

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS



Open Access, Refereed Journal Multi-Disciplinary  
Peer Reviewed

[www.ijlra.com](http://www.ijlra.com)

## DISCLAIMER

No part of this publication may be reproduced or copied in any form by any means without prior written permission of Managing Editor of IJLRA. The views expressed in this publication are purely personal opinions of the authors and do not reflect the views of the Editorial Team of IJLRA.

Though every effort has been made to ensure that the information in Volume II Issue 7 is accurate and appropriately cited/referenced, neither the Editorial Board nor IJLRA shall be held liable or responsible in any manner what sever for any consequences for any action taken by anyone on the basis of information in the Journal.

Copyright © International Journal for Legal Research & Analysis

## EDITORIALTEAM

### EDITORS

#### **Dr. Samrat Datta**

*Dr. Samrat Datta Seedling School of Law and Governance, Jaipur National University, Jaipur. Dr. Samrat Datta is currently associated with Seedling School of Law and Governance, Jaipur National University, Jaipur. Dr. Datta has completed his graduation i.e., B.A.LL.B. from Law College Dehradun, Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University, Srinagar, Uttarakhand. He is an alumnus of KIIT University, Bhubaneswar where he pursued his post-graduation (LL.M.) in Criminal Law and subsequently completed his Ph.D. in Police Law and Information Technology from the Pacific Academy of Higher Education and Research University, Udaipur in 2020. His area of interest and research is Criminal and Police Law. Dr. Datta has a teaching experience of 7 years in various law schools across North India and has held administrative positions like Academic Coordinator, Centre Superintendent for Examinations, Deputy Controller of Examinations, Member of the Proctorial Board*



#### **Dr. Namita Jain**



*Head & Associate Professor*

*School of Law, JECRC University, Jaipur Ph.D. (Commercial Law) LL.M., UGC-NET Post Graduation Diploma in Taxation law and Practice, Bachelor of Commerce.*

*Teaching Experience: 12 years, AWARDS AND RECOGNITION of Dr. Namita Jain are - ICF Global Excellence Award 2020 in the category of educationalist by I Can Foundation, India. India Women Empowerment Award in the category of "Emerging Excellence in Academics by Prime Time & Utkrish Bharat Foundation, New Delhi. (2020). Conferred in FL Book of Top 21 Record Holders in the category of education by Fashion Lifestyle Magazine, New Delhi. (2020). Certificate of Appreciation for organizing and managing the Professional Development Training Program on IPR in Collaboration with Trade Innovations Services, Jaipur on March 14th, 2019*

## Mrs.S.Kalpna

Assistant professor of Law

*Mrs.S.Kalpna, presently Assistant professor of Law, VelTech Rangarajan Dr.Sagunthala R & D Institute of Science and Technology, Avadi. Formerly Assistant professor of Law,Vels University in the year 2019 to 2020, Worked as Guest Faculty, Chennai Dr.Ambedkar Law College, Pudupakkam. Published one book. Published 8Articles in various reputed Law Journals. Conducted 1Moot court competition and participated in nearly 80 National and International seminars and webinars conducted on various subjects of Law. Did ML in Criminal Law and Criminal Justice Administration.10 paper presentations in various National and International seminars. Attended more than 10 FDP programs. Ph.D. in Law pursuing.*



## Avinash Kumar



*Avinash Kumar has completed his Ph.D. in International Investment Law from the Dept. of Law & Governance, Central University of South Bihar. His research work is on "International Investment Agreement and State's right to regulate Foreign Investment." He qualified UGC-NET and has been selected for the prestigious ICSSR Doctoral Fellowship. He is an alumnus of the Faculty of Law, University of Delhi. Formerly he has been elected as Students Union President of Law Centre-1, University of Delhi. Moreover, he completed his LL.M. from the University of Delhi (2014-16), dissertation on "Cross-border Merger & Acquisition"; LL.B. from the University of Delhi (2011-14), and B.A. (Hons.) from Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi. He has also obtained P.G. Diploma in IPR from the Indian Society of International Law, New Delhi. He has qualified UGC – NET examination and has been awarded ICSSR – Doctoral Fellowship. He has published six-plus articles and presented 9 plus papers in national and international seminars/conferences. He participated in several workshops on research methodology and teaching and learning.*

## **ABOUT US**

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH & ANALYSIS ISSN- 2582-6433 is an Online Journal is Monthly, Peer Review, Academic Journal, Published online, that seeks to provide an interactive platform for the publication of Short Articles, Long Articles, Book Review, Case Comments, Research Papers, Essay in the field of Law & Multidisciplinary issue. Our aim is to upgrade the level of interaction and discourse about contemporary issues of law. We are eager to become a highly cited academic publication, through quality contributions from students, academics, professionals from the industry, the bar and the bench. INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH & ANALYSIS ISSN 2582-6433 welcomes contributions from all legal branches, as long as the work is original, unpublished and is in consonance with the submission guidelines.

# **“THE ANATOMY OF AN ERROR: WHEN PROFESSIONAL RESEARCH DELIVERS NOVICE WORK”**

AUTHORED BY - KARTIKEY AGARWAAL<sup>1</sup>  
(Regn. No: SU/Ph.D./Management/2023/07)

The recent controversy surrounding the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) has become a defining case study in the crucial importance of academic rigor and professional accountability. When a respected institution's work is questioned, it's not just about a single data point; it's about the entire process—or lack thereof—that allowed a grave error to be published. This article explores the CSDS incident from a research scholar's lens, arguing that the controversy was not merely an innocent mistake but a profound failure of methodology that should serve as a cautionary tale for the entire academic community.

