Guidelines for Ethical Considerations in Social Research & Evaluation in India

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2020

Published *by*
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Photo Courtesy **CMS Survey**

ISBN: 978-93-5407-077-8

Content

Foreword

Reeling under the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world is grappling to respond, recover and get back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on all 17 SDGs confirms the need for transformative and accelerated actions to make sustainable development a reality for all. To step up actions for the SDGs, the United Nations Secretary-General is calling for an urgent and ambitious Decade for Action to deliver the Global Goals by 2030.

In alignment to this call, the Decade of EVALUATION for Action (also the Eval4Action campaign) encourages regional and national commitments and actions to strengthen evaluation systems and capacities to support SDG implementation. This is because strong evaluation has the highest multiplier effect on sustainable development ensuring no one is left behind. In support, Eval4Action is mobilising a coordinated push for influential evaluation to ensure response and recovery from the pandemic is backed by evidence and the world gets back on track to achieve the SDGs.

To ensure evaluative evidence and development research findings backing policies and programmes are meaningful, equity-focused and gender-responsive, ethical standards should be upheld at all stages of evaluation and research, including from its inception to the utilization of evaluation and research findings for decision-making.

Therefore, I am happy to welcome this timely and relevant e-guide on ethical considerations in social research and evaluation. This is a useful resource for young and emerging evaluators, programme implementers, academics and researchers that reinforces the concept of ethical practices in evaluation and social research. Although the resource focuses on India- a multi-cultural, multi-lingual fast growing economy - this e-guide is equally relevant for development partners across the globe. The e-guide also provides an opportunity to users to self-test their ethical sensitivity.

I congratulate the author, Mr. Alok Srivastava for developing this useful and relevant guide on ethical considerations that supports the evaluation and research community at large, to strengthen evaluations and research toward the implementation of SDGs.

Marco Segone

Director, Evaluation Office, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
Co-leader, Decade of evaluation for action Eval4Action
Founder and former co-chair, EvalPartners
Former Chair, United Nations Evaluation Group

Preface

Most common way of defining "ethics" is 'norms for conduct that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour'. In fast growing and expanding sector of social and development research and evaluation of policies, programmes and schemes, relevance and importance of practicing ethical norms is very critical as it ensures objectivity, promotes fair practices in conduct and provides ground for acceptance of findings by stakeholders.

Practicing ethical norms restricts misrepresentation of information and data and restricts researchers from being biased. Also, to an extent, emotional conflicts of surveyed population are addressed properly. In addition, accountability of researchers towards the community gets ensured and organizations likely to fund research can trust the quality and integrity of research.

CMS is one of the few non-government institutions in India which has a duly recognized Institutional Review Board (CMS-IRB) to review non-clinical research (and evaluation) protocols from ethical perspective and ensure rights of participants is taken care by the research agency.

In absence of any well-defined ethical guidelines for non-clinical research in India, it mostly becomes optional for the researchers and even institutions to go for or avoid going for an ethical review of their research protocols prior to initiating the research.

The booklet is a user guide highlighting the importance of developing research protocols from ethical perspective and suggesting the ways to ensure ethically upright research being undertaken in India, a country with a population belonging to diverse culture, traditions and demographic profile.

May 7, 2020

Alok Srivastava
Director CMS Social
Member, CMS-IRB

Guidelines for Ethical Considerations in Social Research & Evaluation in India

1. Background

The relevance and importance of practicing ethical norms is increasing day by day in the field of social research including evaluation. Conducting ethically and scientifically rigour social research is a must and more critical in a culturally diverse country like India.

More than 18 major languages combined with some 1652 languages and dialects are being spoken in India. To add to it, the literacy rate of the population is not encouraging. As per Census 2011, literacy rate is around 74%; even lesser among female- 65% than male-82%. As a proverb has it, in India "Every two miles the water changes, every four miles the speech." With such a socio-culturally diverse population, designing a uniformly acceptable ethically robust research with human subjects is a must and at the same time a challenge in India. In 1999, Ethical Guidelines for Social Science Research in Health was framed by the National Committee for Ethics in Social Science Research in Health (NCESSRH). As far as practicing ethical norms in social research in India is concerned, without hesitation, one can say that in India no well-laid ethical guidelines are in place or practice; but more of a case to case basis. In fact, very few social research or the donor agencies in India get clearance from any ethical review board. As a matter of fact, ethical review of social research proposals and protocols are yet to be institutionalized. In India, Institutional Review Board on ethics for non-clinical research is a few, almost non-existent. Most universities in India have duly-constituted ethics committee but their review is limited to research by their faculty and students and not to other researchers or institutions.

