



Guidelines

Senior Fellowship



Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)
Ministry of Education (MoE)

JNU Institutional Area, Aruna Asaf Ali Marg, New Delhi - 110067 (INDIA)

1. Introduction

1.1 Senior Fellowships are awarded to senior Indian researchers who have made significant contribution in the field of Social Sciences through projects/ publications, including books published by reputed publishers and research papers in peer-reviewed journals with high impact factor. The studies made by the Senior Fellows are expected to have the potential to contribute in the development of the nation by providing evidence-based solution to current and future challenges in different fields.

1.2 The Senior Fellowships for the Financial Year 2025-26 shall be awarded in the following areas of Social Sciences:

Sr. no	Broad Domains	Priority Areas
1	Economics / Development Studies	a) Innovations in Agriculture and Rural Development b) Entrepreneurship and Start-ups c) Blue Economy d) Natural Resources and Regional Development e) Sustainable Development f) Green Economy Transition g) Fintech and Fintech-based Solutions for Economic Development h) Cooperatives and Rural Transformation i) Emerging Technologies and Socio-economic Development j) MSMEs and Development k) GST Reforms l) Circular Economy m) Informal Economy n) Gig Economy and Market Dynamics
2	Management	a) Financial Management b) Human Resource Management c) CSR Programs and Business Ethics d) Technology and Management e) Organisational Behaviour f) Sustainability and Management g) Human Capital, Innovation and Management h) Corporate Governance and Inclusive Development
3	Commerce	a) Trade and Commerce b) Fintech and Fintech-based Solutions c) Financial Literacy and Digital Financial Systems d) Digital Assets and Governance e) Financial Inclusion f) E-Commerce g) Taxation, Reforms and Ease of Doing Business

Sr. no	Broad Domains	Priority Areas
4	Sociology/ Social Work	a) Development and Empowerment of Vulnerable Sections of Society b) Food and Society c) Rural and urban societies d) Informal Work and Domestic Labour e) Ageing and Social Security f) Education, Technology and Society
5	Social Anthropology	a) Linguistic Anthropology b) Cultural Anthropology c) Ethnographic Studies d) Development and Anthropology e) Religion, Rituals and Social Cohesion f) Anthropology of Infrastructure and Urban Change g) Family and Changing Social Institutions h) Prehistoric Cultures of the Indian Subcontinent i) Cultural Survival and Rights j) Bio-cultural studies of Health and Disease
6	Culture Studies	a) Digital Humanities b) Life, Literature and Thought in India c) Literature and Globalization d) Art Practices and Folk/Oral Forms e) Medical Humanities f) Language, Literature and Popular Culture g) Popular Culture h) Intellectual Traditions and Social Thought in India i) Cultural Heritage and Traditions
7	Sanskrit Studies	a) Grammatical Traditions b) Manuscript Studies c) Poetics d) Literary and Aesthetic Traditions e) Sanskrit and Indian Knowledge Systems f) Sanskrit and Contemporary Discourse g) Commentarial Traditions and Civilisational Discourses h) Computational Sanskrit and Digital Archiving
8	Socio-Philosophical Studies	a) Indian Philosophical Systems b) Comparative Ethics c) Artificial Intelligence and Ethics d) Philosophies of Mind and Consciousness e) Decolonizing Philosophy Studies in India

