DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH METHODS

Week 3, Lesson 1:Literature Study

Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

Rajshree Bedamatta, PhD
Department of Humanities &
Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati
rajshree@iitg.ac.in

What we will cover in today's lecture

1. What is the purpose or aim of the literature review?
2. What is Systematic Review of Literature?
3. How to do Systematic Review of Literature

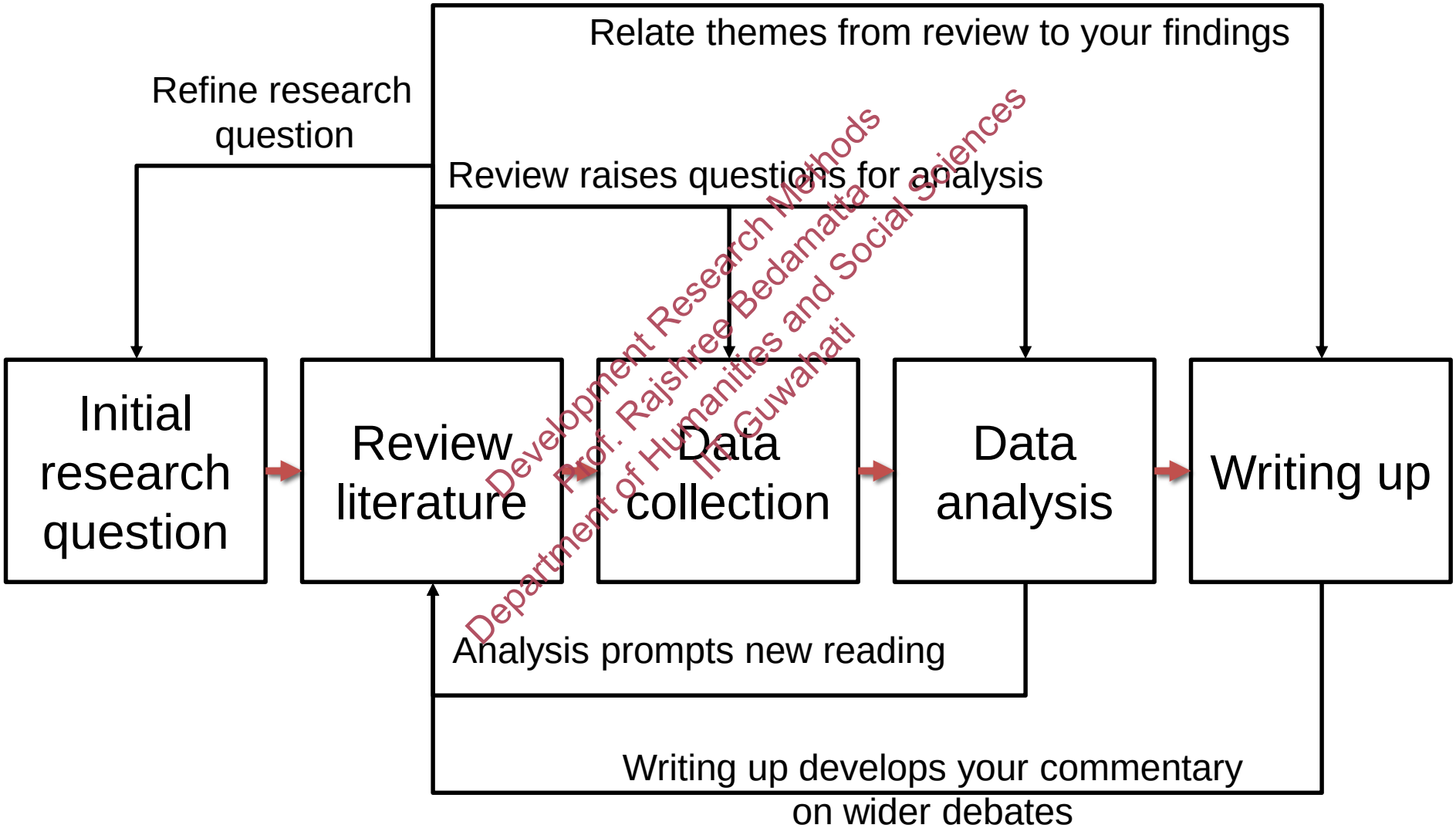
Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

What is the purpose of the literature review?