Unlike clinical research, non-clinical health research to an extent does follow some basics of ethical clearances but in most of the cases it is more of a voluntary choice and less as a pre-requisite for initiating a research study. In most cases, there is no compulsion on social researchers and evaluators (herein after referred as social researcher) or consulting agencies to get the research protocols approved from any designated Ethical Review Board before initiating the study. Most often practiced ethical norm in India is to take 'consent' of the respondents and that too mostly as part of studies related to some socially sensitive issues such as HIV/AIDS, reproductive and sexual health topics or for collection of blood samples. Most of the time, the consent is verbal in nature due to poor and low literacy status of respondents. Even here, all risks and benefits are not detailed out while reading out the consent statement. Privacy of the respondents and confidentiality of the data and information gathered too is at stake if not properly protected. But be aware that it may be almost impossible to entirely cloak identity, especially if your data includes video or audio recordings or can be linked to larger databases. It is often argued that by agreeing to participate in the survey, it is presumed that the consent for participation has been given by the respondent!! As a matter of fact, in majority of the cases, it is out of respect, particularly in rural India, that a person agrees to participate in the survey rather than by understanding and absorbing the objectives of the study or the pros and cons of their participation. As a result, they might not share facts but give politically correct answers to questions, which make them uncomfortable. It is also observed that the contextualization of ethical standards and norms at community level in Indian context is very relevant and important. For instance, due to a low literacy level, particularly in remote rural areas, insisting for written consent from participants is a tough proposition and may lead to non-participation of a large section of marginalized and vulnerable community members. Similarly, due to cultural norms and practice, a male, and that too from outside the village, interacting

or interviewing a female or even male for that matter may not be able to elicit frank and free opinion, on sensitive issues such as maternal health, sexual abuse among others, and could also lead to emotional breakdown of the respondent.

It is often said in context of social research in India that formal ethical review of research protocols are undertaken only when the institution or the Principal Investigator is keen to publish some research papers and articles in journals of repute. If the research is meant to suffice donor's need only or to strengthen one's credentials from business aspect, then hardly effort is made to get the research protocol reviewed by any institutional ethical review board.

The ethical clearance to an extent ensures that the research team will strictly abide by the method and approach suggested in the duly-approved research protocol by the ethical review body. The reality as observed is that at ground level i.e. during data and information collection, while interacting with community or just before selecting the human subject or respondent (interviewee), the researchers may sometimes revise or reselect the sample
i.e. goes for convenience sampling. Since no system is in place nor is it mandatory to do post-check of whether the sample selection was followed as suggested in the research protocol, the challenge that arises is 'how to control the deviation from the proposed approach.' This may further lead to biased findings being reported. In other words, deviation from originally proposed sample design should be considered unethical because the findings on important indicators, for instance, reach of social welfare programmes or initiatives may be misleading. But be aware that it may be almost impossible to entirely cloak identity, especially if your data includes video or audio recordings or can be linked to larger databases.

2. What is Ethics?

When most people think of ethics (or morals), they think of rules for distinguishing between right and wrong, such as the Golden Rule ("Do unto others as you would have them do unto you"), a code of professional conduct like the Hippocratic Oath ("First of all, do no harm"), a religious creed like the Ten Commandments ("Thou Shall not kill..."), or a wise aphorism like the sayings of Confucius. This is the most common way of defining "ethics": norms for conduct that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. It is pertinent to mention that right from the childhood the grooming takes place on ethical and morally correct behaviour. In other words, we learn from childhood at home, at school, in religious places, or in other social settings. Undoubtedly, in fast growing professional world of research, relevance and importance of practicing ethical norms is very critical as it ensures objectivity, promotes truth and knowledge and ensures lesser occurrence of error. The two commonly referred documents on ethical guidelines for social research include:

The **Belmont Report**: It is written by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, USA. The Commission, created as a result of the National Research Act of 1974, was charged with identifying the basic ethical principles that should underlie the conduct of biomedical and behavioral research involving human subjects and developing guidelines to assure that such research is conducted in accordance with those principles. Informed by monthly discussions that spanned nearly four years and an intensive four days of deliberation in 1976, the Commission published the Belmont Report, which identifies basic ethical principles and guidelines that address ethical issues arising from the conduct of research with human subjects.

