**Terms of Reference (ToR)**

**Consultancy to lead a research on “*Contribution of rural women farmers’ in agricultural production and protection of food sovereignty***”

1. **About ALRD:**

Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) is a national rights based single focused advocacy and networking organization, established in January 1991. It aims to promote and strengthen land rights and agrarian reform in Bangladesh for the poor and marginalized communities. ALRD was formally registered with the Joint Stock Company under Societies Registration Act, 1860 and also with the NGO Affairs Bureau in 1991. Since its formation, ALRD has been playing a pivotal role in mobilizing grassroots actors and promoting advocacy and networking for establishing the rights of the poor and the marginalized communities including women over land and natural resources. At present, its network is spread over more than 200 NGOs, covering the entire Bangladesh. The main focus of its activities includes policy advocacy on land rights of the poor people over natural resources for effecting appropriate agrarian and land reforms in Bangladesh and capacity building of the partners and stakeholders.

1. **Context:**

Agriculture is the main driving force in the rural economy of Bangladesh. Food security of a vast segment of the country's population is dependent on headways in the agricultural sector. Its contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) currently stands at 14.10 per cent, while it employs 40.6 per cent of the labour force; and 70 per cent of the rural population is dependent on agriculture. The involvement of women in agricultural activities was incorporated for the first time in the labour force survey of 1995-96.

Historically Bangladesh is known to be a country of small family farming where women play a pivotal role in producing crops that ensures achieving food security in the country. In different studies of ALRD, it is found that women play the principal roles during pre and post harvesting in agriculture particularly in preparing the soil, producing crops, harvesting, crushing, preserving seed and crop, maintaining the ecosystem, supplying drinking water, preparing and managing organic fertilizer, and last but not the least ensuring food and nutrition to the families. Women farmers in different discussions organized by ALRD said that they participate in 17 of the 21 stages in the crop production cycle. Even though rural women farmers are at the forefront in the progress of the agriculture economy, their contribution in agriculture is not evaluated properly in family, society and state. Sometime, in fact most of the time, family and society kept them away from inheritance ownership of land and even they lack state recognition as farmers. As a result, they do not have access to bank loans due to non-recognition as farmers as well as for not having land in their name or control over land. In the absence of recognition as farmers, women are also not eligible to receive agricultural insurance coverage and other facilities offered by the government. For instance, over 1.4 million farmers' cards have been distributed all over the country; however, women’s access to the famer’s card is very negligible yet.

At present, over 72.6 percent of female workers are engaged in the agriculture sector. The number of women workers in this sector has increased by over 4.5 million during the previous decade from 3.7 million in 2005-06. The participation of men in the agriculture sector has diminished by over 10 percent during the previous decade. This void has been filled up by female workers and this changing pattern raises feminization of agriculture. Amid this COVID- 19 pandemic, the government has allocated a stimulus package Tk. 50.00 billion for the farmers at only 4 percent interest to offset the agriculture fallout. Now a question remains: what is the ratio between women and men to this stimulus package. The economic fallout of the COVID-19 crisis is being acutely felt by women farmers, and high degree of economic uncertainty (such as lack of capital and unfavourable condition access to credit, and irregular supply of food) and gender disparity leave women particularly vulnerable to the economic storm of COVID-19.

COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of the poor population particularly rural women, women farmers in regard to their inaccessibility to most essential health services. Now after several months of the persistent crisis, the economy has further aggravated and the poor and lower middle class are the worst victims. As a result large portions of the urban poor population are going back to their village homes for survival. This massive outflow of poor, lower income people from urban to rural areas will create extra pressure on the rural economy particularly in the agricultural labour market and sharecroppers' insecurity which will ultimately affect badly the interest of the marginal women farmers.

