

**National Human Rights Commission**  
**Guidelines for Sponsoring Research Projects**

1. **Introduction**

The National Human Rights Commission sponsors research projects as per the provision under Section 12 of Chapter-III of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 which mandates the Commission to undertake and promote research in the field of human rights.

These guidelines for sponsoring the research projects to the research institutions/ organizations indicate their eligibility conditions, procedure for submission of research proposals, procedure for sanction of research projects, procedure for release of grant in installments, and other conditions of the financial assistance provided by the Commission for the research projects.

2. **Aims and Objectives**

The major objective of the scheme is to promote research in the field of human rights for developing and building knowledge and database of the issues of concern in the Commission which may also culminate in addressing those issues. The findings of the research would also be taken up as issues for organizing seminars, conferences, workshops and training programmes by the Commission.

Therefore, the Commission intends to promote such research projects which are more focused along the lines of applied research or action based research. The ultimate aim is to translate the research findings into an action plan so as to protect and promote human rights - civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural rights.

3. **Thrust Areas/ Themes of the Research Projects**

The thrust areas/ themes for undertaking the research in a particular year would be circulated to the prominent research institutions/ universities/ organizations working in the field of human rights and will also be simultaneously advertised through Commission's website/ daily newspaper/ research journal, etc.

4. **Duration of Research Projects**

- (i) The proposals may be submitted for both short-term and long-term research projects. The short-term projects would be for duration of 3 to 6 months whereas the long-term project would be considered for duration of 6 to 12 months.
- (ii) The duration of short-term research projects may be extended by three months under exceptional circumstances only with the prior approval of the Commission.
- (iii) The duration of long-term research projects may be extended by 3 to 6 months under exceptional circumstances only with the prior approval of the Commission.
- (iv) The date of release of the 1<sup>st</sup> installment of the grant by the Commission would be considered the effective date of commencement of the research project.

5. **Quantum of Financial Assistance**

The limit of financial assistance for short-term and long-term projects would be as under:

<b>Duration of Research Project</b>	<b>Quantum of Financial Assistance</b>
Short Term project ( <i>upto the period of 6 months</i> )	Upto Rs. 7.5 lakhs
Long Term project ( <i>upto the period of 1 year</i> )	Upto Rs. 15 lakhs

**Note:** In special circumstances, especially when the study requires extensive fieldwork covering large geographical area, the above mentioned limit of the financial assistance may be suitably enhanced by the Commission on case to case basis.

6. **Eligibility Criteria**

The research grant would be made available to an institution having adequate infrastructure to execute the research project(s). An institution which is associated in any manner with any aspect of protection and promotion of human rights, with good track record, qualified human resource and trained manpower, and which is not run for profit, shall be eligible to be considered for entrusting the research project, such as:

- (i) Research and Training Institutions set up and fully funded by the Central Government/State Government/Public Sector Undertaking;
- (ii) Institutions/ Organizations registered as professional society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 (Act XXI of 1860);
- (iii) Institutions registered as 'Trusts' under The Indian Trust Act, 1882;
- (iv) Registered institutions exclusively devoting itself to the espousal of the cause of human

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- rights;
- (v) University or a Deemed University;
  - (vi) College covered under Section 2 (f) and 12 B of the UGC Act, 1956;
  - (vii) Private college covered under Section 2(f) of the UGC Act, 1956 and affiliated to the university.

**Note:** In case of the institutions listed at S. Nos. (ii) to (iv) above, their eligibility for receiving assistance will be decided by the Competent Authority of the Commission after perusal/ consideration of their registration certificate, audited annual report and balance sheet of the last 3 years, etc.

#### **7. Procedure for Submission of Research Project Proposal**

- (i) The institution seeking financial assistance should submit the proposal as per the prescribed format (*See Annexure I*).
- (ii) The financial details should include details in respect of various expenditure heads including remuneration to the research staff, cost of travel with boarding/ lodging during field visits, cost of computer hiring or data processing, stationery and printing cost, telephone and postage charges, overhead costs, etc.
- (iii) No financial assistance is given for procurement of equipment/ furniture including computer hardware/ scanner/ printer/ telephone/ Fax/ photocopier, etc.
- (iv) The proposal should be forwarded by the Head of the Institution/ Organization. (*see proforma at Annexure-II*).
- (v) The proposal shall be submitted along with the requisite documents. Incomplete proposal shall not be entertained and will be out rightly rejected.

