



RAJIV GANDHI SCHOOL OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW, IIT KHARAGPUR



7TH RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM ON

HARMONISING DOCTRINE AND DATA: ADVANCING EMPIRICISM IN LEGAL SCHOLARSHIP

REGISTER NOW!!

**24TH OCT - 26TH OCT 2025
RGSOIPL, IIT KHARAGPUR**

BACKGROUND NOTE

Does empirical research precede theoretical enquiry? The question masks a sense of friction that began to unravel with the evolution of the contemporary scientific temper, upending some of the most common ideas about the functioning of nature and this universe. In principle, such a discourse was motivated to shrink the hypothetical margin of any issue through substantial evidence. Yet, the logic of preference between rationalism and empiricism within epistemology has tormented scholars for decades. The discipline of law is a grand amphitheatre where such introspection offers boundless opportunities.

In recent times, the philosophical approach in law has started to embrace the logic of science more frequently, engaging in inquiries into how empirical data can reshape legal reasoning. This shift aims to drive metaphysical notions through a timely trial at the altar of testimonials that are flooded with data and statistical approaches. But it never abandoned its roots. On the contrary, it maintains its reservation against any prejudiced aspiration towards validating work through an approach purely with the help of data and scientific tools. For that matter, the fates of doctrinal and empirical studies are entwined.

Empirical legal research in India is relatively nascent. During the post-independence period, the Constitution of India laid the foundation for a rights-based legal order, and legal education remained focused on black-letter law. Early empirical legal studies began as part of larger sociological or anthropological inquiries. India, therefore, has a trajectory of socio-legal investigations shaped by its colonial legacy, postcolonial development priorities, and contemporary institutional shifts.

This Colloquium aims to interrogate the transformative potential of empirical research in understanding, critiquing, and reshaping law, without compromising theoretical insights. The Colloquium seeks to foster a new discourse that values measurable patterns, lived experiences, and data-driven policy outcomes by shifting the focus from abstract legal reasoning to evidence-based insights. It critically engages with quantitative and qualitative tools—from computational legal studies and behavioural experiments to ethnographic fieldwork and satellite-based assessments. The central theme encourages scholars to reflect on how empirical methods can complement, refine, or disrupt conventional legal frameworks. It also recognises the challenges in applying empirical techniques within a normative discipline like law. Through this dialogue, the Colloquium seeks to build an ecosystem of legal research that is methodologically rigorous, socially responsive, and reform-oriented in the Indian and global context.

ABOUT IIT KHARAGPUR

Established in 1951, IIT Kharagpur is the first Indian Institute of Technology and a pioneer in technical education and research in India. With 19 academic departments, 13 schools of excellence, eight multidisciplinary centres, and over 25 central R&D units, the institute fosters a vibrant ecosystem for innovation and interdisciplinary inquiry.

Recognised as an Institute of Eminence in 2019, IIT KGP has consistently led in academic excellence, producing global thought leaders across disciplines. It is the first IIT to integrate non-engineering disciplines such as law and management into its academic framework, reinforcing its commitment to holistic and socially impactful education.

Guided by its motto, *Yogah Karmasu Kauśalam* — Excellence in Action is Yoga, the institute continues to inspire transformative research and leadership.

ABOUT RGSOIPL

Established in 2006, RGSOIPL is India's first law school within a premier technology institute, envisioned to bridge the gap between law and technology. The School is nationally recognised for its academic rigour and research excellence, ranking first in Legal Research (NIRF 2024) among law institutions nationwide.

RGSOIPL offers a comprehensive academic portfolio, including a three-year LL.B. (Hons.), a two-year LL.M. with specialisations in Intellectual Property Law, International Law, and Criminal Law, as well as a Ph.D. Programme. The recently introduced Master's in Public Policy and Governance reflects the School's commitment to interdisciplinary learning and research.

The School fosters a vibrant academic environment through its flagship National Colloquium on Legal Research, national moot court competitions, and a strong emphasis on Pro Bono Culture for Access to Justice. Regular lectures by distinguished legal scholars further enrich the academic discourse.

RESEARCH AT RGSOIPL

The scholars at the Rajiv Gandhi School of Intellectual Property Law (RGSOIPL) are actively engaged in cutting-edge research across a diverse range of legal fields, with a strong emphasis on interdisciplinary inquiry. Key areas of focus include Intellectual Property Law, International Law, Criminal Law, Constitutional Law, Corporate Law, Environmental Law, Law and Technology, Law and Economics, Competition Law, and Labour Law.

RGSOIPL scholars have published extensively in leading journals and with renowned academic publishers such as Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Wiley, Springer, SAGE Publications, Taylor & Francis, and Brill. Their contributions also feature in leading conferences and journals such as the British Society of Criminology Conference Proceedings and the Asian Journal of Criminology, reflecting the School's commitment to impactful and globally relevant legal research.