On the other hand, women with different identities, particularly indigenous, occupational and religious minorities, have been facing multiple discriminations and harassments. First they become victims in and deprived from home as women and then from society and State because of their sexual, ethnic and religious identity. Amid this COVID-19 crisis, harassment and abuse against women have increased, and 97.4 percent women in the country are victims of domestic violence[[1]](#footnote-1). This figure indigenous, occupational and religious minorities yet not known.

With this background and experience of working for several years on the above issue, ALRD thinks that comprehensive research is essential for robust advocacy with lawmakers to change the existing policy with recognition of women farmers and securing their rights over agriculture and land.

1. **Rationale:**

The rationale of the research is to find out the challenges that women have been facing in getting access to facilities provided by the government agricultural extension department, financial stimulus package, training, information, access to market, access to and control over *Khas* land etc. and to address the necessity of reforming the existing policy/laws with specific recommendations and relevant justifications. And COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of the rural women farmers in accessing essential agricultural services. Research will also thrive to link it with the current overall situation of rural women farmers.

1. **Research problem:**

Due to not having access to and control over land, women are not recognized as farmers that lead them facing multiple challenges in getting access to agricultural and credit support by the government. The manifestation of the existing challenges further intensified due to COVID pandemic.

1. **Objectives of the research:**

The general objective of the research is to contribute to promote women’s rights over agriculture, in particular recognition as farmers so that they would have access to agricultural inputs and control over *khas* land in order to promote family farming and food security, even amid this COVID-19 crisis.

The specific objectives are:

1. To analyze the contribution of women farmers in agriculture and national food security;
2. To understand the present scenario of women farmers’ access to government agricultural services and credits;
3. To analyze women’s ownership and control over land and other natural resources (*khas* land, water, and forest) and their decision making role in agriculture;
4. To identify gaps and opportunities of the relevant policies (women development policy, agricultural policy, etc.);
5. To understand the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on women farmers’ in terms of access to agricultural inputs (such as government declared stimulus packages and subsidies) and violence against women (VAW).
6. **Methodology** **:**

The research will try to involve all relevant stakeholders at the regional and national level and follow both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. In this regard, the research will value primary stakeholders’ knowledge, experiences and concerns particularly marginalized rural farmers’ mainly women, indigenous women in CHT and plain lands from the viewpoint of their contribution to agriculture, and access to and control over private, public and customary land and food security. The process of the research will also allow the participation and consultation of key stakeholders (rights holders and duty-bearers) to the extent possible and will ensure that the views of beneficiaries are represented in the research.

The study will utilize both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods to enhance the triangulation of data and increase overall data quality, validity, credibility, and robustness and reduce bias. Besides, the research will review all relevant documents which are the key elements of the research such as review of related academic articles, journals, contemporary research papers, and reports, government statistics and records, policies and project documents, and definitely international instruments as deemed important. The research will be implemented upon agreement between the researcher and ALRD authority and ensure the followings:

1. Sample size considers all selected areas i.e. coastal region, haor region (Sunamganj), CHT, and north region and will be interviewed for the research;
2. Questionnaire development: considering the COVID situation, the research person will develop a questionnaire to collect the information and to orient the representatives of ALRDs partner organization from the said areas in association with ALRD.
3. Focus Group Discussions (FGD): The focus group discussion should be able to verify the information collected through the questionnaire survey and report on indicators that can’t be done through surveys
4. Discussion/meeting/KII over phone or online applications: With respective agriculture and gender experts, economist, Govt. officials, policy makers, network partner organizations etc.
5. A case study approach will also be employed to illustrate the research evidence and support to logic interventions.
6. **Expected deliverables and timeline:**

The research will be carried out from the last week of August 2020 for approx. 3 months. All deliverables will be in English and submitted to the executive director of ALRD. At least the following points will be covered by the study documents (not limited to and could be revised after getting the findings from 1st draft).