Sr. no	Broad Domains	Priority Areas
		f) Philosophy of Ecology and Sustainability g) Intercultural Ideas, Comparative Philosophy and Modernity
9	Sociolinguistics	a) Language, Culture and Society b) Social Concepts and Theories in Indian Languages c) Multilingualism d) Sociolinguistics and Education e) Language, Media and Technology f) Media, Digital Communication and Language Shifts g) Cross-Cultural Aesthetic Dialogues and Linguistic Interface
10	Gender Studies	a) Gender and Society b) Gender and Work: Women in the Informal and Unorganized Sectors c) Gender and Environment d) Women and Digital Transformation: Bridging the Gender Gap in Technology e) Gender, Education and Health f) Gender and Law
11	Health Studies/ Public Health	a) AYUSH & Community Medicine b) Indigenous Healing Methods and Practices c) Food and Nutrition of Children d) 'Zero-Food' Children: Socio-economic and Environmental Aspects e) Sports and Fitness f) Digital Health Services g) Public Healthcare in Rural and Urban Regions h) AI and Public Health i) Ethno-medicines and Integrative Systems j) Mental Health in Post-pandemic Societies
12	Political Science	a) E-Governance b) Human Rights and Legislation c) Contemporary Electoral System d) Participatory Politics e) Politics and Technology f) Indian Political Thought g) Indigenous Polity h) Rural and Urban Governance i) Indian Constitutionalism j) Climate Politics and Global Governance

Sr. no	Broad Domains	Priority Areas
		k) Democracy and Electoral Politics l) Public Policy and Welfare m) Social Media, Digital Interface and Democracy n) Women and Politics
13	International Relations/ Geopolitics	a) Geo-Politics b) Indo-Pacific Strategic Relations c) India's Cultural Diplomacy and Soft Power d) Global South and Diplomacy e) Multilateralism, Plurilateralism and Global Institutions f) Energy Security and Geopolitical Transformations
14	Public Administration	a) Ethical Governance b) Governance Reforms and Bureaucracy c) Public Service Delivery d) Digital Governance e) Decentralization and Local Administration f) Public Policy and Governance
15	Diaspora Studies	a) Role of Indian Diaspora in the Development of Bharat b) Multiculturalism and Migration c) Foreign Policy and Diaspora d) Diaspora and Economic Development e) Diaspora and Identity f) Literature, History and Diaspora
16	National Security and Strategic Studies	a) Defence and National Security b) Defence Manufacturing c) Border Security and Illegal Cross-border Migration d) Information Warfare and Cyber Security e) Maritime Security f) Non-traditional Security Threats g) Emerging Threats and Hybrid Warfare h) Terrorism and Global Security i) Internal Security
17	Education and Skilling	a) Digital Learning & Technology Integration b) National Education Policy 2020: Implementation and Challenges c) Ethics, Values and Innovation in Education d) Artificial Intelligence and Education e) Skilling Youth for Future Jobs f) Skill Education in HEIs g) Internationalisation and Education h) Academic Governance and Leadership

Sr. no	Broad Domains	Priority Areas
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Innovation and School Education j) Digital Skilling and Employment k) Early Education and Pedagogy l) Reforms in Higher Education m) Teacher Education and Capacity Building n) Integration of Indian Knowledge Systems in Curriculum
18	Social Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Mental Health & Culturally Responsive Interventions b) Social Dimensions of Indian Psychology c) Digital Life, Technology, and Psychological Well-being d) Workplace Well-being e) Community and Inter-group Relations f) Social Influence and Behavioural Changes
19	Legal Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Legal and Para-legal Systems and Access to Justice b) Legal History of India c) Judicial Reforms and Court Management d) Law, Technology, and Innovation (Including AI and Digital Rights) e) Legal Pluralism and Customary Law in Contemporary Context f) Criminal Justice System and Reforms g) Decolonizing Legal Studies
20	Social and Human Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Population Studies and Demographic Transitions b) Migration, Displacement, and Spatial Mobility c) Human Capital, Livelihoods, and Holistic Development d) Regional Geography e) Transformations in Rural and Urban Landscapes f) Disaster Management and Spatial Vulnerability Assessment g) Technology, Risk Communication, and Inclusive Governance in Disaster Management in the Global South h) Urban Resilience, Smart Cities, and Sustainable Urban Futures
21	Environmental Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Human-Environment Relationship b) Climate Change: Impacts, Mitigation, and Adaptation c) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Indian Context d) Renewable and Clean Energy Resources e) Conservation of Biodiversity, Wildlife, Soil, and Natural Resources f) Environmental Policy, Law, and Governance g) Climate Adaptation and Community-Based Preparedness and Resilience h) Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Indigenous Environmental Practices

