

National Human Rights Commission
Manav Adhikar Bhawan,
C-Block, GPO Complex, INA, New-Delhi – 110023

Invitation for Expression of Interest for Conducting Research
Study on Missing Children

INTRODUCTION

The National Human Rights Commission sponsors research projects as per the provision under Section 12 of Chapter-III of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 which mandates the Commission to undertake and promote research in the field of human rights.

Every year, thousands of children are reported to have gone missing in India as evidenced by the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). According to NCRB's 'Crime in India 2019' report, a total of 73,138 children were reported missing in 2019. The report also states that the number of missing children has increased by 8.9% in comparison to 2018, wherein, the number of missing children was 67,134. Even when the country spent a major chunk of the year 2020 under lockdown due to the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, a total of 59,262 went missing as per NCRB's latest statistics. Further, a total of 43,661 children continue to be untraced in the year 2020 (including previous years untraced missing). And as with all concerned stakeholders, the National Human Rights Commission has also been continuously alarmed by the issue and has decided to take up a research study on it.

Therefore, the **Commission hereby invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from the reputed research institutions, universities, recognised NGOs devoted to the espousal of the cause of child rights, for undertaking NHRC Research Study on Missing Children, as per the Terms of Reference (TOR) given below.**

The last date for receipt of the EOI is 21st January 2022.

1. OBJECTIVES

The objective of the study is to come up with evidence-based recommendations to the Government to improve the response of institutional mechanisms concerning the cases of missing children and thereby remove the barriers faced by parents/guardians of missing children at all stages of the systems' response, barriers faced by functionaries involved in the system and facilitate quick recovery of missing children, ensure that the perpetrators are brought to book and the recovered children have the full support and access to their rights and entitlements for their rehabilitation and reintegration.

The overall objective is:

To assess how the system for delivering justice for missing children functions at all levels in

the NCT of Delhi, exploring the reasons (social, political, and economic) why children go missing and the legal and procedural failures that take place in the process of the system's response to missing children resulting, often, in the lack of access to justice.

The specific objectives are:

- To find out reasons why children go missing;
- To carry out a zone-wise mapping of areas in NCT of Delhi from where children go missing and from where they are recovered;
- To examine the systematic barriers and challenges in ensuring justice for missing children;
- To focus on prevention, protection and rehabilitation (in connection to point iii);
- To examine whether the basic rights of children are violated in the response from various stakeholders;
- To identify the process followed in cases requiring inter-state and intrastate coordination and cooperation between the concerned authorities and the challenges that need to be overcome;
- To assess the service delivery mechanisms related to child protection and allied sectors as provided by the policy and legal framework with particular emphasis to access and quality;
- To identify measures for fixing accountability of response mechanisms/ all stakeholders including Police, Courts, etc;
- To make recommendations for strengthening/making changes in the systems;
- To disseminate the findings and recommendations of the study to all stakeholders.

2. METHODOLOGY

To include the following:

1. Literature Review
2. Review of legal aspects/gaps in laws, procedures, rules.
3. Review of response of courts on the issue of missing children- review of judgments and the documents (status reports, affidavits, compliance report, etc.) that have been filed in the court.
4. Review of all Standard Operating Procedures in use that cover missing children:
 - Standard Operating Procedure for Cases of Missing Children issued by the Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India. Most updated version is dated 23.11.2016.
 - Standard Operating Procedure for Care and Protection of Children in Street Situations, issued by National Commission for Protection of Child Rights and Save The Children-India. It has multiple versions floating around but the most updated version available on NCPCR website is dated November-2020.

- Standard Operating Procedure for Railways to Ensure Care and Protection of Children in Contact with Railways, issued by Indian Railways with the support of MWCD, GOI and NCPCR. Most updated version was issued on 04.06.2018.
 - Standing Order No. 252/ 2019 issued by Delhi Police for Procedure to be followed on Receipt of Information about missing children/ Persons.
 - Standard Operating Procedure for Enforcement of The Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 issued by Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India , in year 2017.
5. Review of select programme interventions from a rights-based approach.
(Analysis of various interventions from within the sample that is being studied including but not limited to Operation Smile, Operation Muskan, and Railway Childline (their pros and cons particularly vis-a-vis child rights approach).
6. The stakeholders with whom in-depth interviews need to be held and from whom quantitative data will have to be collected (mixed method/ participatory methodology) including children themselves (FGDs/ interviews as per conditions with necessary precautions), CHILDLINE, police, judiciary, parents, functionaries of institutions, prosecutors, CWCs, schools, AHTUs, nodal officer under the Child Labour Act in each district, representatives from CSOs, Legal Services Authority, DCPCR, PLVs, portal administrators/ functionaries, representatives from DWCD/MHA.
- (The list is to be fine-tuned after literature review by the agency. All protocols and guidelines to be checked to identify the other stakeholders with whom children come in contact with and who need to be included).*
7. Children who had gone missing but did not come in contact with the legal system - to be built into the qualitative part of the research- FGDs with parents and children.
8. The reference period for the study may be four years from 2017 to 2021. It is proposed that the sample size for in-depth analysis of cases of missing children is 10% of reported cases in the three districts with the highest number and three with the lowest number of missing children.