The Declaration of Helsinki: The World Medical Association (WMA) has developed the Declaration of Helsinki as a statement of ethical principles for medical research involving human subjects, including research on identifiable human material and data. The Declaration is intended to be read as a whole and each of its constituent paragraphs should be applied with consideration of all other relevant paragraphs. Consistent with the mandate of the WMA, the Declaration is addressed primarily to physicians. The WMA encourages others who are involved in medical research involving human subjects to adopt these principles.

3. Who are Human Subjects?

The United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) defines a human research subject as a living individual about whom a research investigator (whether a professional or a student) obtains data through 1) intervention or interaction with the individual, or 2) identifiable private information (32 CFR 219.102.f). As defined by DHHS regulations:

"**Intervention**"- physical procedures by which data is gathered and the manipulation of the subject and/or their environment for research purposes [45 CFR 46.102(f)].

"**Interaction**" is communication or interpersonal contact between investigator and subject [45 CFR 46.102(f)].

"**Private Information**"- information about behaviour that occurs in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect that no observation or recording is taking place, and information which has been provided for specific purposes by an individual and which the individual can reasonably expect will not be made public [45 CFR 46.102(f)]

"**Identifiable information**" means specific information that can be used to identify an individual.

Thus, human beings, irrespective of gender, age group, ethnic group and socio-economic status, individually or in group, considered as a 'subject' for research are identified as human subjects for social science research. However, research involving human subjects categorized in special categories such as minors, pregnant women, differently-abled, prisoners become ethically more sensitive. While on one hand, research involving human participants must not violate any universally applicable ethical standards, on the other hand, a researcher needs to consider local cultural values when it comes to the application of the ethical principles to individual autonomy and informed consent. Important ethical issues include voluntary participation and informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, and accountability in terms of the accuracy of analysis and reporting. However, many a time ethical discussions usually remain detached or marginalized from discussion of research projects. In fact, many researchers consider this aspect i.e. ethical review of research as an afterthought.

4. General Principles of Ethics

As a matter of fact, researchers are expected to abide by the basic principles of ethics as listed below. These include,

- The ethical consideration should primarily aim towards… "The rights of human subjects in research will be my first consideration," and shall act in the human subject's best interest when selecting, interacting or reporting."
- It is the duty of the researcher to promote and safeguard the well-being and rights of research participants, including those who are involved in research.
- The primary purpose of research involving human subjects is to understand the causes, development and effects of areas of investigation and scope of work. Even the best proven interventions must be evaluated continually through research for their safety, effectiveness, efficiency, accessibility and quality.

- All research should be subject to ethical standards that promote and ensure respect for all human subjects and protect their health and rights while participating in the research activity.
- While the primary purpose of social research is to generate new knowledge, this goal can never take precedence over the rights and interests of individual research subjects.
- It is the duty of researchers who are involved in social research to protect the dignity, integrity, right to self-determination, privacy, and confidentiality of personal information of research subjects. The responsibility for the confidentiality of research subjects must always rest with the research professionals and never with the research subjects even though they have given consent.
- Researchers must consider the ethical, legal and regulatory norms and standards for research involving human subjects in their own countries as well as applicable international norms and standards. No national or international ethical, legal or regulatory requirement should reduce or eliminate any of the protections for research subjects.
- Research should be conducted in a manner that minimizes possible harm to the environment.
- Research involving human subjects must be conducted only by institutions or by the individuals with the appropriate ethics education and training.
- Groups that are underrepresented in research should be provided appropriate access to participation in research.
- No discrimination of researchers and research participants on the basis of gender and social group.
- No minor (below 18 years) should be a member of research team.