Sr. no	Broad Domains	Priority Areas
22	Modern Social History	a) History and Heritage b) Memory, Identity and History c) Maritime and Coastal Histories of India d) Decolonization, Nationalism, and Historiographical Shifts e) Digital History, Public History, and Archival Innovations f) Print Culture, History of Education and Knowledge Systems g) The Partition of India
23	Media Studies	a) Mass Media and its Socio-Cultural Impact b) Mass Media and Society in India c) OTT Platforms, Popular Culture, and Identity Construction d) Regional Language, Media and Journalism
24	Library Science	a) E-Resources and IT Application b) Meta-data Harvesting Techniques and Digital Repository c) Publication and its Social Dimensions d) E-Resources and IT Application e) Artificial Intelligence Applications in Library and Information Services f) Knowledge Curation and Open Access
25	Language Studies	a) Knowledge Traditions in Indian Languages b) Application of Knowledge Contained in the Vernacular Texts c) Technology and Language Interface d) Comparative Grammar and Linguistic Structure of Indian Languages e) Development of Multilingual Pedagogical Resources and Translation Tools
26	Indian Knowledge Systems	a) Indian Textual and Oral Traditions b) Development of Pedagogical Materials in Diverse Disciplinary/ Inter-disciplinary Areas based on Indian Knowledge Texts c) Bharatiya Approaches to Ecology and Sustainability d) Indian Concepts of Mind and Consciousness e) Indian Aesthetic and Performative Traditions f) Indian Knowledge Systems and Public Policy Interface g) Indian Knowledge Systems and Law h) Art and Architecture in India
27	Rural Studies	a) Rural Economy and Sustainable Livelihoods b) Dynamics of Rural Society and Social Transformation c) Rural-Urban Migration and Remittance Economy d) Cultural Landscapes and Identity Markers in Rural India e) Digital Transformation and E-Governance in Rural Bharat f) Climate Resilience and Rural Adaptation Strategies g) Health, Education, and Infrastructure in Rural Development

Sr. no	Broad Domains	Priority Areas
28	<i>Divyangjan Studies</i>	a) Intersectional /Multidisciplinary Studies on <i>Divyangjan</i> b) Policy Research for <i>Divyangjan</i> c) Rehabilitation, Innovation & Technology for <i>Divyangjan</i> d) Financial Empowerment of <i>Divyangjan</i> e) Digital Accessibility and the <i>Divyangjan</i> f) Cultural Representation and Portrayal of <i>Divyangjan</i> in popular culture g) Inclusive Infrastructure for <i>Divyangjan</i>
29	<i>Janjatiya Studies</i>	a) Indigenous/Tribal Knowledge System b) Tribe, Culture and Society c) Tribal Languages and Preservation d) Digital Inclusion and Tribal Youth Aspirations e) Comparative Tribal Development Models f) Tribal Education and Curriculum Inclusion-NEP 2020 g) Intra-tribal and Inter-community Dynamics

Research Proposals that span across disciplinary boundaries also fall within the areas of the Council's interest. The research proposals which may not be reflected in the priority areas shall also be considered if, in the opinion of the Experts Committee, its focus is on an important issue covered under social sciences and adjudged as outstanding, and recommended by the Committee for award.

2. Eligibility

- 2.1 The scholar should be an Indian citizen and should not be less than 45 years of age and not more than 70 years of age as on the last date of application.
- 2.2 The scholar must possess Ph.D. Degree and have, in the opinion of the ICSSR, the necessary competence to conduct research in social sciences or allied disciplines in addition to having outstanding research publications, including books published by reputed publishers and/or research papers in peer-reviewed journals with high impact factor, at the time of application.
- 2.3 A fellow must affiliate himself/herself to UGC recognized Universities / Deemed-to-be-Universities, Institutes of National Importance as defined by MoE / UGC, and ICSSR Research Institutes. Funds are disbursed through the affiliating/administering institution.
- 2.4 Faculties with regular service in public funded universities/colleges and research institutes getting UGC pay-scales may be considered for pay protection in exceptionally meritorious cases, which is to be decided by the Expert Committees of the ICSSR. The Expert Committees of the ICSSR also reserve the right to convert a fellowship proposal into a Project Proposal.