(Indicative sources of data collection: FIRs registered, cases where FIR is not registered, complaints received by civil society organisations, complaints filed with NHRC, NCPCR, DCPCR, Zipnet, TrackChild portal, CHILDLINE, CWCs, AHTUs, NCRB etc. children who go missing from CCIs and schools¹. Data should include diverse categories of children.

¹ This must include children who have not attended school consecutively for 30 days or more as per requirement under Rule 2B Explanation 2 (2) of the Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Rules, 2017.

3. KEY DELIVERABLES AND END PRODUCTS

The end product(s) and key deliverables to be given by the agency:

- Tools of Data Collection viz-a-viz the various identified stakeholders,
- Report based on the pilot/pre-testing of the tools
- Data Collection
- Findings Report
- Data Validation
- Draft Recommendations
- Final Report

4. A. COMPETENCIES REQUIRED IN THE AGENCY

The assigned team for the research should have the following competencies:

- The team should include members who have legal background/knowledge, sociology and child psychology, IT expert;
- The team should be oriented and sensitive towards child rights and child-friendly methods;
- The agency should have a demonstrated record of having conducted similar research in the past;
- Should be able to submit synopsis of two similar researches carried out it;
- The capacity to orient, induct, train, and engage field researchers;
- Skill in designing and implementing appropriate research tools and methodology, including current/dynamic research methods, mixed method/participatory research; and large scale data analysis;
- Excellent report writing skills (in English);
- Ability to liaison with Working Group regularly and effectively;
- Should have a clear Child Protection Policy;
- Should practice the ethics and protocols in conducting research with children.
- Should have an understanding and functional familiarity of the Child Protection System.

4. B. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The research grant would be made available to an institution having adequate infrastructure to execute the research project(s). An institution which is associated in any manner with any aspect of protection and promotion of human rights, with good track record, qualified human resource and trained manpower, and which is not run for profit, shall be eligible to be considered for entrusting the research project, such as:

- i. Research and Training Institutions set up and fully funded by the Central Government/State Government/Public Sector Undertaking;
- ii. Institutions/ Organizations registered as professional society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 (Act XXI of 1860);

- iii. Institutions registered as ‘Trusts’ under The Indian Trust Act, 1882;
- iv. Registered institutions exclusively devoting itself to the espousal of the cause of human rights;
- v. University or a Deemed University;
- vi. College covered under Section 2 (f) and 12 B of the UGC Act, 1956;
- vii. Private college covered under Section 2(f) of the UGC Act, 1956 and affiliated to the university.

Note: In case of the institutions listed at S. Nos. (ii) to (iv) above, their eligibility for receiving assistance will be decided by the Competent Authority of the Commission after perusal/ consideration of their registration certificate, audited annual report and balance sheet of the last 3 years, etc.

5. PROCEDURE FOR SUBMISSION OF RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSAL

- The institution seeking financial assistance should submit the proposal as per the prescribed format (See Annexure I).
- The financial details should include details in respect of various expenditure heads including remuneration to the research staff, cost of travel with boarding/ lodging during field visits, cost of computer hiring or data processing, stationery and printing cost, telephone and postage charges, overhead costs, etc.
- No financial assistance is given for procurement of equipment/ furniture including computer hardware/ scanner/ printer/ telephone/ fax/ photocopier, etc.
- The proposal should be forwarded by the Head of the Institution/ Organization. (see proforma at Annexure-II)
- The proposal shall be submitted along with the requisite documents. Incomplete proposal shall not be entertained and will be out rightly rejected.
- The eligible institutions/ organizations/ research agencies may submit a soft copy of their research proposal in the prescribed format through **email at jdr-nhrc@gov.in latest by 21st January 2022 up to 05:00 PM.**