#### **8. Procedure for selection/ sanction of the Project**

- (i) The project proposal submitted to the Commission will be scrutinized and, if need be, the Commission may call for any clarification from the Principal Investigator or he may be asked to make a presentation before the Commission for which no TA/ DA would be paid to him.
- (ii) During the presentation on the research proposal, the Principal Investigator may be suggested to make the desired changes/ modifications and after receipt of the revised proposal duly incorporating the suggested changes, the Commission may consider to approve the proposal.

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- (iii) The decision of the Commission to accept or not to accept the proposal would be subject to viability of the project and availability of funds. However, the decision of the Commission either way, i.e., to sanction or not to sanction the project would be final, without prejudice.
  - (iv) A Sanction Letter together with the Terms of Reference (ToR) would be issued after approval of the project which would indicate (i) Title and objectives of the study (ii) Research methodology (iii) Coverage area of the study (iv) duration and schedule for completion of the study (v) Outline of the tasks to be accomplished and the outcome expected from the study (vi) Budget, release of grant in installments and other conditions of assistance, etc.
  - (v) The institutions receiving the assistance would be required to complete the formalities as per the ToR/ Sanction Letter.
  - (vi) The amount of assistance would be released in favour of the institution/ organization and not to the Principal Investigator.

#### 9. Procedure for Release of Grant

- (i) A separate bank account **solely for the purpose of the research project** has to be opened in any Bank which is to be operated jointly by the Principal Investigator and any other person nominated by the Institution. The funds will be released into this account by NHRC. However, if any institution is not in a position to open a separate bank account for the research project **due to any justified reason, then the funds will be released in the existing bank account of the Institution duly intimated by the letter to NHRC.**
- (ii) The sanctioned amount shall be released in three (3) installments as per the procedure given below:
  - a) The first installment of the grant comprising 40% of the total sanctioned amount by the Commission would be released after receipt of the request for its release and particulars of the bank account opened for the purpose of the research project.
  - b) The second installment of the grant comprising 40% of the total sanctioned amount by the Commission would be released after receipt of the progress report, utilization certificate in respect of the first installment together with the item wise statement of expenditure duly certified by the Head of the Institute/ Organization.
  - c) The last and final installment, i.e., remaining 20% of the total sanctioned amount, may be taken by the Principal Investigator from the Institute's own resources, which would be reimbursed by NHRC on completion of the following requirements:

- Receipt of the project report and its acceptance by the Commission. In case there is any shortcoming in the project report, the third installment would be withheld till such time the same is addressed properly to the satisfaction of the Commission.
  - Receipt of five hard bound copies of the project report alongwith a soft copy in the 'Word' and 'PDF' format.
  - Utilization Certificate and head-wise statement of expenditure of the total amount spent together with bills/ receipts/ vouchers in original. (see *Annexure-III*)
  - Statement of the bank account/ ledger account from beginning to end and refund of the amount credited towards interest.
- (iii) The amount to be spent according to the approved heads/items within the approved allocation mentioned in the sanction letter/ ToR. However, the institution may re-appropriate expenditure from one sub-head to another, subject to a maximum of 15% in either case within the overall sanctioned amount. Prior approval in such cases is not necessary. All such re-appropriation, however, should be reported to the Commission.
- (iv) The financial assistance is not available for incurring any capital expenditure.
- (v) The books & journals acquired by the Principal Investigator from the grant for the Research Project must be deposited to the NHRC or to the institution's/ organization's departmental library after completion of the project.
- (vi) *Travel and Field Work:* The amount allocated under the head travel/ field work is to be utilized for the data collection and collection of other information such as documents, visits to libraries, etc., within the general scope and sphere of the ongoing project. This should not be used for attending conferences, seminars, workshops, training courses, etc. The PI may travel by the mode of transport as per his entitlement in the Organization/ Institution restricted to the allocation under the concerned head. Foreign travel is not allowed under this scheme.
- (vii) *Institutional Overheads:* The institution will provide the required infrastructure facilities like office accommodation, furniture, computer, library, communication facilities, secretarial services, etc. The overheads for providing these facilities will be normally 5% to 10% of the project cost.

10. **Interim Progress Reports**

The Principal Investigator would be required to submit the interim progress reports at regular intervals to the Commission. If need be, he may be required to make a presentation

before the Commission on the progress of work.