5. Risks and Benefits

All research involving human subjects must be preceded by careful assessment of predictable risks and burdens to the individuals and groups involved in the research in comparison with foreseeable benefits to the participants.

- Commonly referred risks include, breach of confidentiality i.e., revelation to others about the participation in the study; or temporary embarrassment due to some sensitive questions asked during the survey.
- Measures to minimize the risks must be implemented. The risks must be continuously monitored, assessed and documented by the researcher.
- Researchers should not undertake a research study involving human subjects unless they are confident that the risks have been adequately assessed and can be satisfactorily managed.

6. Vulnerable Population

Some groups and individuals such as illiterate, differently abled, pregnant women, children, socially marginalized are particularly vulnerable and may have an increased likelihood of being wronged or of incurring additional harm.

- All vulnerable groups and individuals such as pregnant women, children, differently-abled, should receive specifically considered protection.
- Research with a vulnerable group is only justified if the research is responsive to the needs and priorities of this group and the research will not be representative if not carried out including vulnerable group. In addition, this group should stand to benefit from the knowledge, practices or interventions that result from the research.

7. Research Protocols

Research involving human subjects must conform to generally accepted scientific principles, be based on a thorough knowledge of the scientific literature, other relevant sources of information.

- The design and performance of each research study involving human subjects must be clearly described and justified in a research protocol.
- The protocol should contain a statement of the ethical considerations involved and should have been addressed.
- The protocol should include information regarding study sponsors, institutional affiliations, potential conflicts of interest, incentives for subjects and dissemination of research findings.

8. Research Ethics Committee

The research protocol must be submitted for consideration, comment, guidance and approval to the concerned research ethics committee before the study begins.

- This committee must be transparent in its functioning, must be independent of the researcher, the sponsor and any other undue influence and must be duly qualified.
- It must take into consideration the laws and regulations of the country or countries in which the research is to be performed as well as applicable international norms and standards.
- The committee must have the right to monitor ongoing studies. The researcher must provide monitoring information to the committee, especially information about any serious adverse events.
- No amendment to the protocol may be made without consideration and approval by the committee.
- After the end of the study, the researchers must submit a final report to the committee containing a summary of the study's findings and conclusions.

9. Privacy and Confidentiality

Every precaution must be taken to protect the privacy of research subjects and the confidentiality of their personal information. No personal identifiers of the participants should be presented while discussing the findings.

- Duly signed consent forms, filled-in survey questionnaires, interview schedules should be accessible only to the research team and kept in a protected place such as locked cabinets at least for 3 years.
- Computer entered data and information should be kept in a password protected computer-desktop/laptop/hard disks with access to only research team.
- Telephonic surveys should ensure that no personal identifiers of the participants are recorded. This will ensure that responses are not linked with the responses. Only researchers should have access to recorded telephonic surveys.

10. Informed Consent

- Participation by individuals capable of giving informed consent as subjects in research must be voluntary. No individual capable of giving informed consent may be enrolled in a research study unless he or she freely agrees.
- In research involving human subjects capable of giving informed consent, each potential subject must be adequately informed of the aims, methods, sources of funding, any possible conflicts of interest, institutional affiliations of the researcher, the anticipated benefits and potential risks of the study and the discomfort it may entail, post-study provisions and any other relevant aspects of the study. The potential subject must be informed of the right to refuse to participate in the study or to withdraw consent to participate at any time without reprisal. Special attention should be given to the specific information needs of individual potential subjects as well as to the methods used to deliver the information.

- After ensuring that the potential human subject has understood the information, the enumerator must then seek the potential participant's freely-given informed consent, preferably in writing. If the consent cannot be expressed in writing, the non-written consent must be formally documented and witnessed (*template annexed*).
- When seeking informed consent for participation in a research study the enumerator must be particularly cautious that the potential subject is not in a dependent relationship with the research team member.
- For a potential research subject who is a minor or incapable of giving informed consent, the researcher must seek informed consent from the legally authorized representative.
- When a potential research subject who is deemed incapable of giving informed consent is able to give assent to decisions about participation in research, the researcher must seek that assent in addition to the consent of the legally authorized representative. The potential participant's dissent should be respected.
- Assent should always follow consent and not vice-versa.
- The refusal of a participant to participate in a study or the participant's decision to withdraw from the study must never adversely affect the participants or their family. Due to non-participation or refusal to participate in the research study, the participants or their family should not be denied any benefits or services, which they may like to avail in future.

