwork were:

- A. Evaluation Form 1 (EF1): A semi-structured questionnaire was developed and distributed after each training workshop to the FIs. This was basically to get feedback about the training workshop and its various components. The responses were subsequently collected, codified and analyzed. (*Appendix VII*).

B. Evaluation Form 2(EF2): A semi-structured questionnaire was distributed to the selected FIs to be filled in by them at the conclusion of their fieldwork for the NES. This form aimed at gathering information from the FIs about how training helped them in their fieldwork. (*Appendix VIII*).

The following section discussing the feedback from trainees is divided into three sub-sections: *First*, section 7.1: **‘Training Workshop,’** deals with the presentation and effectiveness of training, its usefulness in conducting fieldwork and the duration of work. *Second*, section 7.2: **‘Field Investigation,’** assesses the experience of field investigation and the level and nature of difficulties faced by the FIs. *Third*, section 7.3: **‘Suggestions,’** examines the suggestions of trainees on various aspects of training and the need for further improvements.

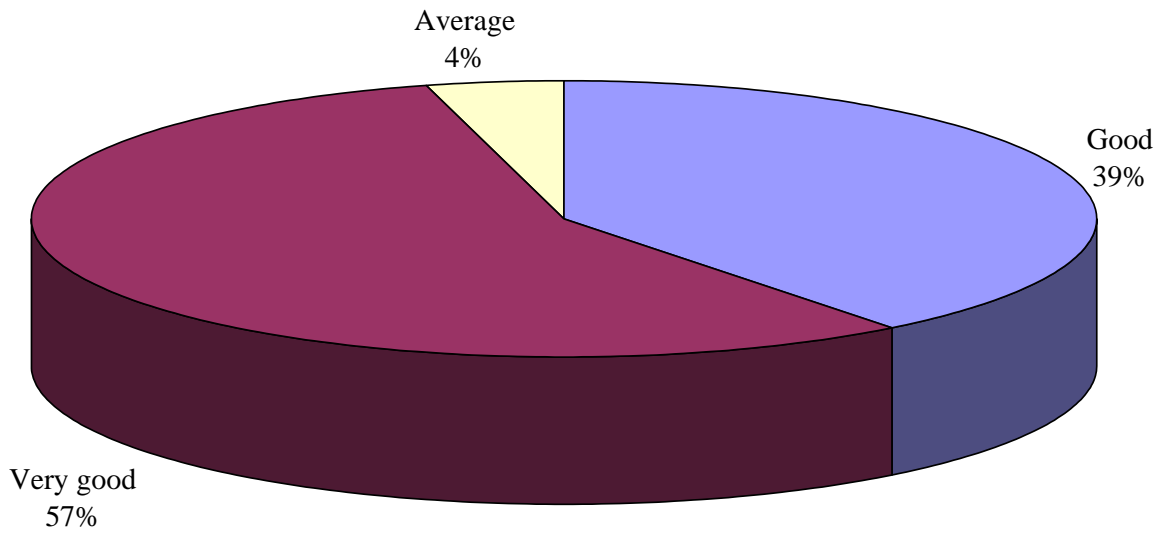
7.1 Training Workshop

The overall presentation of the training in these workshops was appreciated by students across the country. Nearly six out of the ten trainees found the method of presentation in the workshop ‘very good’ (Figure 7.1)^{viii}. Similarly 39 percent students said that it was ‘good’. On the overall rating of the presentation techniques used in the workshops there was a noticeable difference of opinion among the trainees who had prior experience of survey and those who had no such experience. 60 percent of experienced trainees found the presentation to be ‘very good’ as compared with 52 percent of the trainees who were new to survey research found the presentations to be ‘very good’.

The students attending these workshops were also asked to give their feedback on how effective the workshop was with regard to survey research training. 47 percent trainees found the workshops to be ‘very effective’ in enhancing their knowledge about survey research techniques, and an equivalent number rated the training as ‘effective’ (Figure 7.2).

^{viii} The *No Response* category was removed for all the data analysis reported in this Report.