## **The Incident and its Political Aftershocks**

The controversy began when Sanjay Kumar, a prominent psephologist and co-director of Lokniti-CSDS, shared what he claimed were stunning findings on social media. He alleged a drastic and improbable fluctuation in voter numbers in several Maharashtra assembly constituencies between the 2024 Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. Specifically, his now-deleted post claimed a 38.45% decrease in voters in Ramtek and a 36.82% decrease in Deolali. In a separate claim, it cited a 47.38% increase in Nashik West and a 43.08% increase in Hingna. These absurdly high percentages were immediately seized upon by opposition leaders, particularly from the Congress party, to bolster their narrative of "vote theft" and question the integrity of the Election Commission of India (ECI). The ruling BJP fiercely counter-attacked, accusing the opposition of using unverified data to spread "fake news" and delegitimize democratic institutions. The political firestorm forced Kumar to retract his claims and apologize, stating that a "data in row was misread by our Data team." The fallout, however, was swift and severe. The Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) issued a show-cause notice to CSDS, accusing it of "data manipulation" and a "gross violation of the Grant-

---

<sup>1</sup> Research Scholar, NICE School of Business Studies, Shobhit Institute of Engineering and Technology, Deemed to be University, Meerut, India

in-Aid rules." This was followed by the registration of police FIRs against Kumar in both Nagpur and Nashik, transforming a research error into a legal and administrative battle.

### **From the Lens of a Researcher: The Genesis of an Idea**

A research idea does not simply appear out of thin air; it is born from observation and curiosity. A researcher's mind starts generating various ideas and suggestions when a problem is identified. Sanjay Kumar himself stated that he was prompted to conduct this research because various sorts of data had been published, and their authenticity was being questioned. The very idea to conduct a research on this subject was a noble one, aiming to either confirm or debunk the public discourse surrounding the integrity of the electoral lists.

Given this background, the central question is not just what went wrong, but how a mistake could still happen when the research was specifically initiated to verify such sensitive data. This paradox lies at the heart of the controversy. A researcher's mind is trained to be skeptical, to examine and cross-check. The researcher's duty is to scrutinize all suggestions, vet relevant ones, and clearly outline the structure of the research to eliminate potential errors. The CSDS incident suggests this foundational conceptualization, examination, and structuring process was either bypassed or profoundly flawed.

### **A Methodology Betrayed: The Failure of the Process**

The scientific method is the bedrock of credible work, and a failure in any of its steps can invalidate the entire research. The CSDS controversy highlights a systematic breakdown in several critical stages.

1. **Data Collection and Rigorous Validation:** This is where the process critically failed. While obtaining data from official sources is a start, a professional researcher knows this is merely the first step. The data must be subjected to a multi-layered validation process. This includes:
  - **Double-Entry Verification:** Having at least two separate individuals or systems input the same data to ensure consistency.
  - **Algorithmic Outlier Detection:** The absurdly high percentages of increase and decrease (36-47%) should have triggered an automatic red flag in any competent data analysis software.

- Logical Checks: A simple sanity check would reveal that it is physically impossible for such a large percentage of voters to either vanish or appear in a matter of months.
- 2. The Ineffectiveness of the Check-and-Reconfirm Process: In an interview, on a TV channel, Kumar admitted he checked with his team before tweeting, and they re-confirmed the data. This reveals a fundamental failure in their Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). The re-confirmation was not a re-validation; it was a simple confirmation of the initial, erroneous finding. A robust SOP would require a separate team member to independently verify the data and run the analysis from scratch. The fact that the error was not caught by this internal re-confirmation is a damning indictment of the institutional process.
- 3. Reliance on External Validation: The ultimate sign of a broken internal process is the reliance on external checks. As it was pointed out by Kumar, the mistake was not caught by CSDS's own protocol but was pointed out by a journalist friend over a phone call. This is the antithesis of professional research. A professional institution's integrity is defined by its ability to self-correct. The fact that a major error went live and was only caught through an informal, external alert highlights a critical lapse in professionalism and accountability.

### **The Crucial Test of Genuineness**

For any research scholar, the final test of an error's authenticity is its reproducibility. In such a case a logical test holds firm and is the only way to genuinely restore trust.

- If the CSDS's claim of a data misarrangement is genuine, they should be able to publicly demonstrate the exact mechanism of the error. This would mean showing how the raw data from the ECI, when subjected to a specific misarrangement (e.g., a simple column shift or a misaligned copy-paste), would precisely and automatically generate the four erroneous figures that were published.
- Conversely, if they cannot show this direct, logical link, it would strongly suggest that the published figures were not the result of a mechanical error but were deliberately created. This would imply that CSDS's explanation was a cover-up, pointing to a deliberate fabrication rather than an innocent one.

The controversy highlights that a claim of error is not enough; it must be backed by transparent, reproducible evidence.

The Broader Implications and Lessons for Research

The CSDS controversy has implications that extend far beyond the specific institution. It has eroded public trust in independent research and academic institutions, which are meant to serve as neutral arbiters of fact. In a highly polarized political climate, such incidents can be weaponized to delegitimize academic expertise and undermine the very concept of objective analysis.

The ultimate lesson is clear: a diligent and transparent process is not merely an academic virtue; it is the very pillar of trust. The CSDS incident serves as an alarming note for all researchers—the reputation of a scholar and an institution rests not on a single finding, but on the integrity of every single step taken to reach it. When that process breaks down, the credibility of the work and the institution behind it is shattered, and the consequences can be far-reaching and profound.