6. PROCEDURE FOR SELECTION/ SANCTION OF THE PROJECT

- The project proposal submitted to the Commission will be scrutinized and, if need be, the Commission may call the Principal Investigator to make a presentation before the Commission.
- The Principal Investigator may be suggested to make the desired changes/ modifications and only after receipt of the revised proposal duly incorporating the suggested changes, the Commission may consider approving the proposal.
- The decision of the Commission to accept or not to accept the proposal would be subject to viability of the project and availability of funds. However, the decision of the Commission either way, i.e., to sanction or not to sanction the project would be final, without prejudice.
- A Sanction Letter together with the Terms of Reference (ToR) would be issued after approval of the project which would indicate:
 - a. Title and objectives of the study
 - b. Research methodology
 - c. Coverage area of the study

- d. Duration and schedule for completion of the study.
- e. Outline of the tasks to be accomplished and the outcome expected from the study
- f. Budget, release of grant in installments and other conditions of assistance, etc.
- The institution receiving the assistance would be required to complete the formalities as per the ToR/ Sanction Letter.
- The amount of assistance would be released in favour of the institution/ organization and not to the Principal Investigator.

7. DURATION OF THE STUDY:

- The proposal may be submitted for both short-term and long-term research project. The short-term project would be for duration of 3 to 6 months whereas the long-term project would be considered for duration of 6 to 12 months.
- The duration of the project will only be extended under exceptional circumstances with the prior approval of the Commission.
- The date of release of the first instalment of the grant by the Commission would be considered the effective date of commencement of the research project.

8. PROCEDURE FOR RELEASE OF GRANT

- A separate bank account solely for the purpose of the research project has to be opened in any Bank which is to be operated jointly by the Principal Investigator and any other person nominated by the Institution. The funds will be released into this account by NHRC. However, if any institution is not in a position to open a separate bank account for the research project due to any justified reason, then the funds will be released in the existing bank account of the Institution duly intimated by the latter to NHRC.
- The sanctioned amount shall be released in three instalments as per the procedure given below:
 - a. The first instalment of the grant comprising 40% of the total sanctioned amount by the Commission would be released after receipt of the request for its release and particulars of the bank account opened for the purpose of the research project.
 - b. The second instalment of the grant comprising 40% of the total sanctioned amount by the Commission would be released after receipt of the progress report, utilization certificate in respect of the first instalment together with the item wise statement of expenditure duly certified by the Head of the Institute/ Organization.
 - c. The last and final instalment, i.e., remaining 20% of the total sanctioned amount, may be taken by the Principal Investigator from the Institute's own resources, which would be reimbursed by NHRC on completion of the following requirements.
- Note: In case there is any shortcoming in the project report, the third instalment would be withheld till such time the same is addressed properly to the satisfaction of the Commission.
- The amount is to be spent according to the approved heads/items within the approved allocation mentioned in the sanction letter/ ToR. However, the institution may re-appropriate expenditure from one sub-head to another, subject to a maximum of 15% in either case within the overall sanctioned amount. Prior approval in such cases is not necessary. All such re-appropriation, however, should be reported to the Commission.
- The financial assistance is not available for incurring any capital expenditure. The books & journals acquired by the Principal Investigator from the grant for the Research Project must be deposited to the NHRC or to the Institution's/ organization's

departmental library after completion of the project Travel and Field Work. The amount allocated under the head travel/ field work is to be utilized for the data collection and collection of other information such as documents, visits to libraries, etc., within the general scope and sphere of the ongoing project. This should not be used for attending conferences, seminars, workshops, training courses, etc.

- Institutional Overheads: The institution will provide the required infrastructure facilities like office accommodation, furniture, computer, library, communication facilities, secretarial services, etc. The overheads for providing these facilities will be normally 5% to 10% of the project cost.

9. INTERIM PROGRESS REPORTS

The Principal Investigator would be required to submit the interim progress reports at regular intervals to the Commission. If need be, he may be required to make a presentation before the Commission on the progress of work.

10. CHANGES IN THE TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

- a. No change should be made in the Terms of Reference of sanction without prior approval of the Commission. The Principal Investigator will report to the Commission about the changes, if any, they intend to make in the TOR of the research project.
- b. The Principal Investigator of the project proposals should not be changed without the prior approval of the Commission. However, if the Principal Investigator associated with the project leaves the Institution/ Organization at any stage after the commencement of the research study, the project may be continued by appointing a new Principal Investigator by the institute, with prior approval of the Commission. Such request should, however, be timely sent to the Commission.
- c. If the Principal Investigator/ Institution fails to complete the project as per the TOR, the institution will be debarred from receiving the financial assistance under the scheme and an appropriate action will be initiated as deemed fit by the Commission.