11. Dissemination of Research Findings

A research may be considered incomplete if the findings are not shared with the stakeholders within a given timeframe. While disseminating the findings, the following points must be taken in to consideration.

- Researchers, authors, sponsors, commissioners of the research have ethical obligations with regard to the publication and dissemination of the results of research.

- Researchers have a duty to make publicly available the results of their research on human subjects and are accountable for the completeness and accuracy of their reports.
- All parties should adhere to accepted guidelines for ethical reporting.
- Sponsors of the study, institutional affiliations and conflicts of interest must be declared in the publication.

12. Standard of Practices for Commissioner of Research

In addition to ensuring the above discussed ethical practices, the commissioner of a research study, which includes research funding agency, programme donor or programme implementing agency, should ensure the following practices are adopted in each research undertaken.

- Research protocols, including research tools, are reviewed by a research ethics review committee, before the research activities are initiated.
- The Terms of Reference (ToR) or Request for Proposal (RfP) to undertake a research study should have a detailed scope of work and timeline. This will ensure bidding researchers or consulting agency propose a research approach and resource implications on the same parameters and could be compared with other bidding individual or agency.
- Technical research proposal should be given more weightage than financial proposal. Selecting the lowest bidder i.e. one who has given the lowest financial quotation for undertaking the research study, should not be the key criterion. Unless the technical approach and methodology are same of all bidders.
- Commissioners of study should ensure no interference of programme implementing team other than giving insights about the programme activities undertaken to the research team, at the time of inception meeting or during orientation of the research team.

Commissioner of the research study should further ensure that

- Any attempt by a bidding agency or researcher to obtain confidential information, influence the research proposal evaluation committee or the commissioner of the study during the evaluation of the research proposals must lead to the rejection of its bid
- The bidding research agency or researcher must not have any potential conflict of interest such as link with parties or individuals employed with the commissioner of the study or implementing agency of the project to be assessed or studied.
- Any corrupt practice by the bidding agency such as offer of a bribe, gift, gratuity or commission to any person relating to the award of a contract should disqualify the bidding research agency or the researcher.
- Failure to comply with one or more of the ethical clauses may result in the exclusion of the bidding research agency or individual researcher, and may be blacklisted from bidding in future.

13. Dos and Don'ts

- All research protocols should be reviewed and approved by an independent institutional review board (IRB) before initiating the study.
- Along with the research protocols, all research tools and consent or assent forms should be shared with IRB for review.
- Research protocols should clearly detail out the brief background for undertaking the research; objectives of the study; study approach; stakeholders to be involved; sampling approach and distribution; work plan and team composition; ethical considerations; time plan; and findings' dissemination plan.

- The consent or assent form for each study participant (human subject) should include detail about the study i.e. who are we (i.e. introduction about self and affiliation, if any); why this study (i.e. scope and objective of the study); where will be conducted(study location and sample participants); how selected (human subjects/participants); how much time (duration of the interaction with participant); risks and benefits (if participate in the study); confidentiality assurance measures (i.e. no personal identifiers to be used during reporting, data protection); voluntary participation (i.e. refusal to answer any question, leave during the interview and survey or ask for clarification, in case of any doubt); type of consent (i.e. verbal or written).

- All comments and inputs received from the IRB should be incorporated or responded with full justification and explanation.

- Once approved by IRB, no deviation in research protocols including research instruments be made without prior permission of the IRB.

- No minor (below 18 years) should be engaged in data collection & management team.

- No discrimination of researcher or research participants on the basis of gender or social group, if otherwise required as per the scope of the study.

- Research findings should be disseminated as per the dissemination plan mentioned in the research protocol approved by IRB.

14. Ethics Sensitivity Test

The section aims to help the researcher to do a self-administered Ethics Sensitivity Test. The test could also be administered among the team members, post-orientation of the team on ethical considerations in a research, as discussed in this publication.