1. An inception report which includes a research design that builds on the objectives and research questions. It will describe the study methodology/methodological approach, data collection tools and data analysis methods. The inception report will also identify a list of information sources, including key stakeholder analysis. It will include a detailed work plan indicating timing of activities, responsibilities, and use of resources.
2. First Draft of the research, which contains an introduction with description of key findings, case studies, and recommendations.
3. PowerPoint Presentation in a national seminar summarizing key findings, lessons learned and good practices, and integrate the concerns and recommendations of the participants and panelists (if relevant).
4. Submission of the final research report.

* Executive summary
* Introduction
* Description of the key findings
* Research findings
* Recommendations
* Case study with photographs and quotes
* Bibliography/references

Table below provides an indicative timeframe, including due dates for deliverables and to whom.

| Task/Activities | Deliverables | Notes | Due Date |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Inception report | | | |
| * Consultant(s) submits an Inception Report, including a research question matrix, proposed methodology, and work plan (with agreed upon deliverables). | Inception Report (draft) | This report will be used as an initial point of agreement and understanding between the researcher and ALRD team.  Payment:  30% of total amount on approval of deliverable. | Last week of August |
| 2. Research & Data Collection Phase | | | |
| * In-depth document review; conduct consultations with key stakeholders, interviews etc. in alignment with final methodology adopted. |  |  | 2nd week September to 1st week of October |
| * Travel for the preparation of at least 2/3 case studies (one per theme role in agriculture and access to support services; and access to *Khas* land). |  | ALRD will shoulder the communications and organize the stakeholders' consultation like FGD, KII. Consultants have to bear the travel cost. | TBD |
| 3. Draft Report | | | |
| * Presentation by researcher on preliminary findings, main recommendations, challenges, opportunities, and lessons learned. | Discussion/ PowerPoint presentation |  | 2nd week of October |
| * submits first draft of research report | First draft of the research | ALRD team will review the findings and prove feedback.  Payment: 30% of total amount on approval of deliverable. | Last week of October |
| * Presentation on the second draft of the research summarizing key findings, challenges, opportunities, and recommendations. | PowerPoint | ALRD will organize a national seminar to mark the International Rural Women Day | 1st week of November |
| 4. Final Report | | | |
| * Submission of Final research report | Final research report | Payment: 40% of total amount on approval of deliverable. | Last week of November |

1. **Profile of the Consultant(s)**

The expected consultant(s) should have a PhD Degree and involvement with a renowned university will be given priority. The consultant(s) should possess at least ten years of research experience on women in a society, such as women's role in agriculture, IPs, Gender Based violence, gender socialization, and gender and development goals with national and international organizations.

1. **Supports from ALRD**
2. ALRD will provide necessary support organizing local and national events (such as FGDs, KII, local and national level seminars) and communicating with local organizations and stakeholders.
3. The consultant(s) will be assisted in arranging tour and travel, lodging and food during their field visit but will not bear the cost.
4. **Tentative Budget:**

TK. XXXX (XXX only) will be paid by A/C payee cheque. Income Tax will be deducted at source as per law of the land. However, Necessary VAT will be borne by ALRD. The first installment of the Payment (30%) will be made after signing the contract; the second installment (30%) will be paid after field work, and the final payment (40%) will be plaid after submission of the final report.

**General terms and conditions:**

* ALRD reserve the right to accept or reject any proposal without providing verbal and/or written rationale;
* All reports and documents prepared during the assignment will be treated as the property of ALRD;
* The reports/documents or any part, therefore, cannot be sold, used and reproduced in any manner without prior written approval of ALRD;
* ALRD reserve the right to monitor the quality and progress of the work during the assignment.

**Submission of Proposal:**

Interested consultant firms are requested to submit a technical proposal and a financial proposal addressing to the Executive Director, Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) 1/3 Block-F, Lalmatia, Dhaka-1207, Email: alrd@ agni.com

**The deadline of proposal submission on or before 18 August 2020**

Shamsul Huda

Executive Director

Dated: 10 August 2020

1. <https://www.thedailystar.net/over-11000-women-faced-domestic-violence-during-covid-19-shutdown-1912041> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)