1. Increasing your breadth of knowledge of your subject area.
2. Identifying patterns and trends in the literature.
3. Identifying gaps in the literature and seek new lines of inquiry.
4. Identifying similarities and differences in previous research and place you work in perspective.
5. Providing the intellectual context for your own work, enabling you to position your project relative to other work.
6. Identifying experts working in your field (a researcher network is a valuable resource)
7. Carrying on from where others have already reached
8. Demonstrating and clarifying your understanding of your field of research

Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

Linking up your literature review



Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

What is Systematic Literature Review (SLR)

- SLR identifies, selects and critically appraises research in order to answer a clearly formulated question.
- Follows a clearly defined protocol or plan where the criteria is clearly stated before the review is conducted.
- Comprehensive, transparent search conducted over multiple databases and grey literature that can be replicated and reproduced by other researchers.
- The search terms, search strategies (including database names, platforms, dates of search) and limits all need to be included in the review.
- 7 key principles behind systematic literature reviews are Transparency, Clarity, Integration, Focus, Equality, Accessibility, Coverage

Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajashree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

How to do Systematic Review

- Key Stage in conducting a systematic review
  1. Scoping
  2. Planning
  3. Identification (Searching)
  4. Screening
  5. Eligibility

Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

1. Scoping

1. **Formulate one or more research questions**
   - What do you want to know and about what topics?
   - Who will your audience be?
   - Do you have a clear idea of the type of research finding that will be relevant to addressing your research question(s)?
2. **Thoroughly clarify whether the planned systematic review has already been done**

Some example rationales for conducting an updated rather than an original systematic review might be:

(i) It has been 10 years since the last systematic review on this topic and the literature has rapidly expanded since the last review

(ii) The last review was methodologically flawed in various ways (e.g. it was not systematic)

(iii) The last review focused on X but you think it's worth focusing on Y for particular theoretical or empirical reasons

Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

2. Planning

1. Break your research question(s) down into individual concepts to create search terms
   - Using alternative terms and concepts (Synonyms, different spellings, broader/narrower terms, etc.)
   - Balance between search sensitivity and specificity
2. Formulate preliminary inclusion and exclusion criteria - and then review these in the initial stages of the literature searching and sifting process
   - Criteria can concern: Research question, Conceptualization, Research design, Time frame, Data, etc.
3. Create clear record keeping systems and keep meticulous records by working systematically

Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajasree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

3. Identification (Searching)

1. Use your search terms to search at least two different (relevant) electronic databases
2. Carefully inspect the search results
3. Conduct additional searches to ensure you have located all potentially relevant published and unpublished work

- opengrey.eu is a European database compiled by different national libraries in various European countries who submit any grey literature they receive;
- opendoar.org/Directory of Open-Access Repositories website searches the open-access repositories of thousands of universities all over the world;
- WorldCat database for dissertations and theses;
- ELDIS (http://www.eldis.org)
- British Library for Development Studies (http://blds.ids.ac.uk/blds/

Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajsikha Bandyopadhyay
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

Searching in Electronic databases- Some Tips

Databases	• Select databases that are relevant to your topic area (e.g. Medline, EMBASE, ISI Web of Knowledge
Parts	• Consider which parts of articles you want to search (e.g. abstract, title)
Limits and filters	• Search by article type (e.g. research syntheses, empirical articles), subject categories, sub-headings, etc.
Boolean Search	• Boolean search operators broaden or narrow your search: 'AND' (a search for all of your search terms; e.g., 'heart AND lung'), 'OR' (a search for at least one of your search terms; e.g., 'heart OR lung'), 'NOT' (a search to exclude certain search terms; e.g., 'heart not lung')
Truncation Symbols	• Use a truncation symbol to look for all words starting with a particular combination of letters (e.g. 'dep$' or 'dep*' will retrieve 'depression', 'depressive', 'depressed', etc); • Use the truncation symbol (*) between words to match words (e.g. 'midsummer * dream' will return results that contain the exact phrase, 'a midsummer night's dream');

Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajnee Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

