

INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY
Research Unit, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi – 110068

Minutes of the Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC) Meeting held on 12th November, 2025 from 12.00 Noon to 5.00 PM in the Conference Room, School of Social Sciences (SoSS), Academic Block, IGNOU, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi – 110068

The following members were present:

S. No.	Name	Affiliation / Expertise	Role
1.	Prof. Tej Bahadur Singh	Former Professor, Central University of Bihar	Chairperson
2.	Prof. Swati Patra	School of Social Sciences (Psychology), IGNOU	Member
3.	Prof. Neerja Sood	School of Health Sciences, IGNOU	Member
4.	Prof. Mansi Sharma	School of Law, IGNOU	Member
5.	Prof. Neera Kapoor	School of Sciences, IGNOU	Member
6.	Prof. S. K. Prasad	Director, NCDS, IGNOU	Member
7.	Prof. Sanghamitra Acharya	Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health, JNU	External Expert (Social Medicine and Public Health)
8.	Prof. S. P. K. Jena	Department of Applied Psychology, University of Delhi	External Expert (Clinical Psychology)
9.	Prof. Rachana Johri	Visiting Professor, BMU Munjal University	External Expert (Psychology)
10.	Prof. Samina Bano	Professor of Psychology, Jamia Millia Islamia	External Expert (Psychology)
11.	Dr. Vijay Rai	Sr. CMO Dr. RML Hospital (Retired) & erstwhile Addl. Director of Health Services, Delhi Govt.	External Expert (Health & Clinical)
12.	Dr. Harindar Goyal	Former Principal, RAK Nursing College	External Expert (Community Nursing)
13.	Dr. Sushil Kumar	Associate Professor, IHBAS, Delhi	External Expert (Psychiatric Nursing)
14.	Prof. Rashmi Sinha	Retired Faculty. SoSS, IGNOU	External Expert (Anthropology)
15.	Prof. Jaideep Sharma	Director, Research Unit, IGNOU	Member Secretary

Jaideep Sharma

Dr. Satish R. Gaikwad, Deputy Director, Research Unit, assisted the Committee in the entire proceedings of the meeting. The quorum, as per the IEC Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), was duly met.

The Chairperson welcomed all members and appreciated the University's consistent efforts in maintaining high standards of ethical compliance in Ph.D. research. He emphasized that ethical review is integral to ensuring scientific validity and social responsibility in academic research.

The Member Secretary thereafter presented the agenda items and briefed the Committee on the *Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)* of the Institutional Ethics Committee, highlighting key features aligned with the ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) Guidelines for human research.

Each Ph.D. scholar, accompanied by their respective supervisor, was invited to present their research proposal before the Committee. After each presentation, the Committee deliberated extensively on the ethical aspects including informed consent, participant safety, confidentiality, translation and cultural adaptation of instruments, and compliance with the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017.

In the case of Ph.D. students supervised by Prof. Swati Patra, the Committee duly noted the potential conflict of interest, and in accordance with the *IEC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)*, Prof. Swati Patra did not participate in the decision-making process related to those specific proposals. This procedural adherence ensured complete impartiality and ethical compliance in all deliberations.

Following in-depth discussion and expert observations, the Committee made topic-specific recommendations as detailed below:

S. No.	Name of Scholar/Title of the PhD research	Discipline / School	Supervisor	Decision & Ethical Recommendations
1	Ms. Nidhi Gupta/ “Effect of Play Therapy on Executive and Social-Emotional Functioning in Children with Specific Learning Disability”	Psychology, SoSS	Prof. Swati Patra	<i>Approved for ethical clearance.</i> The scholar must (i) obtain prior parental and institutional consent for child participants, (ii) ensure linguistic and cultural adaptation of play therapy tools, (iii) clearly define the target age group, and (iv) uphold confidentiality and non-intrusive observation ethics. Use validated play therapy frameworks available in standard literature.
2	Ms. Anju Bala/ “Psychosocial Correlates of Diabetes	Psychology, SoSS	Prof. Swati Patra	<i>Approved with modification.</i> Title to be revised to specify “Type-II Diabetes Mellitus.” The scholar must (i) clearly

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	Self-Care and Psychological Well-Being among Diabetics."			define the age range of participants, (ii) translate tools into Hindi/local language ensuring semantic equivalence, (iii) anonymize health data in compliance with patient rights, and (iv) adopt standardized psychometric instruments for reliability.
3	Mr. Ritwik Banerjee/ "Morphometrics Study of Hand Among Indian Populations."	Anthropology, SoSS	Dr. P. Venkatramana	<i>Approved for ethical clearance.</i> The scholar must (i) refine the sample selection strategy ensuring representation and validity, (ii) obtain written informed consent from all participants, (iii) maintain strict confidentiality in handling biometric data, and (iv) justify the scientific and anthropometric relevance of the study.
4	Mr. Virendra Singh/ "Assessment of Help Seeking Behaviour of Clients and Effectiveness of Community Based Intervention on Anxiety Spectrum Disorders in Sikar District of Rajasthan."	Nursing, SoHS	Dr. Reeta Devi	<i>Approved for ethical clearance.</i> The scholar must: (i) obtain written permission from the original tool developer prior to use or adaptation of any research instrument; (ii) translate all tools into the relevant local dialect/language using simple, culturally appropriate terminology, ensuring clarity and accuracy; (iii) avoid any anxiety-provoking, intrusive, or psychologically distressing questions in the survey, particularly those that may trigger emotional discomfort among participants; (iv) strictly adhere to established privacy, confidentiality, and data-protection norms throughout the research process; (v) explicitly define and document all intervention

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				protocols, including procedures, safeguards, and participant support mechanisms; and (vi) ensure full compliance with the provisions of the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, especially with respect to consent, risk mitigation, participant well-being, and referral mechanisms where required.
5	Ms. Tanya/ “Effectiveness of Tobacco Intervention Study among School Going Adolescence in Delhi.”	Social Work, SOSW	Prof. Rose Nembiakkim	<i>Approved for ethical clearance.</i> The scholar must (i) translate all study tools into the regional language, (ii) ensure ethical sensitivity during tobacco-use interventions among adolescents, (iii) secure parental and institutional permissions, (iv) strengthen inclusion and exclusion criteria, (v) categorize forms of tobacco use clearly, and (vi) align methodology with Tobacco Cessation and Nicotine Replacement Therapy protocols.
6	Ms. S. Vaishnavee/ “Psychological Impact of Assistive Devices on Persons with Disability in the National Capital Region.”	Social Work, SOSW	Dr. G. Mahesh	<i>Approved for ethical clearance.</i> The scholar must (i) redefine inclusion criteria to align with the target group, (ii) specify types of assistive devices under study, (iii) establish operational definitions for self-esteem indicators, (iv) ensure sensitive handling of disability-related data, and (v) use validated bilingual measurement tools.
7	Mr. Reneej K. B./ “Availability, Accessibility and Affordability of Maternal and Child	Social Work, SOSW	Dr. G. Mahesh	<i>Approved for ethical clearance.</i> The scholar must (i) ensure informed consent of all women participants, (ii) protect the privacy of health-related information, (iii)

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	Healthcare Services for Women with Disabilities in Delhi."			translate tools and consent forms into simple local language, and (iv) maintain transparency and confidentiality throughout data collection.
8	Ms. Sachetha G. M./ "Group Intervention on Substance Abuse Among Junior College Students in Karnataka."	Social Work, SOSW	Dr. N. Ramya	<i>Approved for ethical clearance.</i> The scholar must (i) obtain legal and parental consent for all minor participants, (ii) adhere to norms for child protection and data privacy, (iii) ensure clear segregation of control and experimental groups to prevent contamination, (iv) adapt the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale appropriately, and (v) document intervention compliance and outcomes systematically.

The Committee collectively emphasized the following overarching ethical principles applicable to all Ph.D. research involving human participants:

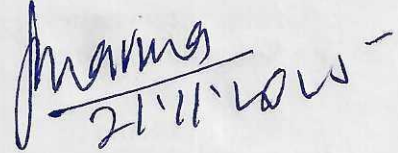
1. **Language and Comprehensibility:** All research tools, informed consent forms, and participant information sheets must be translated into Hindi or the relevant regional language/dialect using simple, culturally appropriate, and easy-to-understand terminology. The original English version shall first be translated into Hindi/regional language, followed by a back-translation into English to ensure accuracy, semantic equivalence, and cultural appropriateness.
2. **Confidentiality and Anonymity:** Data management systems must ensure encryption, anonymity, and restricted access to identifiers.
3. **Vulnerability Safeguards:** Research involving children, patients, or marginalized populations must include special protective measures and guardian consent.
4. **Scientific Rigor:** Instruments must demonstrate reliability, validity, and cross-cultural adaptability in alignment with recognized research ethics standards.
5. **Data Protection:** Scholars must ensure secure digital and physical storage of data with periodic supervisory audit and compliance checks.
6. **Compliance and Reporting:** Any **methodological modification** post-ethical clearance must be resubmitted to the IEC for review and approval before implementation.
7. **Post-Approval Oversight:** Supervisors shall ensure that scholars maintain ethical adherence throughout fieldwork, and any adverse event shall be promptly reported to the IEC.

After extensive deliberation, the Committee approved all eight research proposals for ethical clearance, subject to incorporation of the specific recommendations recorded above.

Signature

The Member Secretary was authorized to issue individual ethical clearance letters to the respective Schools for placing before their School Boards and onward submission to the Research Council.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chairperson and the Committee Members for their valuable insights, professional rigor, and commitment to upholding the ethical and scientific integrity of doctoral research at IGNOU.



(Jaideep Sharma)

प्रो. जयदीप शर्मा / Prof. Jaideep Sharma

निदेशक / Director

अनुसंधान एकक / Research Unit

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