

## Note on the Contributors

**Elaine Alam**, a development and human rights practitioner who has worked in the sector since 2007, is a founder-member and Secretary General of FACES Pakistan. She has extensive experience in poverty reduction programmes and community development in both policy and practice and specialises in development management. She is also currently one of the key actors providing technical support to human rights policy and implementation authorities in Punjab Province. She also works with the Working Group on Freedom of Religion & Belief and has recently advocated for recommendations to the Single National Curriculum, forced conversions, shrinking civic space, the rights of transgenders, the rights of women especially religious minorities as well as climate justice.

**Jeevan Baniya** is Assistant Director at Social Science Baha, Kathmandu. He completed his PhD in Political Science from the University of Oslo. He also teaches international relations at Tribhuvan University. His academic expertise and interest include public policy, state-society relations, democracy and development, labour and migration, disasters, etc.

**S.M. Masum Billah** is Associate Professor of Law, Jagannath University, Bangladesh. He earned his PhD from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. An alumnus of Rajshahi University, Dr Billah was a short-term visiting fellow at the SARCPL, Stellenbosch University, South Africa. He is the author of *Ainer Vab O Ovab* (The Art and Inert of Law). He is actively engaged with the Human Rights Summer School in Dhaka run by the Empowerment through Law of the Common People. His research interests include human rights, constitutional property and legal history.

**Sajjad Hassan** is an Indian human rights researcher and trainer, and the convenor of the South Asia Collective.

**Zakir Hossain** heads the Nagorik Uddyog (Citizens' Initiative), a human rights organisation working to promote human rights, access to justice and good governance in Bangladesh. Zakir has been an active, vocal and well-known human rights and environmental activists in Bangladesh for the past 25 years. He contributes to mobilise Dalits and socially excluded communities in Bangladesh. As an activist, the area of his present work includes access to justice, labour rights, human rights, advocacy, campaigns, reporting and building social movement through empowering the communities.

**Monjurul Islam** is a human rights activist, actively involved with the rights of socially excluded people and Dalit community members. He has 15 years of experience in working with development and human rights and has contributed to a good number of research publications, articles, working papers, policy briefs and so on. Currently, he works with Nagorik Uddyog as Policy Advocacy Coordinator and engages with national, regional and international advocacy to promote the rights of Dalit, indigenous peoples and other minorities.

**Shahnaaz Khan** has a background in peace and conflict studies and has worked on issues of identity-based violence and minority rights, including the *South Asia: State of Minorities Report 2018*. She is currently working in the education sector towards transforming curriculum and pedagogy to address identity, power, and marginalisation within India's education system.

**Saroj K. Nepal**, a Bhutanese citizen, is a social scientist. In a career spanning 30 years, he worked for the Royal Government of Bhutan as a sociologist, and with Danida for two years as Programme Officer for Health and Good Governance Sector Programmes and as a Social Development Consultant. He has completed assignments on social themes and issues in a range of sectors, with unilateral

and bilateral donors and development banks. He also has developed project proposals, and undertaken monitoring and evaluation. He recently took up a new position as Executive Director (Interim) of the Centre for Research on Bhutanese Society (CRBS) that he co-founded in 2020. He has engaged with the South Asia Collective since 2018 with contributions to the annual publications and discussions held on-site in the region.

**Shambhawi Paudel** is a Research Associate at Social Science Baha. She is a human rights lawyer with research interest in cross-sectional application of human rights standards in society. She completed her LLM in Human Rights Law, specialising in international justice, from the Central European University, Hungary. Her master's thesis was a study on the right to access abortions and sex selection in China, India and Nepal. She has worked in different governmental and non-governmental organisations on issues such as reproductive rights, LGBTIQ+ advocacy, state transparency and accountability, and arms control.

**Ambika Satkunanathan** is an Open Society Fellow (2020-2021). From October 2015 to March 2020, she was a Commissioner at the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka. Prior to that, she functioned as the Legal Consultant to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Sri Lanka. Her research and advocacy have focused on transitional justice, custodial violence, prison reform, militarisation, gender and Tamil nationalism. Her publications include contributions to the *Oxford Handbook of Gender & Conflict*, the *Routledge Handbook on Human Rights in South Asia*, and *Contemporary South Asia*. She is Chairperson of the Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust, an Sri Lankan grant-making organisation and Vice-Chairperson of Urgent Action Fund Asia & Pacific, a regional feminist grant making organisation. Ambika holds a Master of Laws (Human Rights) degree from the University of Nottingham, where she was a Chevening Scholar, and has earned bachelor's degrees (LLB/BA) from Monash University, Australia.

**Ritika Singh** is a researcher based in Kathmandu. Her research interests include labour and migration, social construction of gender relations and inequalities, social inclusion, and representative policymaking. She earned her MA in International Relations: Global Governance and Social Theory from BIGSSS, a joint programme between Jacobs University and University of Bremen, Germany. She has been working in the development sector in Nepal in various capacities for more than a decade. Currently, she is a Research Associate at Social Science Baha, where she is primarily engaged with research on minorities in South Asia, and on Nepali migrant workers.

**Abhimanyu Suresh** is a researcher with the South Asia Collective. He holds a bachelor's degree in Financial and Investment Analysis from the University of Delhi and a master's in Development Studies from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. Abhimanyu works on issues of exclusion and marginalisation and accountability.

**Sudeshna Thapa** is a human rights lawyer and holds an LLM in International Human Rights Law from Lund University, Sweden. She has previously worked as a Research Assistant to the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Toxics, involved, among others, in research related to the human rights implications of exposure to toxic and hazardous substances on minorities. She is currently a Research Officer at Social Science Baha, where she is primarily involved in research and writing on issues pertaining to Nepali migrant workers. She writes regularly on a range of socio-legal issues including minority rights and social inclusion.

**Abdul Rahman Yasa** is a Policy and Research Officer with Civil Society and Human Rights Network. He has an MA in Politics and Security from the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, and a BA in Political Science. Abdul has served with different national and international organisations in Afghanistan. He has worked as a consultant with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), and as a Development Trainer with Creative Associates

International Inc. His work as a Government Policy Officer with Independent Directorate of Local Governance of Afghanistan and as Civilian Consultant with the Ministry of Interior of Afghanistan between 2012 and 2018 has provided him with the opportunity to look at governance practices and challenges in a broad range of institutional issues. His focus is democratic development, anti-corruption, research, women and peacebuilding, human rights, and security studies (Central Asia).