3. How to Apply

- 3.1 Applications will be invited through open advertisement on ICSSR website and its social media platforms.
- 3.2 The candidates shall submit online application. The research proposal should be submitted only in the format attached with the application form. No separate research proposal or copies of research papers are to be attached.
- 3.3 The Research Proposal should either be in Hindi or English (Use Unicode 8 (UTF-8) to fill the

form in Hindi)

- 3.4 One applicant can submit only one application under Senior Fellowship scheme. However, he/she can apply separately for another scheme.

4. Procedure for Award

- 4.1 The procedure for the award of the fellowships will include evaluation and interaction/presentation of applications by the panel of subject experts in multiple phases.
- 4.2 The recommendations of the Expert Committee(s) are placed before the requisite Committee(s) of ICSSR for their consent / approval.
- 4.3 The list of selected applications will be uploaded on ICSSR website. Only the selected candidates and their affiliating universities shall be informed individually through a provisional award letter specifying the formalities and documents required for joining the fellowship.

5. Duration and Value

- 5.1 Senior Fellowship is a full-time research engagement.
- 5.2 The duration of fellowship shall be for two years and no extension will be considered.
- 5.3 The value of fellowship is Rs.45,000/- per month and contingency grant of Rs.40,000/- per annum and will be in line with the directives of the Ministry of Education from time to time.
- 5.4 Under Salary protection, a fellow is entitled to salary and allowances admissible as per rules and contingency grant. However, special allowances like children education allowance, medical reimbursement, LTC, etc. are not admissible from the ICSSR. The parent institution may, however, pay/reimburse the same as per its rule.
- 5.5 The ICSSR shall also pay the leave salary and pension contribution or contribution towards CPF and gratuity for the period for which he/she holds the ICSSR's fellowship as per rules of the parent institution.

6. Joining & Release of Fellowship

- 6.1 The scholar has to join the fellowship within one month of the date of the award letter by submitting all required documents through the affiliating institution. This may be extended by the ICSSR in exceptional circumstances.
- 6.2 The fellowship will be sanctioned initially for a period of one year, effective from the date of joining of the Fellowship by the scholar. The renewal of the Fellowship for the subsequent year shall be subject to the receipt of satisfactory Annual Progress Report and Statement of Account for the fellowship released for first year.
- 6.3 The first-year fellowship and contingency will be released in two equal instalments. The first instalment will be released after receiving the Grant-in-Aid-Bill (GIB) and the second after receiving a satisfactory Six-Monthly Progress report in the prescribed format along with the Statement of Account.
- 6.4 The second-year fellowship and contingency will be released in three instalments. The first instalment of six-month fellowship will be released on receipt of the Grant-in-Aid Bill (GIB). The second instalment of 03 months fellowship will be released on receipt of a satisfactory Progress Report of next six months in the prescribed format along with the Statement of Account. The final instalment of remaining fellowship along with contingency will be released after receiving the final report and its acceptance by the ICSSR and Statement of Accounts with Utilization Certificate in GFR-12A Form of the entire sanctioned amount of fellowship duly signed by the competent

authority of the affiliating institution. However, in case of non-public funded institution, the final instalment of fellowship will be released on receipt of the Audited Statement of Accounts with Utilization Certificate in GFR-12A Form and verification of the documents by the ICSSR.

- 6.5 The 7.5% overhead charges to the public funded affiliating institution will be released only after the submission of the Audited Statement of Accounts with Utilization Certificate in GFR-12A Form and verification of the documents by the ICSSR.
- 6.6 The accounts and utilization certificate will be signed by the Finance Officer/Registrar/Director in case the accounts of the Institution are audited by the CAG/AG. Otherwise, they need to be signed, both by the competent authority of the affiliating institution along with a Chartered Accountant.
- 6.7 In case of salary protection during the fellowship, the leave salary and pension contribution or contribution towards CPF and gratuity, will be released only after the completion of fellowship in all respects and on receipt of due & drawn statement from the parent organization and verification by the ICSSR. In case the employee comes under the New Pension Scheme (NPS), the employer's contribution will be released along with the salary.