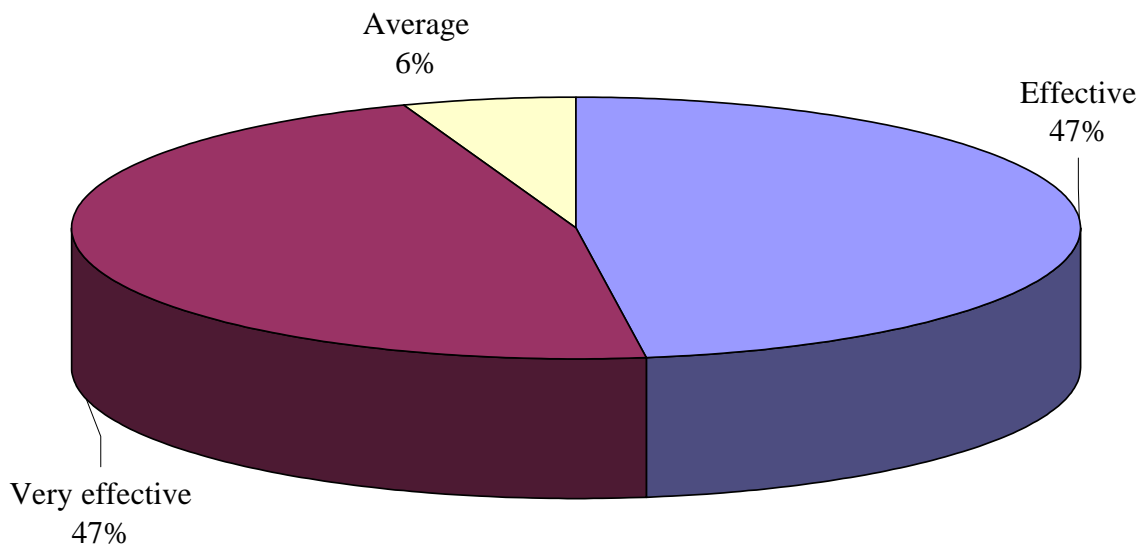
Figure 7.1: Opinion on Methods of Presentation during Training



Source: NES 2009 Evaluation Form 1; N=1402

Question: What is your opinion on the methods of presentation used during the training program?

Figure 7.2: Opinion on Effectiveness of Training Program



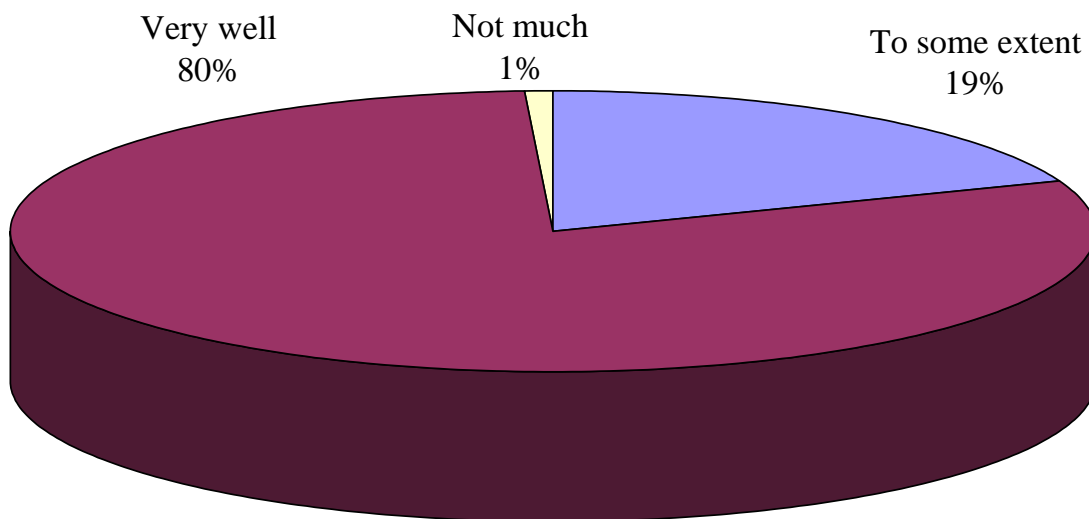
Source: NES 2009 Evaluation Form 1; N=1402

Question: Please rate your opinion about the overall training programme for carrying out fieldwork?

Overall the training appears to have been of substantial help to these students with regard to their final fieldwork (see figure 7.3). An overwhelming 80 percent of the trainees reported that the workshop helped them ‘very well’ in becoming familiar with fieldwork techniques. Whereas, only a percent of the trainees felt that the workshop did not help them much. This is a very positive sign of the usefulness of these workshops and of the need to continue such training in the future.

