Editor's Note | Volume 2, Issue 1

With this third issue of the South Asia Journal for Minorities, we continue our commitment to amplifying marginalized voices and interrogating the structural forces that sustain inequality across the region. The journey from our inaugural issue to this volume has reinforced our conviction that rigorous research and meaningful dialogue are essential instruments for social transformation.

The articles gathered here speak to a troubling insight: formal institutional arrangements, whether constitutional provisions, security frameworks, or political movements, do not automatically deliver justice for minority communities. The contributions reveal a persistent gap between the promise of protection and the reality of exclusion. This gap is not merely a failure of implementation. It is produced through institutional logics that, even when well-intentioned, can replicate the very hierarchies they claim to address. The papers compel us to examine how exclusion becomes routine, embedded in ordinary governance, customary practice, and the everyday exercise of authority.

Several papers examine how state power interacts with minority communities. One contribution demonstrates how Countering Violent Extremism approaches in Sri Lanka reframe Tamil families' demands for truth and justice as security threats. Another explores how the Arakan Army's selective recognition of ethnic groups in Myanmar reproduces exclusion of the Rohingya. A study from Manipur shows how customary institutions and religious authority produce forms of exclusion that remain invisible within formal legal frameworks. These papers force us to confront uncomfortable truths about how state and non-state actors can perpetuate marginalization even while claiming to address it.

Other contributions turn to identity, belonging, and political participation. An ethnographic study of Bengali Dalit Christians demonstrates that conversion to Christianity does not dismantle caste hierarchies but transforms their expression. A paper on the Shaheen Bagh protests reveals how Muslim women were subjected to gendered and sexualized hate online, exposing how digital narratives operate as tools of political control. A further contribution challenges the assumption that Indian Muslims influenced India's foreign policy toward Israel, questioning how academic discourse itself can reproduce majoritarian assumptions.

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Read together, these papers suggest that legal provisions, constitutional guarantees, and political commitments are insufficient to address structural inequalities. Exclusion is often reproduced through routine practices and institutional logics that appear neutral on their surface. The experiences of minority communities are shaped by intersecting forms of identity and power, requiring analytical frameworks that attend to this complexity.

These papers leave us with urgent questions. How can security frameworks be reoriented toward justice-centered approaches? What would it take for federal democratic arrangements to genuinely include all communities? How can customary institutions be held accountable to constitutional principles? And how can researchers ensure their own frameworks do not reinforce the exclusions they seek to critique?

Across South Asia, minority communities continue to face systemic discrimination, violence, and exclusion. The challenges documented here are active forces shaping the present. In this environment, the work of documenting, analyzing, and advocating for minority rights becomes ever more urgent.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our authors for their careful research and intellectual courage. We thank our reviewers for their rigorous engagement, our editorial board for their wisdom and guidance, and the SAREM team for their dedication in bringing this issue to publication.

The South Asia Journal for Minorities remains committed to its founding vision: a platform for rigorous research, meaningful dialogue, and impactful advocacy. We invite scholars, activists, policymakers, and students to join us in this endeavor.

This issue represents another step in a necessary and protracted intellectual journey. We proceed with intellectual integrity, theoretical empathy, and an unwavering commitment to those whose narratives insist upon being heard. Together, we continue the work of building a more just and inclusive South Asia.

We look forward to your engagement with this issue and welcome your responses to the ideas presented within these pages.

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