



MADRAS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH REVIEW BOARD (IRB-MSSW)

About IRB

The Institutional Research Review Board (IRB) of Madras School of Social Work is responsible for the review and approval of all research involving human subjects conducted under its auspices. The IRB-MSSW is charged with protecting the rights and welfare of human research subjects recruited to participate in research activities and to ensure compliance with applicable regulations. The board is responsible for reviewing all research projects involving human subjects that are conducted at institution facilities or property and / or; is sponsored by the institution.

The board aim to evaluate research proposals for its scientific value, possibility of risk in research, and finally approval and direct researchers in ethical aspects associated with research involving human subjects.

Research studies carried out by the faculty members, research scholars and students at the Institute also result in reports, publications and books. These publications become public domain documents that are easily accessible and widely disseminated and used by a cross-section of people and agencies for research purposes or policy advocacy. MSSW faculty publish their work in peer reviewed journal articles in some of the most renowned journals; chapters in books; authored/edited volumes published by reputed publishers and other writings that include book reviews, articles in newspapers, magazines and reports.

The IRB is guided by the following principles:

- Ethical, legal, and institutional guidelines will be followed to evaluate applications of research studies with the primary purpose of ensuring that the rights of the human subjects are protected.
- Independent assessment and evaluation of the benefits and costs of the research will be done to minimize risk for the human subjects.
- All applications will be reviewed in a timely manner to facilitate productive research.

Institutional Research Review Board

The IRB-MSSW is chaired by an outside expert and members from different disciplines, like Social Work, Management, Psychology, lay person from the community as representatives.

All the research projects of the Institute or outside organizations having Institute's faculty as research partner, involving human subjects are reviewed and approved. The committee ensures that research involving humans is conducted according to the legal, institutional and professional ethical guidelines focusing at privacy, confidentiality, voluntary participation and human subject protection.

Duration

The IRB-MSSW will be for the period of three years and the quorum would 50% for the meetings. The Member Secretary in consultation with the Principal can extend one more term for the willing members to continue the second term. Only two terms is allowed for any member to be part of the Board.

Composition of Members of the Board

Position	Name of the Expert	Institution Affiliation
Chairperson	Dr. Miriam Samuel, PhD	Madras Christian College, Chennai
Member Secretary	Dr. K. Sathyamurthi, PhD	Convener, Research & Development Cell, MSSW
Institutional Internal Expert	Dr. J. S. Gunavathy, PhD	Associate Professor, MSSW
Expert – Social Work	Dr. Pamela Singla, PhD	Professor, DSW.
Expert – Management	Dr. Rupashree Baral, PhD.,	Professor, IIT-M
Expert – Psychology	Dr. V.Surendran, PhD	Professor, Dept of Oncology, WIA, Chennai
NGO/Layperson	Thiru. H. Narayanan	AMM foundation, Chennai

- The meeting of the IRB-MSSW will be held at least quarterly once, unless otherwise specified by the member secretary.
- The mode of meeting viz., online, or offline would be based on the discretion of the Chairperson in consultation with the Member Secretary of the IRB-MSSW
- Additional review meetings would also be held with short notice as and when required. Meetings will be planned in accordance based on the requirements.

Standard Operating procedure of IRB-MSSW

The IRB-MSSW meets once in every two months or on receiving of at least three applications for reviewing of project proposals for human subject protection strategies. The project should either be funded by the Institute or from outside research agency/organization, where any faculty of the Institute is associated either in the capacity of PI or Co-PI or consultant.

Process of submitting applications

PI(s) should submit a duly filled-in IRB application online copy in the prescribed format other required documents (as mentioned in the application form available on the Institute's website) to the Member Secretary, IRB-MSSW.

- The title of the study.
- Clear research objectives and rationale for undertaking the investigation in human participants in the light of existing knowledge.
- Precise description of the methodology of the proposed research, including sample size (with justification), type of study design (observational, experimental, pilot, randomized, blinded etc.), expected outcome etc.,
- All other relevant documents related to the study like investigator's brochure for the study and statement of relevant approval from the other agencies (if any).
- Complete details of the funding organization or the institutions funding for the study with their requirements need to be attached.

Decision-making process

The IRB-MSSW provides a complete and adequate review of the research proposals submitted to them. Once Member Secretary of the IRB-MSSW, in consultation with the chairperson and other members decides a date, PI or Co-PI of the project are requested to make a brief presentation and explain the issues of human subject protections and strategy to address it. IRB-MSSW reviews human subject issues and strategies for protecting it, irrespective of qualitative or quantitative data. In special case, chairperson of IRB in consultation with Member Secretary may decide to review the applications through circulation or even provide exemption from review if there are negligible chances of violating human subject rights, safety and threats to their life. Comments if any by IRB must be incorporated in the proposal before it is finally approved.

Certificate

Once the IRB is satisfied that the study is in no way harmful to the subjects under study, IRB Member Secretary include it in the minutes of the meeting and share with all the members. Once it is ensured that all the points discussed in the meeting are included in the minute, it is signed by the Chair person and uploaded on the Institute's website. The committee will issue an Ethical Clearance Certificate, valid for the period of study specified. The committee will also advise the researcher about the "informed consent" to be obtained from the subjects, and "confidentiality" to be maintained vis-a-vis subjects. It is responsibility of the convener to get the certificate issued within two weeks of the meeting of IRB.



Dr. K. Sathyamurthi, PhD
Member Secretary-IRB, MSSW



Dr. S. Raja Samuel, PhD
Principal