Furthermore, in support of the usefulness of training, after the completion of their fieldwork, FIs were asked to give feedback on the usefulness of their initial training in handling problems and difficulties during the fieldwork. 69 percent of the participants said that the training helped them to a great extent in dealing with difficulties that arose during the fieldwork. Further 27 percent said that it helped them to some extent in finding solutions to the difficulties that they encountered during the fieldwork (Figure 7.4).

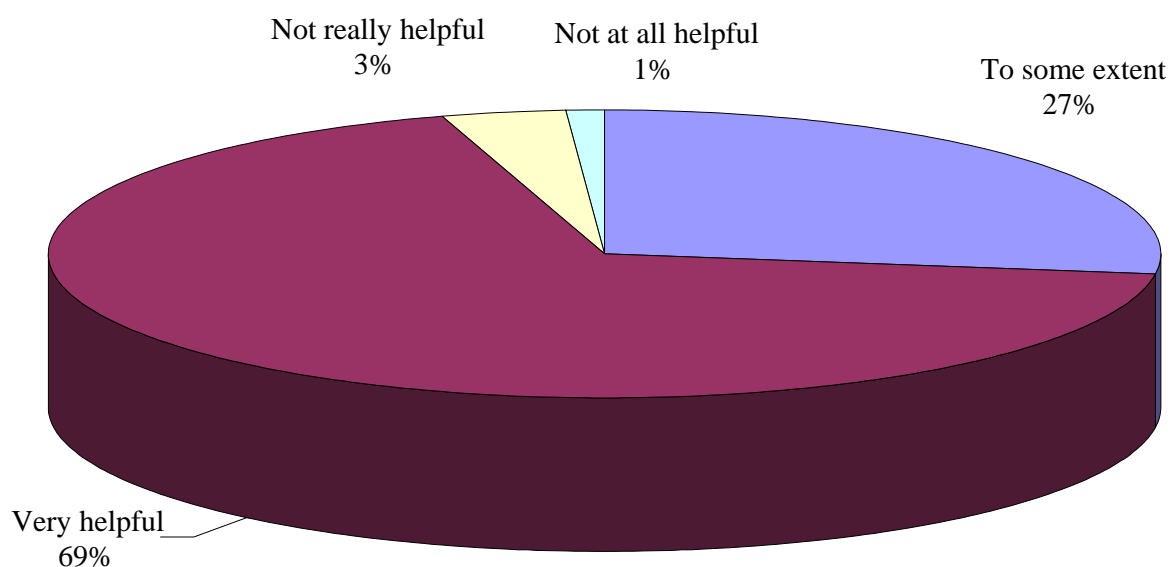
Figure 7.3: Usefulness of workshop with regard to fieldwork techniques



Source: NES 2009 Evaluation Form 1; N=1402

Question: To what extent do you think that this workshop helped in familiarising you with fieldwork technique?

Figure 7.4: Helpfulness of training with regard to actual fieldwork difficulties



Source: NES 2009 Evaluation Form 2; N=1024

Question: To what extent do you think the training was helpful in dealing with these (fieldwork related) difficulties?