Searching in Electronic databases- Tips 2

Wildcard Symbols	• Consider using a wildcard symbol to stand-in for one character, if that character exists (‘#’ or ‘?’ or ‘$’ depending on the database) (e.g. ‘wom#n’ will find ‘women’ or ‘woman’);
Parentheses	• Consider using parentheses because commands within these run first (e.g. ‘(smok* OR tobacco)’)
Proximity	• Consider searching by proximity, to search for one word within n number of words of another word (‘adjn’ or ‘NEARn’ depending on the database) (e.g. ‘patient adj3 anxiety’ will retrieve records where ‘patient’ and ‘anxiety’ appear within three words of each other);
Exclusion	• Consider excluding unwanted meanings (e.g. ‘jaguar NOT(car OR cars)’, if you want the animal);
Year	• Consider searching by publication year, if you have a good theoretical or empirical reason for doing so

Development Research Methods
Prof Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

Studying Institutional discourses

- Understanding the problems in interpreting institutional discourses- Biases and censorships

- Locating the report institutionally
  - The institutional identity of the source
  - The institutional identity of the researchers
  - Identity of those who paid for the study and their interests
  - Institutional constraints in carrying out research

Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

The structured skim reading of grey material

Step 1
Register the complete reference. You may not gain access to the material again

Step 2
Note and identify the source

Step 3 Study the title page
Note down the title, date of publication, institutions, etc. to locate the political, social and institutional context of the report.

Step 4 The executive summary
Good for reconstructing policy discourses and debates on the issues.

Step 5 Skimming the substance
Differences between the body of the report and executive summary indicate areas of controversy and negotiation

Step 6 Survey the quantitative data
For all useful data note the source, years, types of data and method of data aggregation

Step 7 Review the bibliography
This may provide useful references or give an indication of the depth of the research

Step 8 Note taking
Make notes about the report itself, about any useful information, and of any points you think are important to verify or deepen in further reading.

Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

Interpreting institutional discourses in construction of argument

- Step 1 Identifying and rethinking assumptions
- Step 2 Formulating alternative questions and extending the range of possible answers
- Step 3 Reading both sides of key debates
- Step 4 Confronting the data: how well they answer old and new questions
- Step 5 Rethinking conclusions
- Step 6 Rethinking the audience

Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

4. Screening

1. Export references to a citation manager to collate the search results
   - (e.g., EndNote, RefWorks)

2. Read the Title and/or Abstract of identified work
   - Do they meet your inclusion and exclusion criteria?
   - Focus on sensitivity (locating and sifting as many articles as possible)
   - Record keeping (list of the number of rejected articles, short note on the reasons for excluding each study).