**11. Changes in the Terms of Reference(TOR)**

- (i) No change should be made in the Terms of Reference of sanction without prior approval of the Commission. The Principal Investigator will report to the Commission about the changes, if any, he intends to make in the TOR of the research project.
- (ii) The Principal Investigator of the project proposals should not be changed without the prior approval of the Commission. However, if the Principal Investigator associated with the project leaves the Institution/ Organization at any stage after the commencement of the research study, the project may be continued by appointing a new Principal Investigator by the institute, with prior approval of the Commission. Such request should, however, be timely sent to the Commission.
- (iii) If the Principal Investigator/ Institution fails to complete the project as per the ToR, the institution will be debarred from receiving the financial assistance under the scheme and an appropriate action will be initiated as deemed fit by the Commission.

**12. Submission of the Project Report**

- (i) Upon completion of the research study, the Principal Investigator would prepare and submit a draft report to the Commission.
- (ii) Principal Investigator may be asked by the Commission to make a power point presentation on the report before the Commission. The observations/ suggestions given during the course of presentation and subsequent discussion, may be taken into account in finalizing the report.
- (iii) The final report of the project will be submitted by the Principal Investigator after incorporating the comments/ suggestions made by the Commission on the draft report. The reasons for non-acceptance of the comments/ suggestion, if any, should be properly explained to the Commission.
- (iv) The Principal Investigator/ Institution may be required to send the primary data collected alongwith the particulars of respondents, if asked by the Commission.
- (v) The financial support under the Scheme provided by the Commission shall be duly acknowledged on all documents produced and prominently displayed with a disclaimer as given below.

- (a) **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** "This study was carried out with the financial support of National Human Rights Commission, India, and conducted by [Name of the organization with address]."
- (b) **DISCLAIMER:** "*The Organization [name to be mentioned] has received the financial assistance under the Research Scheme of National Human Rights Commission, India to prepare this report. While due care has been exercised to prepare the report using the data from various sources, NHRC does not confirm the authenticity of data and accuracy of the methodology to prepare the report. NHRC shall not be held responsible for findings or opinions expressed in the document. This responsibility completely rests with the Institute [Name to be mentioned]*".

13. **Copyright and Dissemination of Research Report**

- (i) **Copyright:** NHRC would have the intellectual property right for all the research studies outsourced. Prior permission of the Commission would be necessary before such study reports could be published by the Principal Investigator/ Institution/ organization concerned.
- (ii) The soft copy of the study shall be put on the NHRC website for the purpose of dissemination of the study report. Further, the Commission may also grant permission for its publication in any form, i.e., Book/ Journal/ Newspaper, etc.

14. **Settlement of the Project account**

- (i) The Principal Investigator/ Institution is required to settle the project account immediately on completion of the project. In case the balance grant, if any, is not claimed within six months from the date of completion of the project, the same will lapse and no representation will be entertained on this behalf.
- (ii) In case a separate Bank account has been opened solely for the purpose of the research project. the same shall be closed after completion and settlement of the research project and the unutilized balance, if any, shall be refunded forthwith to the Commission.

15. **Other Conditions of Grant**

- (i) The Research proposal and final report should either be in English or in Hindi.
- (ii) The Project Account will be open for scrutiny by the NHRC or its representatives at any time.

- (iii) The Principal Investigator/ Co-Investigator of the project will not accept any financial assistance from any other source(s) for the same project assigned under the scheme by NHRC.
- (iv) The persons engaged in the research project shall not be treated as the employee of the Commission in any manner.
- (v) There should not be any duplication/overlapping with the evaluation studies carried out by any Government Agency or any institution/ organization/ NGO.
- (vi) The Principal Investigator will consult NHRC on the final methodology including the schedule/questionnaire etc to be adopted, keeping in view the objectives of the study before commencing the work of primary data collection.
- (vii) The Institution or the Principal Investigator or his research staff associated with the project shall not share the data collected for the assigned research study with any other person/organization without the prior approval of the Commission. The research study shall not be used by the Principal Investigator or his research associates or anybody else for the preparation of any doctoral thesis/ dissertation or for attainment of any other degree/ diploma or publication(s) without the prior approval of the NHRC.
- (viii) In case of non-compliance of terms and conditions as laid down in the sanction letter, or in case of the unsatisfactory progress of the work, the project may be cancelled and the institute will have to return the entire money along with the interest earned. The concerned organization will have to bear all responsibilities regarding any discrepancy and irregularity in the funding w.r.t. the sanctioned project.