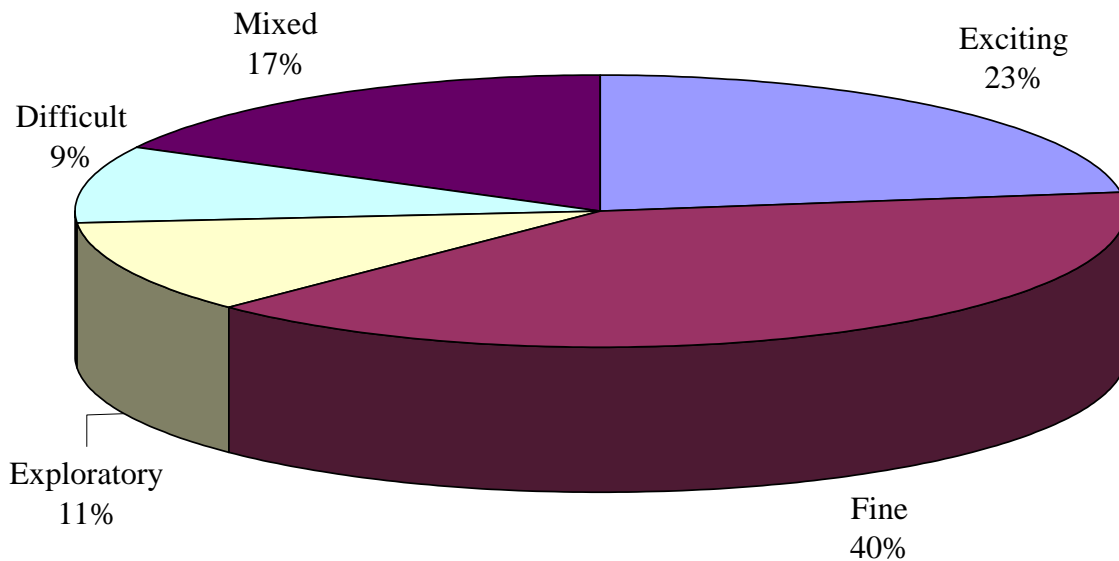
Generally, the duration of training workshops conducted for Lokniti surveys is two days. But for the NES 2009 it was decided that these workshops would be extended to three days, to make them more rigorous and well spaced. The decision for organizing three day workshops was supported by the trainees. More than seven out of ten trainees (73 percent) said that the length of the workshop was adequate for covering all aspects of survey method. However, 12 percent of the trainees found the workshop to be too long.

7.2 Field Investigation

As previously mentioned, after the FIs completed their fieldwork they were asked to give feedback about their experiences. While, 23 percent of the FIs said that their fieldwork experience was exciting, whereas 11 percent said it was exploratory in nature (Figure 7.5). In contrast, 40 percent trainees reported that their fieldwork experience was 'normal', and only nine percent said that they

had to face difficulties of various kinds. For the remaining 17 percent it was a mixed experience of some excitement as well as some ground-level difficulties.

Figure 7.5: Experience as a Field Investigator

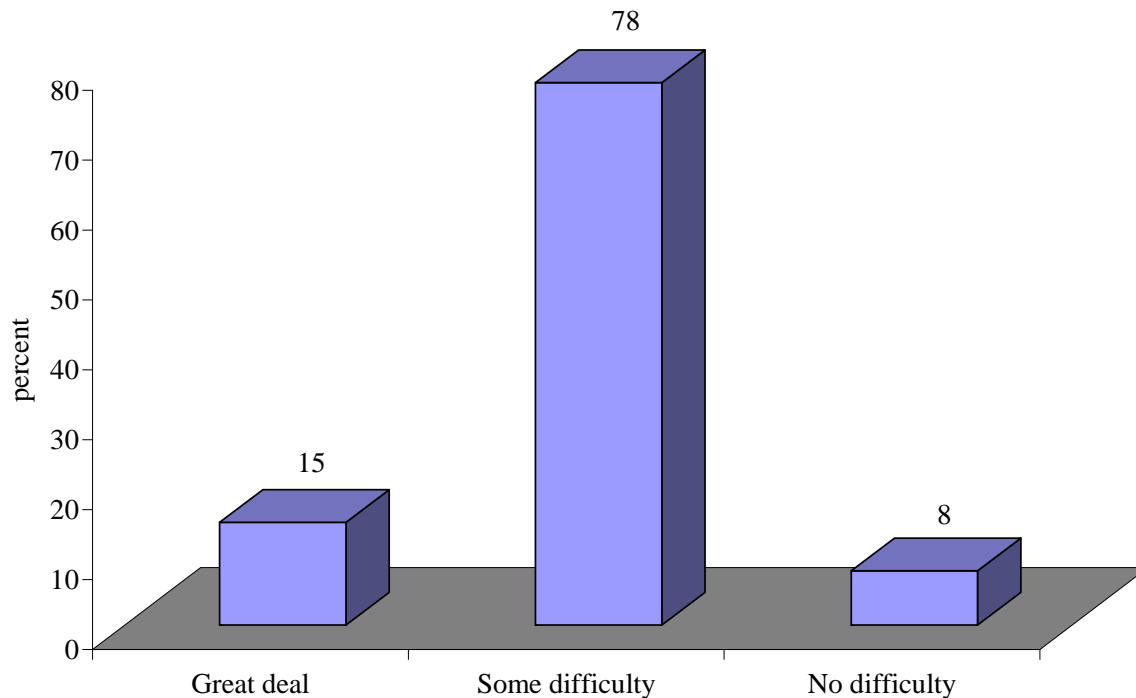


Source: NES 2009 Evaluation Form 2; N=1024

Question: How was your experience as a field investigator?