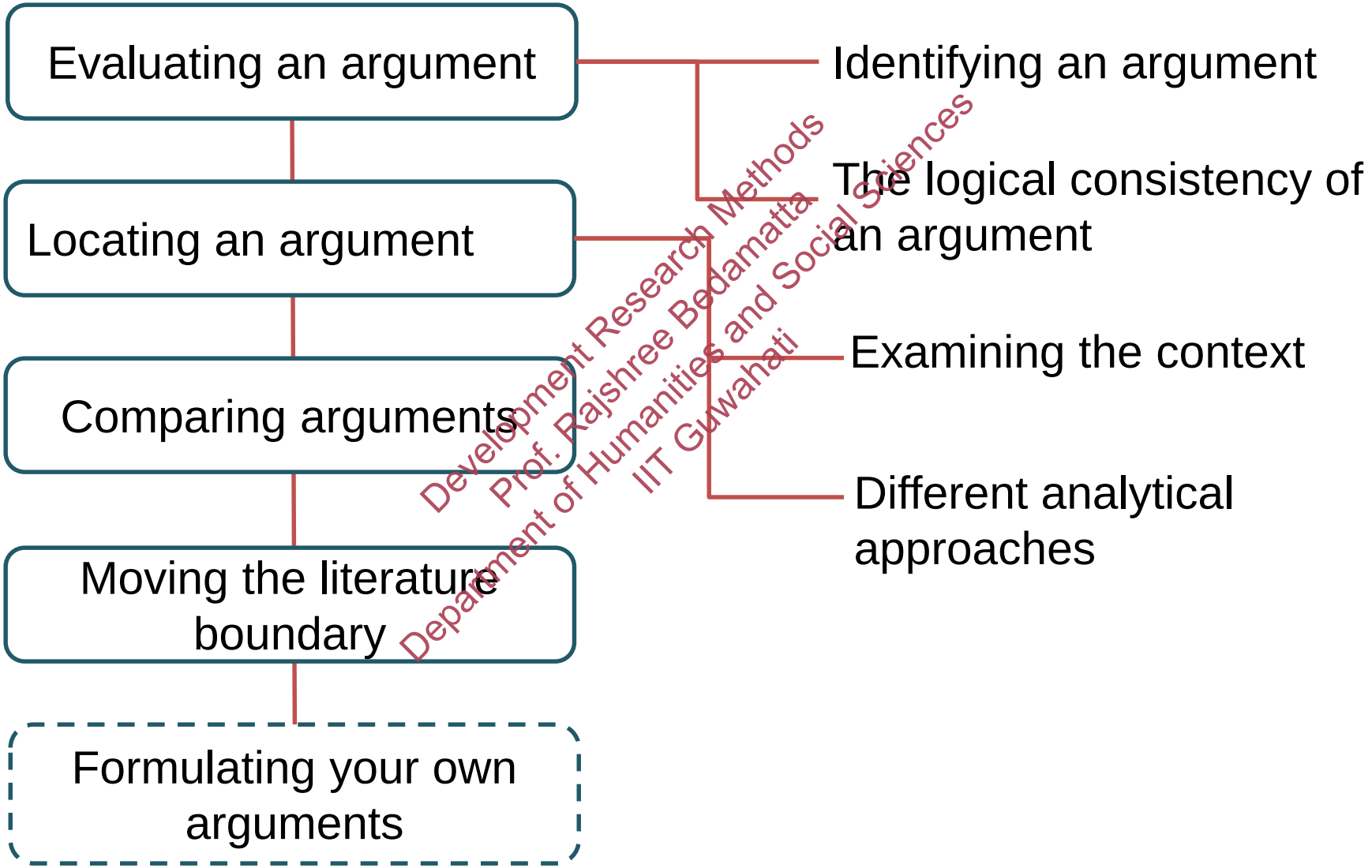
Development Research Methods
Prof. Raishree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

5. Eligibility

- Sift the full-text version of potentially eligible articles and extract relevant information to be included
  1. Focus shifts from sensitivity to specificity
  2. Focus on definition or conceptualization; measures/key variables; research design; participants; year of publication; data/results; study design, setting, etc.
  3. Record keeping (Notes on inclusion and exclusion reasons, quality of the work, etc.)

Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

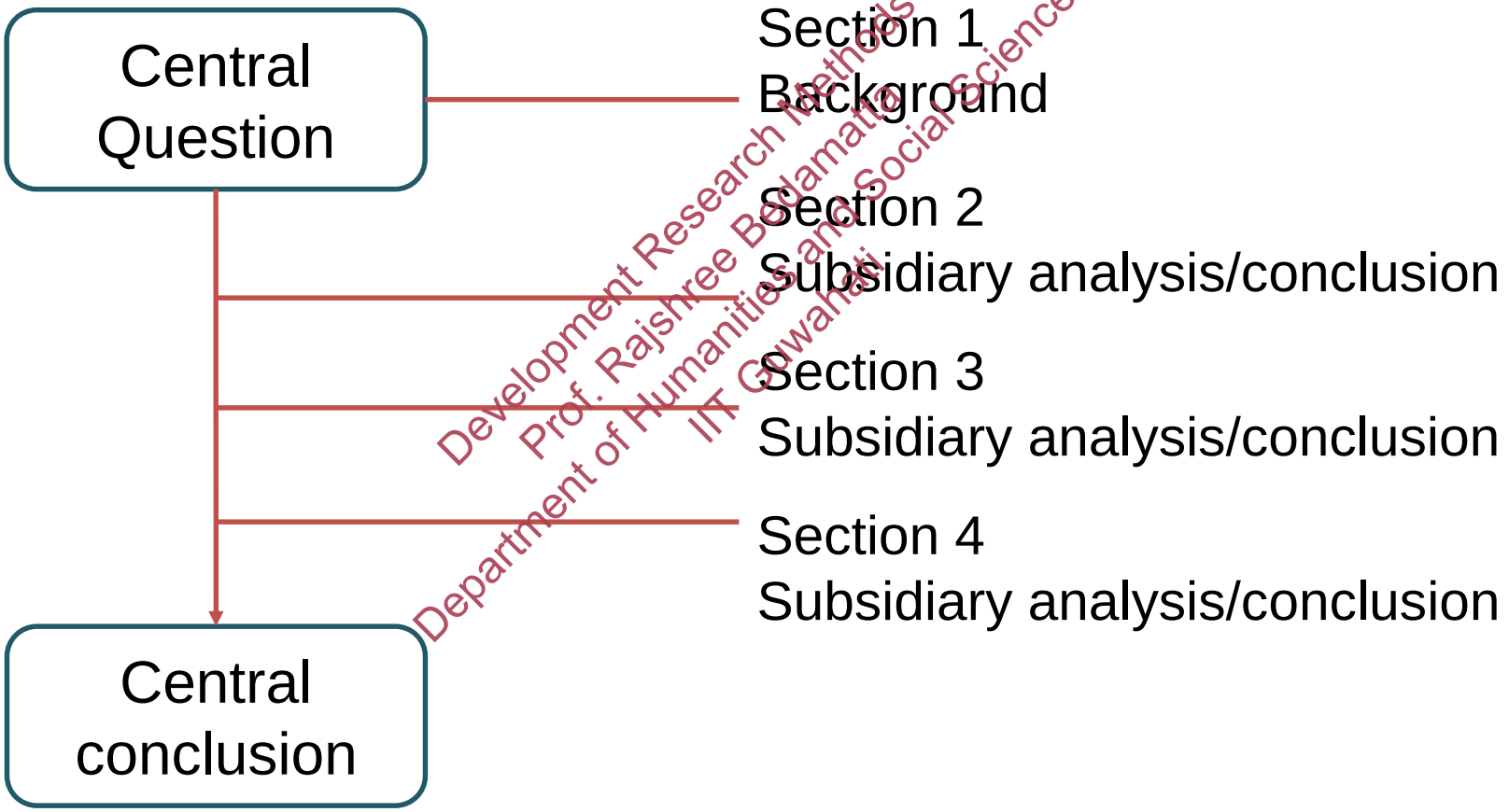
Analysing the literature



Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

Formulating your own argument

Literature study framework



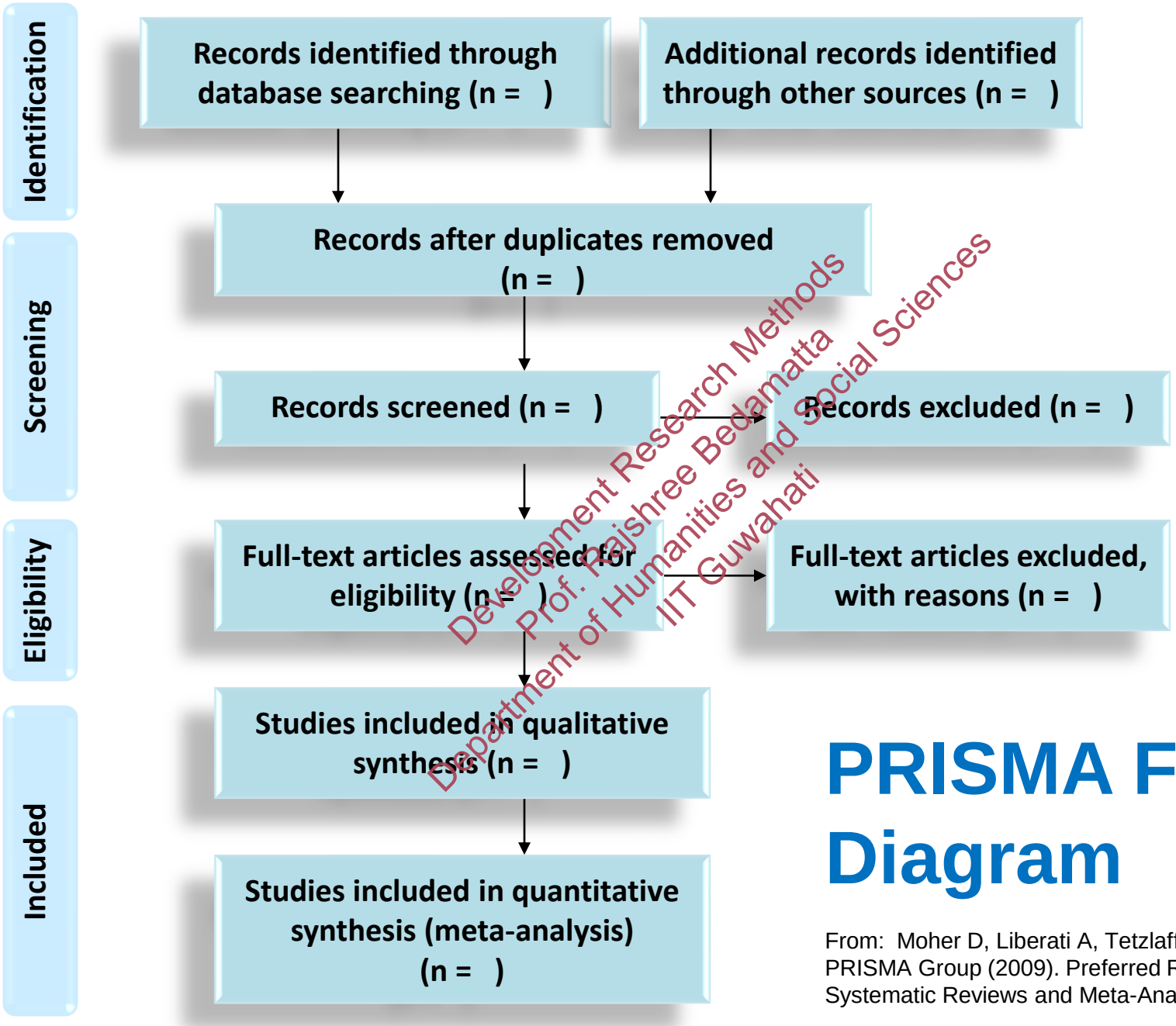
Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

Writing up Literature Review

As a general rule,

1. Adhere to respected guidelines which outline how to report systematic reviews and meta-analyses (e.g., AMSTAR, PRISMA)
2. Present a flow diagram of the literature searching and sifting process (e.g., PRISMA flow diagram)
3. Use as a template for formatting and content, at least two different systematic reviews which have been published in top journals in your field which address similar goals to the purpose of the review
4. Introduction-Method-Results-Discussion-Appendix

Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati



Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

PRISMA Flow Diagram

From: Moher D, Liberati A, Tetzlaff J, Altman DG, The PRISMA Group (2009). Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses

Some general points about how to present a narrative review

- Present each study in a way that makes its relation to the themes clear and explicit
- Show how strong or how weak the overall evidence for each main point is
- Describe findings in the context of providing something new to the literature
- Structure the review into sub-sections, with a coherent “story” and flow throughout.
- Provide a balanced coverage and critique of all aspects of the literature (ideally spending some time searching for evidence that would seem to contradict the main conclusions and patterns)
- Cite a study's conclusion whilst also describing the method and specific results to provide a context

Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

References used for this lecture

- Siddaway, A. (2014). What is a systematic literature review and how do I do one. University of Stirling, (I)

- Meth, P and Glyn Williams, *Literature Reviews and Bibliographic Searches* in Vandana Desai and Robert B. Potter, *Doing Development Research*, 2006, Sage Publications.

- Stephanie Barrientos, *Interrogating information through a literature study* in Mohan, G., & THOMAS, A. (2007). Research Skills for Policy and Development. How to find out fast. London

- Bridget O'Laughlin, *Interpreting institutional discourses* in Mohan, G., & THOMAS, A. (2007). Research Skills for Policy and Development. How to find out fast. London.

- Moher D, Liberati A, Tetzlaff J, Altman DG, The PRISMA Group (2009). Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses: The PRISMA Statement. PLoS Med 6(7): e1000097. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed1000097

- https://libguides.csu.edu.au/c.php?g=476545&p=3997202

For a comprehensive literature on the topics covered in this lecture it is also suggested that students go through the reference list of the above cited papers.

Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati