

Terms of Reference
Research Paper
Intersectional Discriminations Faced by Women and Girls from Religious Minority
Communities in South Asia

Seeking 1 consultant from Pakistan
Budget: 5,000 EUR

The [South Asia Collective](#), in collaboration with [Minority Rights Group](#), seeks an experienced consultant, think tank, or research institute to carry out a high quality and rigorous baseline study of its project, "[Supporting Religious Pluralism and Respect for Freedom of Religions or Belief across South Asia](#)". The project aims to strengthen the capacity of a regional researchers' and activists' network to monitor incidents, trends, and patterns of FoRB violations; produce and publish authoritative reports; and carry out linked advocacy to combat religious discrimination, intolerance, and violence, and improve the protection of FoRB in South Asia. This project is funded by European Union and implemented in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and India.

This Terms of Reference (TOR) defines the work that must be carried out by the external consultant, specifically in Pakistan.

1. Background of the Organization

[South Asia Collective](#) is a regional network bringing together researchers, activists, and organisations from across South Asia to systematically track the conditions of minorities and their access to rights in line with international standards of FoRB, minority and human rights; and to engage in advocacy based on these findings to improve outcomes for marginalised communities. SAC members are engaged at various levels ranging from grassroots activism to regional and international advocacy with bodies such as the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the UN.

[Minority Rights Group](#) campaigns worldwide with around 150 partners in over 50 countries to ensure that disadvantaged minorities and indigenous peoples, often the poorest of the poor, can make their voices heard. MRG examines how discrimination based on age, class, gender and disability can have a multiple impact on disadvantaged minorities, and its campaigns target governments and communities to eradicate such attitudes. Through programmes, publications, advocacy, legal cases, training and education, and action in the media, MRG support minority and indigenous people as they strive to maintain their rights – to the land they live on, the languages they speak, to equal opportunities in education and employment, and to full participation in public life.

2. The Project

The SAC and MRG are in collaboration for a 3-year project titled "[Supporting Religious Pluralism and Respect for Freedom of Religions or Belief across South Asia](#)" which is implemented in the 6 South Asian countries, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and India. Across



South Asia, rising majoritarian nationalisms have accompanied severe challenges to FoRB. Religious minorities are at particularly high risk of violent attacks, hate speech, and intimidation, and these violations are frequently met with lack of accountability. This occurs against a backdrop of long-standing social, economic, and cultural marginalization and exclusion, particularly for those who face intersectional discrimination, such as religious minority women, indigenous peoples adhering to minority religions, and those facing caste-based discrimination. The project's overall

objective is to promote and protect freedom of religions or belief (FoRB) in South Asia by improved, more collaborative monitoring, reporting, and advocacy on FoRB violations. Specifically, the aim is to strengthen the capacity of a regional researchers' and activists' network to monitor incidents, trends, and patterns of FoRB violations; produce and publish authoritative reports; and carry out linked advocacy to combat religious discrimination, intolerance, and violence, and improve the protection of FoRB in South Asia.

Our expected results include:

- Strengthened and increased capacity of a network of HRDs, researchers, and organisations across South Asia (SAC) working securely and collaboratively to promote the rights of religious minorities.
- Regular and authoritative information and research regarding violations of FoRB in South Asia distributed to key national, regional, and international actors.
- Strengthened capacity and opportunities for CSOs to engage in joined up sustained advocacy based on research findings at the local and national levels to improve accountability for FoRB violations against religious minorities/legislation regarding FoRB.
- Greater priority given to addressing discrimination, intolerance, and violence on the grounds of FoRB in South Asia amongst regional and international actors, in particular SAARC, UN human rights mechanisms, and international agencies.

3. The Baseline Assessment

Purpose

SAC and MRG are seeking an external consultant to conduct a baseline study on the situation of women belonging to minority communities across Pakistan. In the present dearth of tangible data relating specifically to minority women, we are seeking a consultant from Pakistan to generate comprehensive data that elaborates on the multiple impact that intersectional discriminations can have on their day-to-day living, giving a more granular look into local and/or provincial contexts, rather than at the national level. A thorough study must also include specific, realistic, and measurable policy recommendations. The goal of this study is to create tangible material to conduct national and international advocacy with, and to be able to implement with civil society organizations.

This research will be used for advocacy on both an international level, while also serving as a useful tool for national and local-level NGOs. Therefore, it must provide a set of implementation recommendations, and must be written in a clear, easy-to-read, and practical manner.

Objectives

- To identify the social, political, and economic discriminations borne by women belonging specifically to religious minority communities



This project is made possible with the financial support of the European Union.

- To identify the specific needs of local women of such backgrounds that is missing from stakeholders' agenda
- To contribute to a body of work that establishes a benchmark for civil society organizations to work against

3.1 Key Questions:

Context analysis

1. In what ways do legal barriers to justice and safety manifest themselves with regards to women from religious minority communities?
2. How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the social, political, and economic situation for women from religious minority backgrounds?
3. What is missing from the public and civil society dialogue around women's rights, with regards to women from religious minority backgrounds?
4. In what ways has increasing nationalistic rhetoric, as well as majoritarian fundamentalism impacted women's private lives and public participation?
5. What should key stakeholders, policymakers, and NGOs know to design programmes that respond to the specific needs and issues of women from religious minority backgrounds?

Baseline Study

1. To what extent are community members aware of the presence of religious minorities in their neighbourhoods, and of the particular issues that they face?
2. How is the capacity of local CSOs in strengthening participation in a gender and minority sensitive way? What are the existing practices, if any, facilitated by local CSOs to enhance participation of women from religious minority backgrounds?
3. To what extent do women and minority stakeholders hold public office, and are able to engage constructively with the public on the interceptional issues facing women from their community? What is the capacity needs among them in order to engage more constructively?
4. To what extent citizens, especially those from minority groups including women and youth, are aware of the levels of barriers that prevent them from fully participating in public life?
5. What are the strengths and weaknesses on collaboration between CSOs, activists, and local government units in facilitating gender and minority sensitive projects?
6. What are citizen's suggestions on making the women's movement more inclusive and minority-sensitive?

3.2 Methodology

The methodology and data collection tools are required to be included in an inception report to be submitted within a week of signing the contract.

The research paper should be done through participatory research method using focus groups that would be convened in the form of a dialogue, interactive inquiry and participatory ranking and interviews.

S/he may use a mixed quantitative and qualitative methods:



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- **Desk study review**
- **Key Informant Interviews:** Interviews may be conducted to gather in-depth information on public perceptions surrounding the issue. They may be carried out with at least 15 key informants, including the CSO staffs, community members, local authorities, members of women and minority groups.
- **Focus-Group Discussions:** At least five FGDs should be organized with religious minority women and girls belonging to different religious minority communities (one FGD with each community) and working in various professions. Each FGD would include 15 participants. Total 15 interviews should be carried out with the women, 5 from each community.
- **Community Survey:** A short community survey in at least 15 neighborhoods may be conducted to capture the above key points. In order to do the survey effectively and appropriately, the consultant will calculate a proper total sample size based on the total population universe of the 15 neighbourhoods using a scientific sample size calculation formula. The total sample size will then be distributed proportionately and a survey will be carried out inclusive of gender, age, religion and ethnicity (if and where appropriate). The consultant is responsible for conducting the perception survey, including arranging the enumerators for the survey.

Using the above as guidelines, the consultant is responsible for designing a methodology best suited for the research they conduct. This methodology will be reviewed by the team for approval.

4. Scope of Work

4.1 Location

Pakistan

4.2 Deliverables:

Following specific deliverables are expected from the consultant.

- Within **seven days from signing the contract, the consultant shall submit the Inception Report**, which clearly defines the baseline methodology, such as clear outlines of FGDs and KII checklist, survey questionnaires, and a research timeline with specific deadlines for each deliverable. The inception report should have clear and logical explanation for the planned methodology.
- **Data collection in the field.** Consultant will take lead in conducting FGDs, survey, and interviews, etc. The data collection from FGDs and KIIs should be documented well into transcripts or notes.
- **Draft baseline report to be submitted within 15 days of completion of the data collection** for the review and comments from relevant country team. The review and feedback of the report could be more than one round depending on the quality of the report submitted by the consultant and the extent to which the comments and suggestions from the first round of review have been incorporated.
- **The baseline report after incorporating the comments.** The report should be written strictly in English language and should be around 25-30 pages (excluding annexes) in length and consists of:
 - a. Cover Page
 - b. Table of contents, list of acronyms/abbreviations and list of tables and charts
 - c. Executive summary of key findings and recommendations – no more than 3 pages.
 - d. Introduction: Short context analysis, project description, baseline methodology with clear explanation of sampling and limitations, FGDs/KIIs participant selection, data analysis approach.



- e. Context Analysis findings. As the Context Analysis may be published separately in the future, it should meet the standard of external publications quality.
 - f. Baseline findings, analysis, and conclusions with associated data presented per research objective and per criteria, via a reasonable balance of narrative vs. graphs and charts .
 - g. Recommendations for activities/intervention. The recommendations should be forward looking and should focus on program design, planning vs implementation, implementation methodology and approach, project monitoring and evaluation system, among others.
 - h. Appendices, which include collected data, detailed description of the methodology with research instruments, list of interviewees, bibliography, and consultant's brief biography.
- The report should be submitted electronically in a MS-Word document. The consultant is responsible for English editing of the final report and should be well formatted.

6. **Duration, Deadline, and Timelines**

The following timeline will be followed:

Application submission deadline	September 21 st , 2021
Hiring of consultant	October 1 st , 2021
Submission of inception paper	October 8 th , 2021
Submission of first draft of report	November 12 th , 2021
Draft review	November 19 th , 2021
Submission of final edited report	November 26 th , 2021

8. **Requirements of applicant**

These qualifications are applicable to all consultant, think tanks, or research institute with interest to apply:

- Sound knowledge and experience on the field of Freedom of Religions or Beliefs; women's rights, Civil Society Empowerment, Public Administration, Development or other related social science field;
- Strong knowledge and experience working issues of religious minorities in individual South Asian countries;
- Proven quantitative and qualitative research skills (candidates should provide a copy of baseline/evaluation reports produced); Strong background in participatory design, monitoring and evaluation methodologies;
- Knowledge of logical and results frameworks;
- In-country work experience
- Fluent in English, Urdu, and relevant local language(s);

9. **Applications**

Interested candidates should send:

- (1) Expression of interest
- (2) CV with sample of evaluation or baseline report
- (3) Proposed budgeting plan (including survey budget)

to sac@thesouthasiacollective.org by **September 21st, 2021**.

