Announcement of Legal Fellowship Programme

Fellowship Period: March 2021 – February 2022

SUBMISSION DEADLINE – JANUARY 26TH 2021, MIDNIGHT IST

SAWF IN is pleased to announce a call for a year-long legal fellowship to women lawyers practicing at district courts in India

About South Asia Women Foundation India (SAWF IN)
South Asia Women Foundation India, SAWF-IN is a national women’s fund of India. We were set up with the vision of building a world where women, girls, trans*2 and gender non-conforming persons realise their constitutional rights and freedoms to equality and non-discrimination. Our mission is to mobilise indigenous and other resources, to support movements and initiatives led by women, girls, trans* and gender non-conforming persons, towards the realisation of their human rights.

As a women’s fund, SAWF-IN supports grassroots initiatives and women’s and trans* led organisations with financial and non-financial resources. We believe in their leadership and skills to find the most appropriate solutions to address the issues facing them. SAWF-IN’s role is to ensure that resources are made available and are reaching the most dispossessed women’s collectives, for the priorities they identify, and the claims they make.

SAWF IN Legal Fellowship Programme - Background
The SAWF IN Legal Fellowship Programme was launched in 2017 in partnership with Women’s Fund Asia (formerly known as South Asia Women’s Fund). Through an annual fellowship, the programme provides financial and technical support to women lawyers practicing in districts courts of India, which are the first site of legal redress and remedies for women. The year-long support is aimed at enabling women lawyers hone feminist lawyering and litigation skills, and advocate for women and trans* rights. At the same time, the programme offers opportunities for peer learning, building networks with lawyers from other countries and receiving mentoring support from senior feminist lawyers.

The fellowship support is meant to serve a catalyst to support pro bono litigation and legal advice for women and trans* person from marginalised communities. In the last 3 years, the programme has supported 6 women lawyers working at six district courts. They have supported pro bono litigation for more than 190 women and filed 232 cases in six district courts, in six states. Additionally, the legal fellows have also offered legal counselling to over 800 women from socially and economically marginalised communities such as Dalits, Adivasis, Muslim women among others.

Call for the Legal Fellowship Programme, 2021-22

---

1 With possibilities of extension, post assessment of year one.

2 Trans here refers to a wide range of gender identities. Apart from transsexual and transgender, this umbrella term includes but is not restricted to agender, gender fluid, and gender non-conforming identities.
SAWF IN is launching the call for legal fellows against the background of the humanitarian crisis unleashed by COVID 19. The pandemic has exposed and exacerbated social and economic inequalities in all forms. Numerous studies have shown that the effects of COVID have been particularly harsh on women and trans* people. Women’s groups have reported that economic stress has exacerbated incidents of inter spousal abuse, domestic violence and sexual assault. For many such women legal recourse for the violations faced by them is highly challenging as they are either unaware of the remedies available or the legal system is highly intimidating and unresponsive to their situation. The high cost of litigation also deters women from seeking the rights granted to them under the law.

Through the fellowship SAWF IN wishes to address the unmet need for litigation support to women who choose to use the legal remedies they are entitled to. The fellowship will support women lawyers practising at district courts to:

a) Provide free legal aid and support to women and trans* litigants
b) Build their own skills in feminist lawyering in primary courts, particularly in building constitutional arguments.
c) Advocate for more gender responsive lawyering at district courts
d) Lead and participate in actions that directly contribute to realising the rights of women and trans*

WHO CAN APPLY -

- Applicant must be a citizen of India.
- Women and Trans* lawyers practicing in the district court of any state in India.
- With at least 1 year of experience in Courts, preferably on laws to protect rights of women, children and trans*.
- Applicants below the age of 45 will be preferred.
- Preference will be given to individual applicants who belong to socially, economically and ethnically marginalised communities.
- Persons with experience of engaging with communities of women or trans* people, facilitating their leadership or has been an active supporter of the Indian women’s rights movement will be preferred.
- A self-motivated person.
- Good articulation skills and willingness to document their work extensively.
- Can dedicate one year towards the fellowship programme.
- Has internet connection or phone connectivity to participate in fellowship updates, workshops and reporting.

Review and Selection Process

- The last date for receiving applications is midnight of January 26th, 2021.
- A Webinar will be organised to discuss the application call and process. Please log onto http://www.sawfindia.org/legal-fellowships-programme-call-2021-22 for more details.
- Applicants can expect an acknowledgement of their application within 24 hours of submission or else please get in touch with us on legalfellowship.sawfin@gmail.com
- Shortlisted applicants will be contacted for an interview on phone or online with a selection panel consisting of experienced and senior feminist lawyers.
- The final selected legal fellows for 2021-22 will be announced tentatively by February 25, 2021.
• The legal fellowship will begin from **1 March 2021** with the potential of **extension** subject to progress and outcomes at the end of year one.

• Write to **legalfellowship.sawfin@gmail.com** to submit your application or if you have any queries.

• SAWF IN encourages application from people with disabilities (PWD). Please contact us on **legalfellowship.sawfin@gmail.com** if you need any assistance with your application.

**Please note:**

All Applicants who do not move further in the selection process will be informed. SAWF IN would like to remain engaged with all shortlisted applicants and hence would invite them to be part of our quarterly learning and sharing webinars.

We look forward to hearing from you. If you have any queries please write to **legalfellowship.sawfin@gmail.com**

---

The Legal Fellowship Application package includes the following:

- Call for Application Announcement Note
- Application Format
- Checklist for required documentation, and

The package can be downloaded from [http://www.sawfindia.org/legal-fellowships-programme-call-2021-22](http://www.sawfindia.org/legal-fellowships-programme-call-2021-22)

Applicants can send their forms over emails. Email the Application format with the relevant documents to **legalfellowship.sawfin@gmail.com** with the subject "**Legal Fellowship Application 2021-22**".

Submission Deadline: 26th January 2021 at 12 midnight IST.