REGISTRATION FEES

A nominal registration fee will be charged to cover event expenses:

- Academician/Faculty: ₹4500
- Research Scholars: ₹2500
- IIT Kharagpur Students: ₹500

The fee excludes food and accommodation. However, two working lunches and two dinners will be provided.

Accommodation at the Institute Guest House may be made available. The participant shall make payment directly to the Guest House on actuals.

All participants will also have the opportunity to engage in a dedicated session with resource persons to discuss their research interests and receive expert guidance.

CALL FOR EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

Scholars, researchers, academicians and practitioners are invited to submit extended abstracts for presentation at the symposium. We welcome interdisciplinary contributions, provided they demonstrate a substantial engagement with questions of legal epistemology. Abstracts are invited from across all fields and sub-disciplines of law and from adjacent disciplines, including but not limited to philosophy, sociology, history, political science, and science and technology studies. We particularly encourage submissions that balance theoretical depth with practical relevance and contribute meaningfully to rethinking the foundations and futures of legal thought.

The award for the Best Paper Presenter shall be given to the three most outstanding presenters.

SUGGESTED AREAS

- Crime, Justice, and Accountability – Understanding offences, trials, and punishments through empirical frameworks.
- Inquiries into constitutional rights, safeguards, and freedoms
- Where IP Meets AI: Complex legal and ethical challenges
- Rule of Law and Environmental Protection
- Approaches to Understanding International Human Rights Law
- Lived Experiences of Justice: Discrimination, Gender, and Access
- Evolving ideas and trends in Commercial and Corporate Laws
- Contemporary Research Approaches, issues and challenges in environmental research

(Note: The areas listed above are merely indicative in nature, and are in no way exhaustive.)

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The extended abstract should provide a clear summary of the scope of the paper, methodology, key findings, and results.

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FONT SIZE (TITLE): 14; BOLD

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FONT SIZE (BODY): 12

- Word Limit: The extended abstract should not exceed 1000 words, excluding footnotes.
- Recommended Structure:

INTRODUCTION > METHODOLOGY > OUTCOMES > CONCLUSION > REFERENCES

- Figures and Tables: If applicable, please include relevant figures and tables that correspond to the content of the extended abstract.
- Citation Style: Authors must adhere to OSCOLA 4th Edition
- Originality: Submissions must be original. Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated.
- File Format: Submissions must be in PDF, DOC, or DOCX format.
- Co-Authorship: A maximum of two co-authors is permitted. The full names and institutional affiliations of all authors must be clearly mentioned in the extended abstract.
- Author Biographies: A separate page with short bios of all co-authors must be submitted along with the abstract.
- File Naming Convention: The file should be named as follows:
 - “Name of the First Author_Extended Abstract”
- Submission Link: Extended abstracts must be uploaded via the Google Form:
<https://forms.gle/mj64jqggzJHCUpaU7>
- Review and Selection: Upon acceptance of the extended abstract, authors will be notified about the registration process. Selected abstracts will be invited for oral or poster presentation during the symposium.
- **Early submissions are encouraged, as acceptances will be issued on a rolling basis. Acceptance is on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to review.**

BEYOND THE PANELS

WORLD CAFE

Engage in dynamic small-group discussions over some coffee. Participants shall be seated at tables, exchanging ideas with new peers on allotted topics. The process culminates in a collective reflection, drawing out shared insights and emerging themes from the diverse conversations.



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY DESIGN

Take a deep dive into research through a creative split-path challenge. Two teams, one research objective—yet completely different routes. One team builds its case through doctrinal analysis, the other navigates with empirical evidence. At the end, both converge to reflect on how their approaches shaped their understanding, revealing the unique strengths of each method.

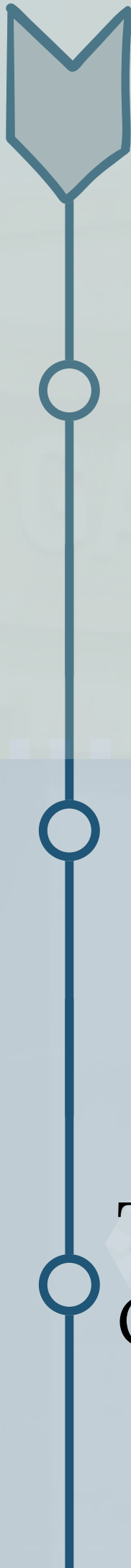


BLIND SPOT DIAGNOSIS

Participants are assigned an extended abstract for review—randomly selected and anonymised. Without access to author details, institutional affiliations, or disciplinary context, participants evaluate the work on its methodological clarity, coherence, and research merit. This activity fosters critical self-awareness about how implicit biases and disciplinary frameworks can shape our judgments in academic peer review and methodological evaluation.



IMPORTANT DATES



Last date for submission of extended abstracts : 20th September 2025

Date of Acceptance of Extended Abstracts: 10th October 2025

The last date for registration for the Symposium: 15th October 2025



Colloquium:

24th October – 26th October 2025

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