Sl. No.	Statement	True-1 False -2
1.	Research protocol should be reviewed by an accredited Institutional Review Board on Ethics	
2.	Research protocol submitted for review to ethics committee should not necessarily include all research tool(s) along with consent form(s)	
3.	Research protocol must include a section on ethical considerations	
4.	Respect for the community and local culture is a must for researcher	
5.	Risk of research should be reduced to minimal and non-harming for study participants	
6.	Written informed consent form is optional	
7.	Protection of the participant is the primary responsibility of the researcher	
8.	Confidentiality of the participant is the primary responsibility of the researcher	
9.	Dignity of local people and individual participant must be maintained	
10.	Participants of the study should have full freedom for self-determination to participate or not in the research study.	
11.	Vulnerable group include	
	i. Pregnant women	
	ii. Children	
	iii. Teachers	
	iv. Physically challenged	
	v. Illiterate	
	vi. Sex workers	
	vii. Farmers	
	viii. Prisoners	
	ix. Widow	
	x. Adolescents	
12.	Informed consent is absolutely essential prior to conducting the survey or interview	
13.	Special protection for vulnerable groups is a pre-requisite for undertaking a research study	
14.	Participant must be free to stop survey or interview at any time	

Sl. No.	Statement	True-1 False -2
15.	Well-being of the study participants should take precedence over the interests of science and society	
16.	Consent from participants in writing should be optional	
17.	For all minor participants, consent from parents/care-taker/guardian is a must	
18.	Assent of minor participant is essential for their participation in the study.	
19.	Informed consent should be given by a participant without being subjected to coercion, undue influence and threat.	
20.	Informed consent is a communication process between researcher and participant and continues throughout the duration of the interview	
21.	Identification of risks and benefits, before, during and after the study is not important for a researcher	
22.	Consent form should be in language of the participants and in simple reading level	
23.	Filled in questionnaire(s) should be kept separate from the signed consent forms	
24.	No personal identifier should be collected in research tools to maintain confidentiality and anonymity of participants	
25.	Computer entered data must be kept in a password protected computer with access to research team only	
26.	Filled-in research tools should be kept at least for three years in a safe and secure place before destroying them	
27.	Research agency or commissioner of the study is expected to disseminate the findings of the study among stakeholders.	
28.	Ethical review of research protocols and research tools are optional in India	
29.	No discrimination of researcher or research participants on the basis of gender or social group should be made	
30.	Gender matching between study participants and researcher(s) is desirable	
31	Research protocol should detail out the sampling approach to ensure unbiased selection of participants	

[See answer sheet to calculate your score and grade on page 21]

15. Reference Materials for further reading

- https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/sites/default/files/the-belmont-report-508c_FINAL.pdf
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Introduction and Consent of Respondent (Template)

Introduction

Greetings {use local terms}! My name is_____. I am from _____ (name of institution, if any), which is an academic/consulting/think tank, since ….. (period of establishment) based at……. (place of Headquarters).

Purpose of the Study

We are conducting a study …… (objective of the study). To this end, we want to talk to .....(respondent category) of your district/state to get their views about these issues.

Procedures and your role in this research

We have selected around …. (sample size) ……. (respondent group) from….....(number of locations) of.....(district/state). You are one of those selected. If you agree, I will ask you some questions about.....(key parameters of the survey questionnaire).

This interview will take about.....minutes of your time and will be conducted in a private area of your home/office/public place.

Possible risks and benefits

There are no direct benefits to you for taking part in this research. But, your response will help us understand the future intervention strategy to improve.....(intervention purpose e.g. knowledge, awareness and skills) of …… (respondent group) to have a better.....(type of service/facility/intervention).

You may feel embarrassed, worried, anxious or uncomfortable by some of the questions we ask (optional, mostly in case of health related surveys). You can refuse to answer any of such questions. Others may learn of your participation in this study, which may also cause you embarrassment, worry, or physical or emotional harm. We will make every effort to protect your privacy during and after the study period. Your responses will not be shared with anyone, including your family member.

Confidentiality

The information that you provide during the study will be kept confidential. No one, including your family members, will ever know your responses. Your name or other information that could identify you will not be written anywhere. The responses of all (respondent group) will be
analyzed to design future intervention strategy in your area.

