

**Workshop on
'Village Studies in India: Historical Overview and Practical Directions for
Fieldwork' conducted by Dr. Rinki Sarkar for IIT Mandi and WPI (USA)
students at IIT Mandi
16-19 March 2018**

This year, 22 students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI, USA), are participating in the Interactive Socio-Technical Practicum (ISTP) course along with 38 IIT B.Tech. Students, and 1 student from the Technical University of Munich (Germany). This unique course with an international collaborative component has been conducted since 2013. International students participate in projects for a duration of seven weeks, working in close association with IIT students, and experiencing student life in India. The objective of student participants (mentored by IIT and WPI faculty) is to analyse local problems and concerns in a multi-dimensional way, using social science research methods, so as to suggest appropriate interventions. The ten projects this year include studies of and intervention in 'e-waste' and solid waste management, water filter designs, conceptualizing Mandi as a 'smart city', studying and mitigating driver fatigue, and analyzing climate change perceptions.

Dr. Sarkar's workshop focused on qualitative and quantitative tools for conducting field-oriented village studies. After explaining the importance of field studies and outlining various approaches, she led the students in small groups (two teams each) for field exposure trips. The locations of these trips (Arned, Kataula, Shegli, Namlay and Mandi) were chosen keeping in mind the specific requirements of each of the ten projects.



Worcester Polytechnic Institute is a university located in central Massachusetts. It is well known for science and engineering studies, and particularly via project based learning. The students are all in their third year, and come from a variety of majors, including robotics, mechanical engineering, aerospace engineering, architectural engineering, CS, civil, mathematics, biology, and biomedical engineering. WPI students choose an ISTP project center from more than 40 domestic or international options. This batch elected to come to Mandi so that they could work directly with students here, and to learn more about Indian culture. So far, they have visited Delhi, Agra, and Jaipur – and look forward to spending two months with their teammates engaging with local communities and stakeholders.

