

# Gender Policy

(Effective from 1st January 2014)

## RISDA-Bangladesh

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Organization Background**

RISDA-Bangladesh (Resource Integration and Social Development Association in Bangladesh) is a non-government voluntary development organization. The Organization came into existence in 1993. Since then as an outcome of the dedication, sincerity and tireless efforts of all irrespective of staff, volunteers, community people and development partners involved with RISDA-Bangladesh, the organization has grown into one of the reputed non-government development organization in Bangladesh and engaged significantly in transforming the lives of underprivileged, marginalized and hard to reach people in the country.

#### **1.1.1. Vision of the organization**

RISDA-Bangladesh envisions a society where deprived and discriminated people are living with sustainable development in their life and livelihood and with respect and dignity.

#### **1.1.2. Mission of the Organization**

Mission of RISDA-Bangladesh is to work with deprived and discriminated people, stakeholders in the society and state party for collective action to establish rights and entitlement for their life and livelihood.

#### **1.1.3. Values of the Organization**

RISDA-Bangladesh is committed to values of mutual respect, equity, justice, rule of law, transparency, accountability, integrity and impartiality.

#### **1.1.4. Objective of the Organization**

- To reduce illiteracy through both formal, non-formal and higher education;
- To create ecological balance through renewable energy like, biogas ,solar and other initiative, intensive social forestation, biodiversity and other initiatives;
- To promote healthy families, planned population and prevention of HIV/AIDS through health, nutrition, family planning, education and awareness on HIV/STD/AIDS and ensure quality of life;
- To generate income /employment opportunities for the unemployed youth, destitute women, marginal farmers and landless people and make them self-reliant;
- To create economic sustainability and social empowerment of rural and urban disadvantaged poor through micro finance and savings;

- ❑ To encourage IGA initiative of the rural poor in fishery, poultry rearing, homestead gardening etc. and provide technical and financial support as well as other assistances;
- ❑ To provide shelter, relief and rehabilitation of the orphans, disabled, distressed and disaster affected people;
- ❑ To enhance women empowerment and eliminate gender inequalities and social injustices through different measures and to ensure legal assistance and human rights;
- ❑ To conduct research, survey, study, advocacy and consultation programs to support and pursue development initiatives and promote good governance at local and national levels;
- ❑ To create organizational sustainability through business or enterprise development centers, information and technology centers, centers for basic and higher education, technical and vocational training institutes, centers for resources development etc.;
- ❑ Implement others relevant projects as on the goal and objectives of RISDA-Bangladesh.

## **1.2. Gender Policy and its Purpose**

This policy presents the standard procedure and policies of gender issues of RISDA-Bangladesh. This is a guiding rule for all projects/programs, staff members of RISDA-Bangladesh, which serves the interest of all its stakeholders.

Each section of this policy defines the policies and procedures of gender issue; however, not all events can be incorporated/ defined. As such, under special cases management shall try to remain true to the intent of welfare of the stakeholders of RISDA-Bangladesh.

The goal of the policy is to establish a gender friendly atmosphere in working areas where all staffs (male & female) can take part equally in development process. The specific purpose of the policy is:

- ❑ To ensure equality among all level of staffs both male and female of the organization.
- ❑ To ensure equal rights, dignity and opportunities among all level of staff and their equal participation in all activities.
- ❑ To create a gender friendly and right-based environment to change and improve the status of women in the society.
- ❑ To undertake affirmative actions considering the historically created social backwardness and deprivation as well as specific needs of women.

- ❑ To take forward the participation of women in development sectors.
- ❑ To create an environment where women's voices are heard and gender issues are raised.
- ❑ To contribute in strengthening the local and national institutions involved at Govt. or non govt. level the improvement of social, legal and economic status of women

### **1.3. Basic Concepts and Components of Gender Policy**

RISDA-Bangladesh is committed to promote gender parity in organizational and program level. Globally, there is a legitimate concern among the government, donors and the stakeholders about gender parity in all levels. Therefore, every organization requires a gender policy to improve the situation of gender relations. It will assist the managers in making administrative planning, communicating, controlling and deciding over program and organizational management.