11. SUBMISSION OF THE PROJECT REPORT

- a. Upon completion of the research study, the Principal Investigator would prepare and submit a draft report to the Commission.
- b. The cover page of the research project should display the logo of NHRC.
- c. Principal Investigator may be asked by the Commission to make a power point presentation on the report before the Commission. The observations/ suggestions given during the course of presentation and subsequent discussion may be taken into account in finalizing the report.
- d. The final report of the project will be submitted by the Principal Investigator after incorporating the comments/ suggestions made by the Commission on the draft report. The reasons for non-acceptance of the comments/ suggestions, if any, should be properly explained to the Commission. Receipt of five hard bound copies of the project report along with a soft copy in 'Word' and 'Readable PDF' format. Utilization

Certificate and head-wise statement of expenditure of the total amount spent together with bills/ receipts/ vouchers in original. (See Annexure-III) Statement of the bank account/ ledger account from beginning to end and refund of the amount credited towards interest.

- e. The Principal Investigator/ Institution may be required to send the primary data collected along with the particulars of respondents, if asked by the Commission.
- f. The financial support provided by the Commission shall be duly acknowledged on all documents produced and prominently displayed with a disclaimer as given below:

11.f.1.1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: 'This study was carried out with the financial support of National Human Rights Commission, India, and conducted by _____ (name with address), with _____, as the Principal Investigator.'

11.f.1.2. DISCLAIMER: 'This research project was sponsored under the Research Scheme of National Human Rights Commission, India. While due care has been exercised to prepare the report using the data from various sources, NHRC does not confirm the authenticity of data and accuracy of the methodology to prepare the report. NHRC shall not be held responsible for findings or opinions expressed in the document; this responsibility completely rests with the researcher(s).'

12. COPYRIGHT AND DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH REPORT

- a. **COPYRIGHT:** NHRC would have the intellectual property right for all the research studies outsourced. Prior permission of the Commission would be necessary before such study reports could be published by the Principal Investigator/ Organization.
- b. The soft copy of the study shall be put on the NHRC website for the purpose of dissemination of the study report. Further, the Commission may also grant permission for its publication in any form, i.e., Book/Journal/Newspaper etc.

13. SETTLEMENT OF THE PROJECT ACCOUNT

- a. The Principal Investigator/ Institution are required to settle the project account immediately on completion of the project. In case the balance grant, if any, is not claimed within six months from the date of completion of the project, the same will lapse and no representation will be entertained on this behalf.
- b. In case a separate bank account has been opened solely for the purpose of the research project, the same shall be closed after completion and settlement of the research project and the unutilized balance, if any, shall be refunded forthwith to the Commission.

14. OTHER CONDITIONS

- a. The progress report and final report should be in English.

- b. The Project Account will be open for scrutiny by the NHRC or its representatives at any time.
- c. The Principal Investigator/ Co-Investigator of the project will not accept any financial assistance from any other source(s) for the same project assigned under the scheme by NHRC.
- d. The persons engaged in the research project shall not be treated as the employee of the Commission in any manner.
- e. There should not be any duplication/ overlapping with the research projects/evaluation studies carried out by any Government agency or any institution/ organization/ NGO.
- f. The Principal Investigator will consult NHRC on the final methodology including the schedule/ questionnaire etc., to be adopted, keeping in view the objectives of the study before commencing the work of primary data collection.
- g. The Principal Investigator will have to submit their progress report and make a presentation on the same after every 3 months from the sanction of the project.
- h. The Institution or the Principal Investigator or his research staff associated with the project shall not share the data collected for the assigned research study with any other person/ organization without the prior approval of the Commission. The research study shall not be used by the Principal Investigator or his research associates or anybody else for the preparation of any doctoral thesis/ dissertation or for attainment of any other degree/ diploma or publication(s) without the prior approval of the NHRC.
- i. In case of non-compliance of terms and conditions as laid down in the sanction letter, or in case of the unsatisfactory progress of the work, the project may be cancelled and the institute will have to return the entire money along with the interest earned. The concerned organization will have to bear all responsibilities regarding any discrepancy and irregularity in the funding w.r.t. the sanctioned project.
- j. All other conditions are applicable as mentioned in the NHRC's Guidelines for Sanctioning Research Project.

