



ICSSR Yuva Shodh Pratibha Scheme: Youth and Decolonisation

(Empowering the students of Four-Year Undergraduate
Programme under NEP 2020)



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

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On the 58th Foundation Day of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), 12th May 2026, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Union Minister for Education launched Yuva Shodh Pratibha Scheme (YSPS) – a special initiative for undergraduate students under NEP 2020. In alignment with the Panch Pran (Five Resolves), ICSSR is providing research opportunities to the 4th year undergraduate students under NEP 2020. The broad theme for the Call for Research Proposals under the ICSSR–YSPS for the year 2026–27 is “Youth and Decolonisation.

Dedicated to Undergraduate students, the ICSSR *Yuva Shodh Pratibha* Scheme (ICSSR-YSPS) invites students enrolled in Four-Year Undergraduate Programmes under NEP 2020 to develop research projects on the themes and sub-themes identified by ICSSR, with the objective of decolonising knowledge, promoting theoretical and critical inquiry in interdisciplinary areas of research, and challenging Eurocentric models of knowledge production and research.

The ICSSR-YSPS aims to encourage students to develop interpretative methodologies and critical skills to decolonise dominant colonial knowledge systems, terminologies, vocabularies, and structures through Bharatiya perspectives, local experiences, contextual realities, and Indian intellectual traditions, in order to upscale original thinking and context-based knowledge production.

Students shall develop competencies by incorporating real-life social experiences and knowledge existing in folk and socio-cultural traditions to formulate inclusive and contextually grounded knowledge and research.

In the process, the key outcome of ICSSR-YSPS is to develop a generation of thinkers in the social sciences and humanities who are original, rooted in Bharatiya traditions of thought, and capable of producing creative solutions for societal benefits and realizing the goal of Viksit Bharat @ 2047. In the process it is expected that the intellectual and research landscape of the nation shall outgrow the residues of colonialism.

The underlying principle of ICSSR-YSPS is that the spirit of enquiry and research obtains maximum expected outcomes when pursued and carried out in collaboration with peers. By formulating questions and building methodologies based on shared ideas and context-based methods, the young researchers would understand and experience the value of collective thinking and shared endeavours to solve societal problems and overcome challenges. ICSSR calls upon young scholars to demonstrate the spirit of teamwork. The project team may comprise (at least) two or three students from the same institution. The team shall be led by one student, designated as the Lead Researcher, along with Researcher–1 and Researcher–2, as the case may be. In other words, if the team comprises two members, the applicant will be the Lead Researcher and the other student will be Researcher–1; whereas, if the team comprises three members, the applicant will be the

Lead Researcher and the other two students will be Researcher–1 and Researcher–2, respectively.

The project shall be conducted under the guidance, supervision, and mentorship of a regular faculty member of the affiliating institution. The research proposal submitted by the team of students should provide a comprehensive and analytical assessment of the identified theme(s) and sub-theme(s). The mentor faculty member and the institution shall be responsible for ensuring that the project funds are utilized in accordance with the guidelines of ICSSR.

The duration of the project shall be **eight months**, and financial support given for each research project selected for the award shall be up to INR 3.00 lakh. Students in the sixth and seventh semesters of UG may apply. However, students shall be considered eligible for the award who present documented evidence of registration under **Four-Year Undergraduate Programmes under NEP 2020**.