7. Monitoring of Fellowship

- 7.1 Regular monitoring of Fellowship is done on the basis of Six Monthly and Annual Progress Reports in the prescribed formats submitted by the scholar. In cases of delayed Progress Reports, the scholar may be asked to give the justification of the delay on which the final decision shall be taken by the ICSSR. The scholar may be asked to furnish an Undertaking specifying the date of final report submission to the ICSSR.
- 7.2 The fellowship may be discontinued if research undertaken by the fellow is found to be unsatisfactory or any rules of the ICSSR are violated.
- 7.3 The ICSSR may ask for annual presentation/mid-term appraisal of the research work.
- 7.4 During the course of the fellowship, the scholar is required to publish at least two research papers peer-reviewed research journals or edited books on the theme of the research undertaken.
- 7.5 The scholars should give due acknowledgement to ICSSR while getting their research papers published.

8. Completion of Fellowship

- 8.1 If a fellow leaves the fellowship within one year, he/she has to submit a detailed progress report of the work done during that period ensuring the final settlement of account by the affiliating institution up to the period of the fellowship. However, if a fellow leaves the fellowship after one year, he/she may be asked to submit the final report on completion of the duration of fellowship without claiming fellowship of the remaining period. If a candidate leaves the fellowship without completion, he/she will have to refund the entire amount of fellowship to the ICSSR within three months of end of fellowship duration.

The scholar is expected to submit the final report within three months after completion of the duration of the fellowship. However, extension for submission of final report may be granted on justified reasons without any additional financial commitment of the ICSSR.

In case the fellow submits the final report late directly after missing submission of periodic progress reports, the ICSSR will decide on accepting the final report and releasing the balance amount of fellowship.

- 8.2** On completion of the fellowship tenure, the scholar shall submit the following:
- a.** A book-length final report along-with a Summary of the report (3000-4000 words) and two published research papers published in peer-reviewed research journals on the theme of the research undertaken
 - b.** These documents should be submitted in hard copy (two copies of final report and two copies each of the Summary and research articles) and a soft copy.
- 8.3** Every final report needs to be checked for plagiarism before submission. Fellows are required to get their final report checked from the affiliating institution for Similarity Index and attach a report of the same at the time of submission. As a policy, ICSSR does not accept similar contents beyond 10 percent on Similarity Index.

9. Expectations from the Affiliating Institution

- 9.1** The affiliating institution is required to provide the requisite research infrastructure to the scholar and maintain proper accounts. For this, the Council shall pay overhead charges of seven and a half percent (7.5%) of the total Fellowship (fellowship amount plus contingency) to the affiliating institution.
- 9.2** The affiliating institution is required to give an undertaking in the prescribed format contained in the Application Form to administer and manage the ICSSR fellowship.
- 9.3** The affiliating institution shall maintain a dedicated bank account for ICSSR grant (Scheme Code-0877) that is duly registered at PFMS portal for release of the Fellowship Grant.

- 9.4 The affiliating institution will be under obligation to ensure submission of the final report and an Audited Statement of Accounts and Utilization Certificate, (in the prescribed Performa GFR 12-A) duly certified by the Competent authority of the institution.
- 9.5 In case a scholar leaves /discontinues his fellowship after one year, he/she will have to refund the entire amount of fellowship to the ICSSR within three months of end of fellowship duration. This clause is not applicable in cases of death. In such cases, the affiliating institution has to submit death certificate to the ICSSR and provide requisite documents to settle the accounts, including the refund of any unspent balance within three months.
- 9.6 The affiliating institution shall make suitable arrangements for preservation of data such as filled-in schedules, tabulation sheets, manuscripts, reports, etc. relating to the study.
- 9.7 The ICSSR reserves the right to demand raw data, or such part of it as may be specified, to be transferred to the ICSSR.
- 9.8 The overhead charges shall be paid only after the completion of the fellowship and on receipt of the final audited Statement of Accounts and Utilization Certificate.