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ANNEXURE-I

FORMAT FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL FOR RESEARCH PROJECT

I. Format for the Technical Proposal

1. **Information about the organization/institution:** 1 -2 pages including name, address, contact information, category of institution, etc.
 - i. Organizational structure (research facilities, personnel, infrastructure and software)
 - ii. Name of at least 2 studies/research of similar nature conducted by your organization, for whom, in which year. Submit a synopsis of the two studies.

2. **Description of proposed approach/methodology for the study:** This is the main component of the technical part of the research proposal. Please describe in the following sections:
 - i. **Introduction/background:** title of the project, origin of the problem, literature review describing current situation, challenges, gaps and good practices, if any in relation to the scope of the study.
 - ii. **Technical approach and methodology:**
 - Explain your understanding of the objectives of the study;
 - Describe the proposed design/methodology for different aspects of the scope of work; give reason/s for proposing a particular methodology.
 - iii. **Risk assessment and mitigation measures:** Identify the potential risks, difficulties in carrying out the research and the measures to be adopted to manage the potential risks; also identify potential limitations.
 - iv. **Proposed organization and staffing for the research:** Indicate the lead person responsible for the research, the different disciplines of the researchers, roles, along with CVs and years of experience in similar research; is proposed staff employee of agency or temporary staff, give details in a table.
 - v. **Deliverables and proposed timeline:** Define the end products and give a timeline for the entire scope of work, including review and reporting.
 - vi. Any other information in support of the proposal which may be helpful in evaluation:

(Please do not cut and paste from the TOR. NHRC seeks to know your understanding of the issue, objectives and scope of work together with the approach and methodology being adopted.)

II. Format for Financial Proposal

1. Financial Assistance required:

Items/Heads	Estimated Expenditure

2. Whether the Institution/PI has received financial support for any research study/ project earlier from the NHRC. If so, please indicate the details.

Date and Place:

Name and Signature of the PI

ANNEXURE – II

FORWARDING LETTER

To,

The Joint Secretary,
National Human Rights Commission,
Manav Adhikar Bhawan,
C-Block, GPO Complex,
INA, New Delhi-110023

Dated:

Subject: Proposal for undertaking/ conducting a research study/ project on _____.
Sir,

I am glad to forward herewith a proposal for undertaking/ conducting a research study/ project on _____ at a total cost of Rs _____. The research study/ project is proposed to be completed over a period of _____ months/ years. Mr./ Ms./ Dr. who is working as _____ in this institution w.e.f. _____ will be the Principal Investigator for this research project.

2. I certify that this institution will provide all the facilities and infrastructure for the completion of the research study/ project and undertake as follows:

- (a) The University/ College/ Institution is approved under (Please mention applicable Section/ Act) and is fit to receive grants from the Central/ State Government and other funding agencies.
- (b) The organization agrees to abide by all the terms & conditions, guidelines of the scheme, and any subsequent revision/ changes therein.
- (c) The project shall be completed within the stipulated period. If the Commission is not satisfied with the progress of the research project, it may terminate the project immediately and ask for the refund.
- (d) The basic facilities such as Computer/ required software/ library/ telephone/ fax/ photocopier, etc., will be provided by the institution. However, the operational cost for these facilities/ activities will be met from the institutional charges sanctioned under the Project.
- (e) The Principal Investigator will continue to work in the institution till the completion of the study/ project. In case the Principal Investigator leaves without completing the project, the institution will take full responsibility to complete the project as per the existing terms and conditions.
- (f) The institution will take full responsibility for monitoring the progress of the research study/ project, sending progress reports and utilization certificates, etc. in the prescribed formats and ensuring proper and timely implementation.

(g) The institution will take full responsibility to ensure that the Research projects will be original and without any plagiarism.

(h) It is also certified that our institution has not been blacklisted by any authority/Central/State Government /NGO, etc.

3. It is requested that the project proposal may be considered favourably for providing financial assistance of Rs._____.
4. Details of documents enclosed are given in the attached Check-list.

Signature, Name and Stamp of the Head of the Institution

ANNEXURE-III

UTILIZATION CERTIFICATE

Certified that the amount of Rs. _____ (Rupees _____ only) received from the National Human Rights Commission under the scheme of support for Research Project titled _____ vide NHRC letter No. dated _____ has been fully utilized for purpose for which it was sanctioned and in accordance with the terms and conditions laid down by the National Human Rights Commission.

HEAD OF THE INSTITUTION

STATUTORY AUDITOR