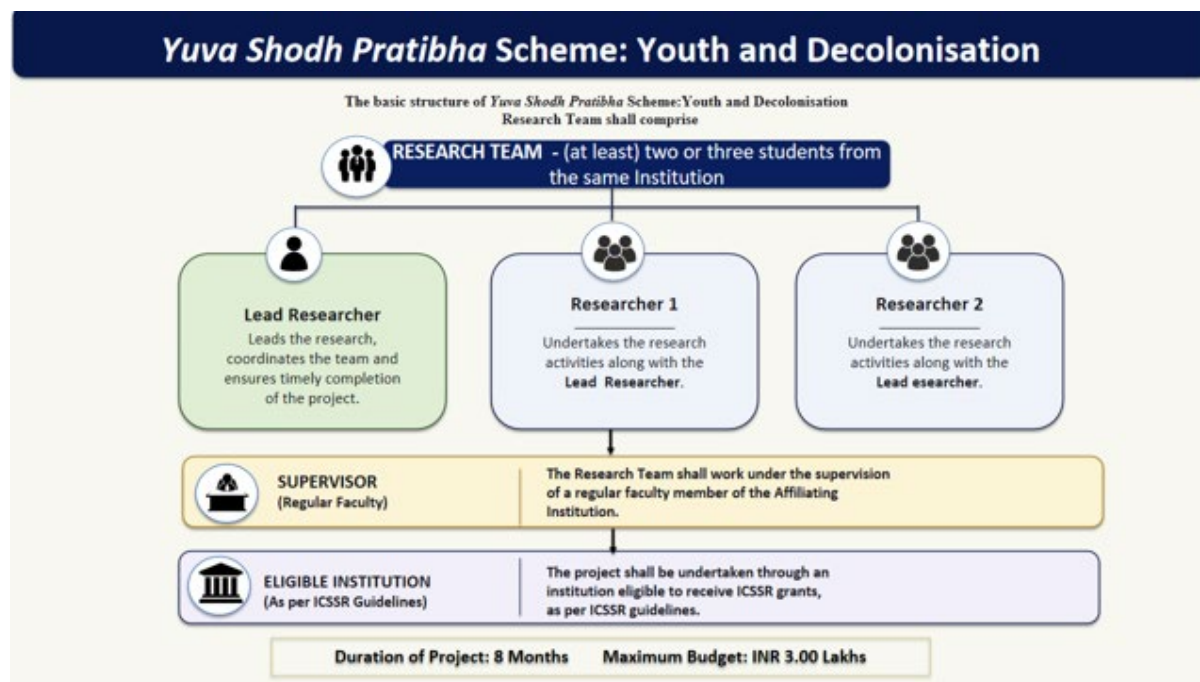
1. Research Themes and Sub-Themes

The identified themes and sub-themes for the studies are mentioned below:

Themes	Sub-Themes
1. Decolonising Narratives: Indo-Aryan Theories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-examining historiography from Bharatiya perspective • Integrating archaeological, linguistic and genetic evidence • Challenging Eurocentric migration theories
2. Decolonising Education and Research Methodology, Beyond Macaulay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive decolonisation and reclaiming Indian pedagogical methods • Decolonial research methods using perceptual knowledge, validity, and indigenous postulations in social and human sciences. • Integrating oral traditions and regional folklore in learning • Revisiting Methods of Evaluation and Assessment
3. Decolonising History, Culture and Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Itihasa</i>; Indian Sources and Literary Traditions • Digitizing Bhasha records and archives beyond colonial gazetteers • Promoting linguistic de-Anglicization in education and governance

4. Health, Mental Well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating psychology rooted in Indian philosophical traditions • Scientific evidences of AYUSH systems • Promoting One Health approach integrating ecology and society
5. Economic and Financial Sovereignty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving beyond Western capitalist models to community-centric indicators • Formalizing support for the informal sector • Reviving indigenous credit systems and cooperatives • Strengthening sovereign fiscal policy for <i>Atmanirbhar Bharat</i> • GST and tax reforms as tools to erase colonial financial discrepancies
6. Decolonising Finance, Trade and Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing financial literacy through joint-family models • Financial sovereignty and Digital India • Indian Ocean and Silk Road trade linkages in modern commerce and maritime mercantile studies
7. Decolonising Governance, Law and Political Thought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysing the transition from colonial codes to Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita • Strengthening legal pluralism: Integrating customary laws and <i>Lok Adalats</i> into the formal justice system • Promoting Indian political thought traditions on ideas of Indian thinkers such as Kautilya, Gandhi, Savarkar etc. • Revisiting Indian Administration and Community Governance, Modules and Institutions • Indian Women thinkers and Decolonial Thought- Maitreyi, Gargi Vachaknavi, Akka Mahadevi, Savitribai Phule, Ahilyabai Holkar, etc.
8. Rural Development, Environment and Indian Knowledge Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting rural autonomy and self-sufficient village economies and shifting the colonial narrative of India's "rural backwardness" • Integrating Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) for environmental conservation practices related to water, forests, and other natural resources. • Sustainable models of Indian urbanization aligned with local climatic conditions • Traditional and Ecological Approaches for Pollution Control

Note: The above-mentioned sub-themes are only indicative in nature. The applicants may develop their research proposals on any other sub-theme that aligned with the broad theme detailed above.