The field investigators were also asked specifically to give feedback on the *levels* of difficulties faced during fieldwork. Figure 7.6 reveals that 15 percent trainees had a great deal of difficulty during the fieldwork while 78 percent reported that they faced some difficulties. Only eight percent of the FIs reported facing no difficulty during the data collection process.

Figure 7.6: Level of Difficulties during Fieldwork



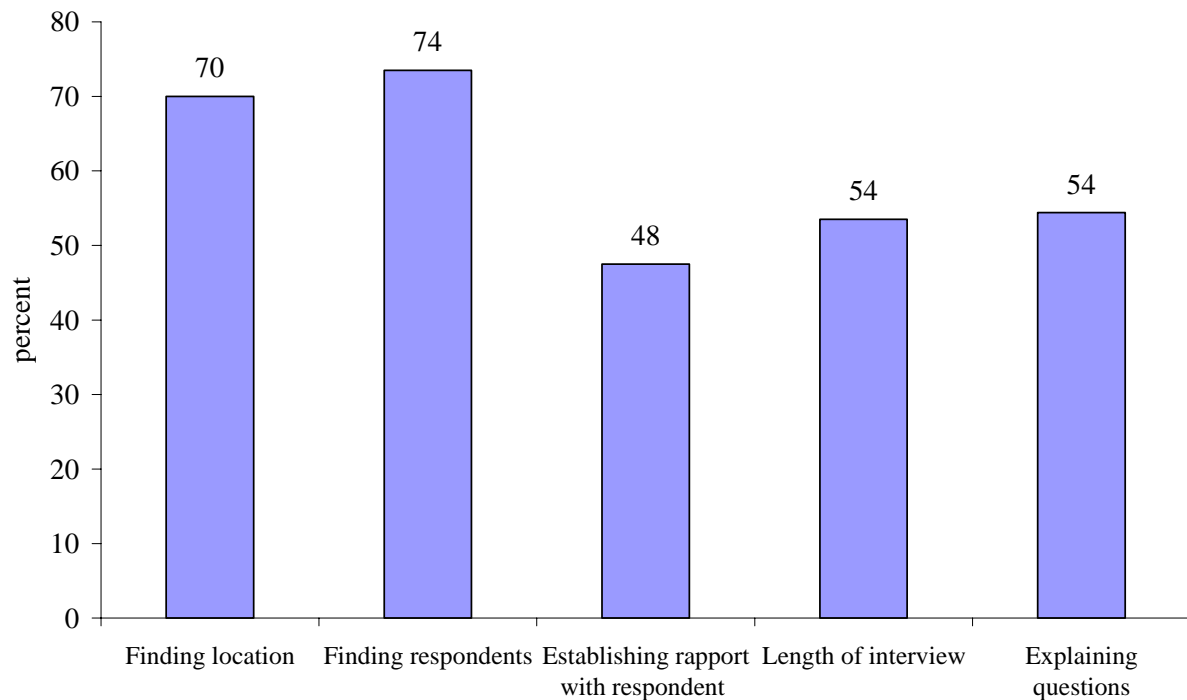
Source: NES 2009 Evaluation Form 2; N=1024

Question: What was the level of difficulties you faced during the field investigation?

Finally, the FIs who reported facing some or a great dealing of difficulty during their field investigation were asked questions about the kinds of difficulties faced. The following major problems were highlighted by these FIs (see Figure 7.7):

- 70 percent had problems in finding the locations of the respondents.
- 74 percent of the FIs reported difficulties in contacting the respondents.
- 48 percent said they had difficulties in establishing rapport with the respondents and convincing them to agree for an interview.
- Just over half of the FIs said they had difficulties in completing the interview due to long questionnaires.
- Similarly over half of the respondents faced difficulties in explaining the questions to the respondents.

