

## **Ethical Standards of Research in SNT Women's University**

In consonance with international research protocol, the SNT Women's University has well-defined code of ethical standards founded on the principles of justice and respect for all human beings. Apart from the self-regulation of research expected from all researchers and their supervisors, the research conducted by the faculty of the university is scrutinized by the **Research Ethics Committee** to ensure that the various studies comply with the **ethical code** of the University. Additionally, each department of the University monitors the **post-graduate and doctoral research** conducted under its aegis in accordance with the established standards of the University. The various departments/faculties also ensure that research studies comply with the ethical norms prescribed by the professional bodies of their respective disciplines. This is primarily because all **scientific activities** (including those conducted by social scientists/educationists) require the **participation of human beings or impacts society**. The researchers therefore are required to make ethical judgments in **consonance with ethical standards** that are universal as well as specific to the cultural standards of the locality/community under study. Apart from defining the obligations of the researcher to the research subject and community, the code of ethics of the University defines the expected methodological and theoretical standards of the discipline. The code of ethics is enumerated below:

### **1) Obligations of the Researcher to the Researched Subject**

#### ***Informed Consent of Participants***

The ethical standards of the University require that participants/respondents or their guardians (if the participant is a minor) in a research study have the right to be informed about purpose, expected outcome of the study. They should be aware of the risks and the potential consequences of the study to the participants.

#### ***Protection of Confidentiality of Participants***

The participants/respondents have a right to know that the information they share will be confidential. This requires that the researcher will not divulge or indicate the identity of the informant during the various stages of the research, i.e., during data collection, processing storage and dissemination.

#### ***Autonomy of Participants***

The researcher will maintain strict confidentiality about the information obtained from the respondent and no personal information given by the respondent/participant during the course of the study will be revealed in any records, reports or other persons without the respondent's

permission. The autonomy of the research participants is also maintained by complying with the following research guidelines:

- The researcher will not make use of hidden cameras, microphones, tape recorders or other observation devices without the expressed permission of the respondent.
- The researcher will not reveal the content of private communication without the expressed permission of the respondent.
- In any experimental study, the researcher will explain the procedure to the respondents and obtain his/her consent with the understanding that the respondent/participant is free to withdraw from the experiment at any point of the research.

### ***Responsibility of the Researcher***

The researcher may come across situations requiring professional intervention. In such situations the researcher cannot remain neutral and only committed to realizing the goals of research. Professional integrity of social workers, health practitioners or educationists requires that they provide professional advice or referrals to the respondents.

The researcher must take special care when the focus of research is on the vulnerable sections of society, such as the poor, displaced and marginalized to ensure that the research process does not compound respondent's vulnerability. The experience of participation in the research should empower the research participant/respondent.

### **2) Ethical Standards Related to Discipline**

Additionally the Departmental Research Committees are expected to scrutinize the research studies conducted meet the highest standards of professional integrity. These are as follows:

#### ***Collection, use and interpretation of research data***

Scrupulous care is taken in the collection, use and interpretation of data to ensure accuracy in the research results. Further the methodology and techniques of data collection meet the rigorous standards. These studies are open to peer review/criticism.

#### ***Methods of reporting and reviewing research plans or findings***

Care is taken by the researcher to ensure that the reporting and review of research plans/findings meet the highest standards of scientific rigor. Acknowledgement of the data source and citations of other studies are of paramount importance.

The various departments of the university will take serious disciplinary action against plagiarism or any kind of appropriation of data from other studies/ or researchers.

### 3) Implementation of the code of Ethics in Research

#### 1. *Departmental Research Committee:*

The Departmental Research Committee that scrutinizes research proposals of the **post-graduate and doctoral students** will also ensure that the research conducted under its aegis is in accordance with the established ethical standards of the University.

#### 2. *Committee for Ethics in Research:*

Committee for Ethics in Research chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor will be constituted to ensure that the research conducted by the faculty members of the university comply with the **ethical code** of the University. The following members will be nominated on this committee for a term of two years by the Vice Chancellor-

- One head of university department nominated by the Vice Chancellor
- The head of the concerned university department whose proposal is submitted for review
- One teacher from Department of Law
- One professor not connected with SNTD Women's University (from a panel of three professors nominated by the Vice Chancellor)

The Academic Section of the University will process the applications for ethical review of research proposals. The committee will meet once in six months. More meetings may be conducted as and when required. It will be mandatory for researchers to accept and implement the changes if any, suggested by the Committee for Ethics in Research for maintaining high ethical standards in research.