2. ELIGIBILITY

2.1 Eligibility for Lead Researcher and Researcher(s)

- a. Third and Fourth-year students (Semesters six and seven) who are registered under Four-Year Undergraduate Programmes as per NEP 2020 at eligible institutions (as specified under Institutional Eligibility, 2.3) only are eligible to apply
- b. Projects shall be awarded only to students enrolled in a Four-Year Undergraduate Programme
- c. All student team members under the Collaborative Research Call must have satisfactory attendance as per the criteria of their respective institutions.
- d. The submission of scanned copy of mark sheets of the previous semesters is mandatory for submission of the online application. In case, the candidates do not upload all the documents, their candidature will be summarily rejected.
- e. The Lead Researcher must be from the Social Sciences or Humanities disciplines; however, the Co-Researcher - and 2 may belong to any other discipline.

2.2 Eligibility for Project Supervisor

- a. Faculty members who are permanently employed in eligible institutions (as specified under Institutional Eligibility, 2.3) are eligible to apply as Project Supervisor.
- b. The Project Supervisor must possess substantial research experience, demonstrable through publications such as books or research papers in high-impact journals.
- c. The Project Supervisor must hold a PhD degree in Social Science and Humanities.

2.3 Institutional Eligibility

The eligibility criteria for institutions include the following:

- a. UGC-recognized Indian Universities, Deemed-to-be Universities, Affiliated/Constituent Colleges, recognized under Section 2(f) and/or 12(B) of the UGC Act
- b. ICSSR Research Institutes, ICSSR-Recognized Institutes and Government Research Institutes
- c. Institutes of National Importance, as defined by the Ministry of Education (MoE)
- d. Top 100 NIRF institutions within specific domain, such as Management, Law, Innovation, Sustainable Development Goals, Agriculture and Allied Sector based on the latest rankings.

3. HOW TO APPLY

- 3.1 The applications shall be invited through an advertisement on the ICSSR website and shall be disseminated through the social media platforms of ICSSR.
- 3.2 The applicants are required to submit an online application along with the research proposal, annexures, and other required documents in the prescribed format, duly forwarded by the competent authorities of the affiliating institution. If desired by ICSSR, hard copies of the same must be submitted within the prescribed date.
- 3.3 Research proposals and final reports should either be in English or Hindi. Arial/ Mangal Unicode (Devanagari) font should be used to fill the Application form in Hindi.
- 3.4 Each student shall be eligible to submit only one application/project proposal under the present scheme.

4. PROCEDURE FOR AWARDS

- 4.1. The procedure for the award of the projects will be in multiple phases before the declaration of final results. All applications submitted to the ICSSR will be screened and evaluated by the expert committee following a blind review process. Shortlisted applicants shall be invited by ICSSR for interaction/presentation (in person or online).
- 4.2. The expert committee(s) shall make recommendation(s) for award of studies and also suggest the budget for the proposed studies after interaction with the shortlisted applicants only.
- 4.3. The merit list of selected candidates will be published on the ICSSR website.
- 4.4. Only the selected candidates and their affiliating universities shall be informed individually through a provisional award letter clearly specifying the formalities and documents required for joining the Project.

4.5. Only one project shall be awarded to a Lead Researcher or Researcher at a time under this scheme

5. BUDGET AND HEADS OF EXPENDITURE

5.1. The amount will be disbursed in instalments, depending on the funds, phases and duration of the study, as indicated in the Award Letter. ICSSR reserves the right, based on expert opinion to make any necessary changes in the Project.

Allocation of Heads of Expenditure

- a. A monthly stipend of Rs. 5,000 each shall be provided to the Lead Researcher and other Researcher-1 and Researcher-2, as per ICSSR guidelines, for a maximum period of six months. Where there is no Researcher-2, in the proposed research, the stipend shall only be provided to the Lead Researcher and Researcher-1.
- b. The proportionate allocation of expenditure under budget heads such as fieldwork (travel, logistics, boarding, survey preparation, etc.); equipment and study materials (computer, printer, source materials, books, journals, software, datasets, etc.); and contingency charges shall be in accordance with the ICSSR guidelines given below:

Detailed Budget Breakup		
Sl.No.	Heads of Expenditure	Value (Rs.) up to 3,00,000/-
1.	Student Stipend	Not exceeding 30% of the total budget
2.	Field work	Not exceeding 30% of the total budget
3.	Research Equipment and study materials	Not exceeding 30% of the total budget
4.	Contingency	Not exceeding 10% of the total budget
	Grand Total	100%

5.2. Affiliating Institutions shall be eligible to get Overhead Charges @ 10% over and above the awarded grant of the project, subject to a maximum limit of Rs. 30,000/-which will be released by the ICSSR after successful completion of the project.