Figure 7.7: Difficulties faced by the investigators



Source: NES 2009 Evaluation Form 2; N=1024

Question: (if difficulties) Did you face difficulties in...?

This feedback received from the trainees and FIs has been an invaluable source of information about the training exercise, and the actual fieldwork experience. The major suggestions on how to improve this training experience are provided in the next and final section of this Report.

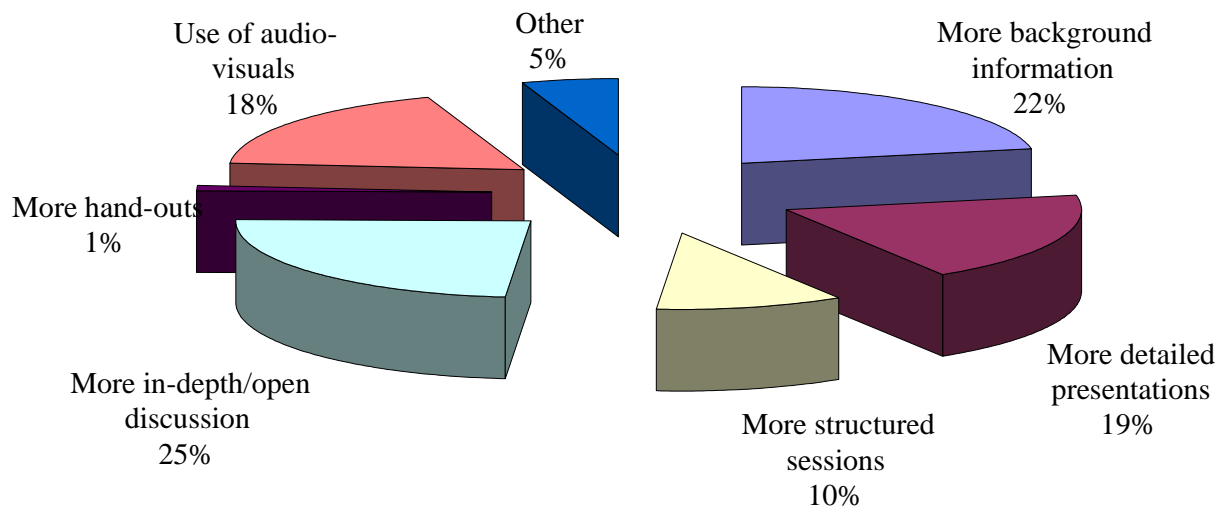
7.3. Suggestions

At the end of the workshops, the suggestions made by the trainees for further improvements in the training programme have provided a valuable source of possibilities for future workshops on survey research. Figure 7.8 highlights the following major suggestions made by the trainees:

- The trainees found the sessions to be interactive but felt that more time should be allotted for open discussions on different aspects of survey method (25 percent).
- Trainees said that details of the study and background information should be provided immediately after their selection. This would help them in learning about the study and the kind of work they would be required to do before attending the training workshop (22 percent).

- Students found Lokniti’s Audio-Visual (AV) film quite informative and mentioned that this AV aided them in understanding different aspects of survey research. Their suggestion about the AV was regarding its length. Some felt that the duration of the training film should be increased with the inclusion of more mock and actual field investigation clips (18 percent). There were also suggestions that these AV clips should be translated into regional languages.
- Though the students said that the training sessions were properly structured, they felt it could have been more focussed (10 percent).
- Students said that training on different aspects of survey method was comprehensive and useful. They however, did suggest the inclusion of a session on data interpretation and analysis as well.

Figure 7.8: Suggestions for improving training workshops



Source: NES 2009 Evaluation Form 1; N=1402

Question: What can make this training workshop more helpful/useful for field investigators?

8. Conclusions

The financial support provided by ICSSR for the NES 2009 has been of immense help to Lokniti in conducting the Election Study in a rigorous way. The resources provided by the Council have allowed for the better designing of the study and the effective training of the field investigators, which in turn has led to a high quality of fieldwork and data collection. The trainees were quite satisfied with the training programme of Lokniti, while stressing the need for a session on data interpretation and analysis which would have been useful to them as well. The reason for not including a session on data analysis during the NES 2009 training workshops was due to paucity of time and resources. Thus, there seems to be a serious need for organizing training programmes for students of social sciences on research methodology based on quantitative methods and data analysis.