All consent forms, questionnaires and notes from this study will be stored in a locked filing cabinet, and only study staff will have access to them. Also, upon signing this consent you give the (name of research agency) consent to access your study records. They would only do this to ensure that your privacy is being maintained and protected.

Participation is voluntary

You are free to say "yes" or "no" to participate in this study. You can also refuse to answer any particular question. Nothing will happen if you decide to say no to me.

Do you have any questions that I can clarify? Do you have any questions about the study? If you have questions later on, I will be happy to provide you with more information or you can contact the….....(name of PI/a senior research team member) at the following telephone number and/or address.

Tel:

Postal address:

e-mail ID:

For questions regarding study participants' rights, please contact: .....(name with address and phone number of Institutional Review Board)

It is not compulsory, but you may please sign this form.

RESPONDENT'S SIGNATURE: _____

Investigator's Statement [DO NOT READ]

I have explained to the respondent and s/he has understood the purpose and the procedures to be followed, and the risks and benefits involved. S/he has agreed/disagreed to participate in this interview.

NAME OF THE **ENUMERATOR** _____

SIGNATURE OF THE **ENUMERATOR**: _____

DATE:

[ENUMERATOR: PLEASE KEEP THIS FORM SAFELY BEFORE STARTING THE INTERVIEW AND SUBMIT IT TO YOUR SUPERVISOR.]

Informed Assent of Minor (<18 yrs.)-*Template*

Hello, my name is_____and I am working for…… (*name of organization*). We are conducting a …… (*name of study*) in ……. (name *of place such as district/state*).

I would like to talk to you on.....(*key issues to be covered in the survey*). This survey will take ……. minutes to complete. Any information provided by you will not be shared with anyone including your parents/guardians/ caregivers.

Information shared by you is very valuable in improving the (*key services aimed to be improved through this study findings*) in your district.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary and even if you choose to participate, you may refuse to respond to any particular question(s).

May I begin the interview with you now?

Yes…..... 1

No…..... 2 (Go to next respondent)

Enumerator's Signature: _____

Date: _____

[ENUMERATOR: PLEASE KEEP THIS FORM SAFELY BEFORE STARTING THE INTERVIEW AND SUBMIT IT TO YOUR SUPERVISOR.]

Answer Sheet: Ethics Sensitivity Test

Sl. No.	Correct Answer
1.	1
2.	2
3.	1
4.	1
5.	1
6.	2
7.	1
8.	1
9.	1
10.	1
11.	
i.	1
ii.	1
iii.	2
iv.	1
v.	1
vi.	1
vii.	2
viii.	1
ix.	1
x.	1

Sl. No.	Correct Answer
12.	1
13	1
14.	1
15.	1
16.	2
17	1
18.	1
19.	1
20.	1
21.	2
22.	1
23.	1
24.	1
25.	1
26.	1
27.	1
28.	1
29.	1
30.	1
31	1

Grade card: *Correct Answer -1 mark; Incorrect Answer-0 mark*

Excellent	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor
38-40	37-33	32-29	28-24	23 or less

About Author: Alok Srivastava is an evaluation and monitoring expert with around two and a half decades of experience. He is Director, CMS Social and a member of CMS-Institutional Review Board (CMS-IRB) on ethics. He is also a core group member of the Evaluation Community of India.

Alok is a Resource Person on developing M&E Framework and several assessment tools such as Poverty Index Tool, Media Credibility Assessment, Ethics Sensitivity Test, among others. He has contributed research papers/articles in reputed journals and books. Some of his recent contributions include, *Standardizing evaluation process: Necessary for achieving SDGs – A case study of India*, Evaluation and Program Planning, Elsevier, Vol 69 (2018); *Ethical Challenges for Evaluation in India*, published in ed. book- Evaluations for Sustainable Development: Experiences and Learning, Daya Publishing House (2015); *Ethics of Evaluation demands rights based approach* published in journal, Transparency Review (2018); *Independent Audit of Implementation of Citizens'/ Clients' Charter (CCC),* published in newsletter Performance Matters, published by Performance Management Division, Cabinet Secretariat, Govt. of India (2014).

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ISBN: 978-93-5407-077-8