10. Other Conditions

- 10.1 The applicants seeking salary protection should have been in regular service for at least two years in an academic institution. The institution shall certify that it will maintain their lien on the post during the period of fellowship and allow them to return after the fellowship period.
- 10.2 The contingency grant may be utilized for research and office assistance, books, stationery, computer related costs, research assistance and the field work expenses related with the research work.
- 10.3 The Copyright of the manuscript will rest with the ICSSR. The ICSSR reserves all rights to publish the fellowship report funded by it, provided the work is recommended for publication by Expert/Experts. The scholars can get it published themselves only after seeking permission from ICSSR.
- 10.4 The scholar shall acknowledge ICSSR's support in all publications resulting from the research output of the fellowship.
- 10.5 All fellowships are subject to income tax deductions as per the Government of India rules at the level of the affiliating/ administering institution.
- 10.6 Defaulters of any previous fellowship/project/grant of the ICSSR will not be eligible for consideration.
- 10.7 A fellow is not entitled for the same fellowship or pay protection more than once.
- 10.8 The research proposal/final report of the fellowship cannot be submitted for the award of any University degree/diploma or funding by any institution. The ICSSR however, will have no objection if the scholar utilizes the research data for research purpose.
- 10.9 The change of the affiliating institution will be considered only in exceptional circumstances to be decided by the ICSSR. Transfer of fellowship to another affiliating institution will be further subject to submission of the following documents:
- (1) Satisfactory progress report;
 - (2) No objection certificate from both previous and the proposed university/institute;
 - (3) Audited statement of account and utilization certificate along with unspent balance, if any.

In case of change of affiliating institution, the time lost will be treated as without fellowship. The remaining period of fellowship will be counted w.e.f. the date of joining at the new affiliating institution. However, the total duration of the fellowship will remain for 24 months.

- 10.10** A gap of minimum 02 years is required from submission of Final Report of Post-Doctoral Fellowship/ Research Project/ Programme of the ICSSR and application of Senior Fellowship.
- 10.11** While accepting any fellowship from the ICSSR, a fellow should not accept any other fellowship or research project or regular assignment from any other institution.
- 10.12** During the tenure of fellowship, the fellow will be governed by the rules of the affiliating institution in all matters including drawals of TA/DA, holidays/leave and contingency grant, etc. However, the duration and amount of fellowship will not exceed twenty-four months.
- 10.13** The selected fellows are expected to do full time research in India. They could, however, undertake data collection outside India in exceptional cases and if warranted by the needs of the proposal. For this they are required to apply separately for consideration under the Data Collection Scheme of the International Collaboration Division. However, ICSSR will not be bound to support such data collection from abroad and the decision of the ICSSR will be final in this regard. In either case, the completion of study should not be consequent upon such data collection support.
- 10.14** The scholar should not have been subjected to any disciplinary/legal action/proceedings/financial penalties in his/her career/ research career.
- 10.15** The final report submitted by the scholar will be considered satisfactory, only after its evaluation by the ICSSR.
- 10.16** Books/periodicals/equipment purchased by the scholar out of the contingency grant should be deposited with the affiliating institution.
- 10.17** Application submitted against one Call will not be considered for the subsequent Calls.
- 10.18** The Council reserves the right to reject any application. It is also not responsible for any postal loss/delays in communication.
- 10.19** Incomplete applications in any respect shall not be considered for fellowship.
- 10.20** Research proposal/final report submitted for fellowship should not be under consideration for funding/ award of the degree by any University/ Institution.
- 10.21** The final authority related to the interpretation of the guidelines or any issue left is vested with the ICSSR.
- 10.20** Those who have completed their duration of fellowship may use the prefix 'Former' and suffix 'the duration' with the name of the fellowship e.g. Former National/Senior/Post-Doctoral Fellow ICSSR (20xx-xx).