5.3. No Project Staff shall be engaged/appointed by the Lead Researcher, Supervisor or Affiliating Institution for undertaking the Project Research.

5.4. For all field work-related expenses of the Lead Researcher and Researcher(s), rules of the affiliating institutes/universities shall be followed.

5.5. All equipment and books purchased out of the project fund shall be the property of the affiliating institution, and a detailed stock report duly signed by the Head of the Institute /

Registrar / Principal has to be submitted to the ICSSR. However, ICSSR may ask for books and/ or equipment if it so requires.

6. JOINING AND RELEASE OF GRANTS

- 6.1 The Lead Researcher has to join the project as per the date of commencement notified by the ICSSR by submitting the requisite documents such as an 'undertaking' on Rs.100 stamp paper duly verified by a notary, declaration in prescribed format on a Rs.100 stamp paper duly verified by a notary, Grant-in-Aid bill towards the first instalment on or before the given deadline, and Registration Mandate Form of PFMS account of those affiliating/administering institutions, which have not linked their accounts to PFMS for ICSSR grant. The joining period can be extended only in exceptional circumstances up to a maximum of three months, by the ICSSR.
- 6.2 The total awarded grant for ICSSR Yuva Shodh Pratibha Scheme on Youth and Decolonisation will be released to the affiliating institution in instalments as mentioned in the award letter, which will be decided by the ICSSR keeping in view the overall requirements of the project.
- 6.3 The Final instalment will be released after receipt of the recommendations of the expert for acceptance of the Final Report; Audited Statement of Accounts (AC) in prescribed format with Utilization Certificate (UC) in form 12A of GFR, for the entire approved project amount duly signed by the Finance Officer/Registrar/Director of the affiliating Institution. A detailed stock report duly signed by the Head of the Institute / Registrar / Principal has to be submitted to the ICSSR. The utilization certificate of institutions whose accounts are not audited by CAG/AG, will be signed by the Finance Officer and Statutory Auditor of the Institute.
- 6.4 The Overhead Charges to the affiliating institution will be released after the acceptance of Final Report along with the receipt of the final Audited Statement of Accounts and Utilization Certificate in prescribed formats, which shall be verified by the ICSSR.
- 6.5 The Lead Researcher and their Supervisor shall ensure that the expenditure incurred by them conforms to the approved budget heads and relevant rules. The Audited Statement of Accounts with Utilization Certificate in form 12A of GFR is mandatory for the entire approved amount for the project.

7. MONITORING OF THE RESEARCH PROJECTS

- 7.1 Research undertaken by Student Researchers will be monitored bi-monthly and the team shall submit periodic progress reports in the prescribed format duly forwarded by their supervisor. The project may be discontinued/terminated if research progress is found unsatisfactory or if any ICSSR rules are violated or the research topic is changed without the permission of ICSSR. In such cases, the entire amount must be refunded to ICSSR with a 10% penal interest.
- 7.2 The Researchers must acknowledge the support of ICSSR in all their publications resulting from the project outputs, such as research papers, journal articles, and articles in edited

books, etc. Prior written approval of ICSSR shall be obtained for any of the above-mentioned publications. In case the project team does not obtain prior approval of ICSSR or does not acknowledge ICSSR, appropriate action may be taken by the Council.

- 7.3 All project-related queries will be addressed to the Lead Researcher/ Affiliating Institution for their timely reply.
- 7.4 The ICSSR may, at any time, ask for verification of accounts and other relevant documents related to the Project.
- 7.5 The ICSSR reserves the right to change the affiliating institute or supervisor if it is found that the affiliating institute or supervisor is not cooperating with the students and is not facilitating the timely completion of the study.
- 7.6 Final report submitted by the Lead Researcher shall be mandatorily evaluated by an Expert appointed by the ICSSR before considering the release of the final instalment.
- 7.7 The Lead Researcher shall be personally responsible for the timely completion of the Project.
- 7.8 If the researchers do not submit the requisite documents and the final report in time or the project is not completed in the stipulated period, the researchers will be blacklisted, and legal recourse will be initiated for the recovery of the released grant.
- 7.9 As per the directions of the Ministry of Education (MoE), the amount of grant sanctioned is to be utilised within the stipulated duration of the project. Any amount of the grant remaining unspent shall be refunded to the ICSSR immediately on expiry of the duration of the project. If the Lead Researcher fails to utilise the grant for the purpose for which the same has been sanctioned or fails to submit the audited statement of expenditure within the stipulated period, he/she will be required to refund the amount of the grant with interest thereon at the rate of 10% per annum.

8. COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT

8.1 No Lead Researcher or Researcher(s) shall be allowed to leave the project before its completion.

8.2 On completion of the study, the Lead Researcher should submit:

- a. Softcopy of the Final Draft Report, in both PDF and Word formats;
- b. Softcopy of the abstract in 500 words, in both PDF and Word formats;
- c. Similarity index sheet (with up to a maximum of 10% plagiarism and less than 20% AI-generated content) for the final report.

Note: If ICSSR detects at any stage of the project that the content is AI-generated (more than 20%), the project will be cancelled.

8.3. If the Experts suggest any changes in the reports at the time of evaluation, the Lead Researcher shall incorporate the changes within the stipulated time and should submit the following:

- a. Soft copy of the modified Final Report in both PDF and Word formats, along with two hard copies;
 - b. Two hard copies of the executive summary;
 - c. Softcopies of (if any) datasets, along with a well-defined description of the data and other important information for documentation.
- 8.4. An Undertaking to submit a Project Submission Certificate and soft copy of project within a month of submission of the project in the a Forwarding letteraffiliating/ administering institution on a Non-Judicial stamp paper of Rs. 100/- (in prescribed format).
- 8.5 Statement of Accounts and Utilization Certificate (in GFR-12 A form) for the admissible amount.
- 8.6 Refund of the unspent balance, if any. The payment may be made by sending a cheque/ DD in favour of ICSSR, New Delhi or through PFMS /RTGS.

9. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE AFFILIATING INSTITUTION

- 9.1 The affiliating institution shall provide the necessary research infrastructure to the Lead Researcher, maintain proper accounts, and ensure dedicated temporary space for students to conduct research and safely store equipment under the supervision of their Supervisor.
- 9.2 The affiliating institution is required to give a Forwarding Letter in the prescribed format contained in the Application Form to administer and manage the ICSSR grant.
- 9.3 The affiliating institution shall open / maintain a dedicated bank account for the ICSSR grant (Scheme Code 0877) that is duly registered at PFMS portal for release of project Grant without any delay.
- 9.4 In case Lead Researcher leaves / discontinues his/her project before completion of the project tenure, the affiliating institution shall inform ICSSR within 15 days and settle the accounts including the refund of any unspent balance within three months.

10. OTHER CONDITIONS

- 10.1 The contingency grant may be utilized for books, stationery, computer consumables costs and fieldwork expenses related to the research work.
- 10.2 The ICSSR reserves the first right to publish the project outcome as research funded by it, provided the work is recommended for publication by the ICSSR expert(s).
- 10.3 Any request for additional grant in excess of the sanctioned budget will not be considered.
- 10.4 The procurement of equipment/assets for the research project is allowed only if it was originally proposed, does not surpass the permissible amount, and adheres to the regulations of the affiliating institution and GFR rules for purchase.

- 10.5 The Lead Researcher cannot make any changes in the research design at any stage.
- 10.6 Overhead charges will be apportioned for the affiliating Institution as per the grant released or as may be finally decided by the ICSSR.
- 10.7 The Council reserves the right to reject any application without assigning any reason. It will not be responsible for any postal delays/loss.
- 10.8 Incomplete applications in any respect will not be considered.
- 10.9 The final authority related to the interpretation of these guidelines or any other issue is vested with the ICSSR.
- 10.10 No queries will be entertained by the ICSSR until the final declaration of results under a call. Any lobbying for an award will lead to disqualification.
- 10.11 The ICSSR retains all rights to publish any project funded by it, contingent upon the recommendation by expert(s) appointed by the ICSSR for publication. The copyright for the final report and outcomes of the project shall be held by ICSSR. Any publication or dissemination of research findings shall solely be at the discretion of ICSSR.