### **1.4 Salient features of the Gender Policy**

#### **1.4.1 Approval & Commencement**

This policy will be effective through an office order after approval from Executive Committee of RISDA-Bangladesh. Once the policy is approved and issued order for implementation, all existing policies, practices and conditions which are irrelevant to new ones will be void. Besides, RISDA-Bangladesh management will develop, amend and review policy and procedure from time to time through memo and circular. If such development, amendment and review, relevant to local law and policies, will replace existing policies and procedure.

If there is any controversy in the policy due to lack of/ for explanation or there is no existence of such rules/ policies/ guidelines, the explanation and decision of Executive Director will be final and it will be included in the manual.

This policy is effective from the 1st January of 2014 and shall apply to all financial transactions undertaken by RISDA-Bangladesh.

#### **1.4.2 Process of updating**

The gender policy of RISDA-Bangladesh is not a static document; it is expected to review and update time to time to be a living and evolving document. It is to be assumed that the promotion of gender equality in an organization reflects its organizational requirements. Therefore, with the change of requirements, it is imperative that this Policy is also updated/ modified with approval of the Executive Committee. The Chief of

Gender Promotion Committee (GPC) shall notify changes to the manual. All pages are dated to ensure accuracy. The manual will have loose-leaf binding as the interim amendment (page) can be included easily.

In each three year, RISDA-Bangladesh management will form a review committee or recruit an external consultant to review the whole documents and the committee/consultant will submit the proposed amendments to the authority of RISDA-Bangladesh. The employees of RISDA-Bangladesh can recommend any amendment/inclusion/ exclusion to the committee/consultant. If possible, one female staff will be included in the committee. All types of amendment/ inclusion/exclusion will be done subject to prior approval of Executive Director.

### **1.4.3. Accountability**

On principle, the Executive Director can only authorize the direction of RISDA-Bangladesh, but, in practice, to a certain extent, this authority is delegated to the operational management Chief Operation Officer/ Area Manager/ Credit Coordinator/ Project Coordinator/ Project Manager/ Accounts Manager so that the projects of RISDA-Bangladesh can be managed on a day-to-day basis without the direct involvement of the Executive Director.

## **2. Areas of the policies:**

The Gender Policy covers the following areas:

- Recruitment, leave, promotion, posting, transfer, termination and dismissal;
- Financial and other material benefits;
- Infrastructure and some other special benefits;
- Staff development;
- Specific problems of the female staff
- Values and code of conduct. Workload
- Workload; (Menstruation Period, Pregnancy Period, Breast feeding)
- Promotion of Gender Parity

### **2.1. Recruitment, leave, promotion, posting, transfer, termination and dismissal**

In the existing recruiting policy certain rules are equally applicable in case of the male and female staff. However, to increase the number of female staff the following affirmative actions have been taken:

#### **2.1.1. Recruitment**

The recruitment will proceed as per personnel policy with proper handling by the recruitment committee:

- a) Formation of Recruitment Committee with 3-5 members of whom at least one

member will be a female.

- b) Recruitment must be balanced with the gender and it will be within the range between 30% for the female. The number of female staff in RISDA-Bangladesh will be increased gradually. This increase will be at the field level as well as at all other levels of management.
- c) Priority will be given to female candidates with equal educational qualification but relaxation in experience for the case of recruitment.
- d) For the recruitment of female staff the qualifying marks for both written and viva voce will be 50, while it will be 45 considered marks for female candidate.
- e) To achieve the target of increasing female staff, certain percentage will be reserved (at least 30%) for female candidates at probation level position. If the job nature permits, applications will be invited from female candidates only.
- f) In case of applicant must mention mother's name in his/her application along with father's name.

### **2.1.2. Leave**

The policy for annual leave, medical leave, and casual leave are the same for both male and female staff, but there is a provision for maternity for the female staff and Paternity leave for male staff, which is as follows:

**Maternity leave:** A female staff will be entitled 4 months maternity leave with full pay as per Govt. rule in first two issues of child birth and, if necessary, medical leave, annual leave and leave without pay may be added to this leave by the approval of the authority. If a female staff adopts a baby (up to 5 months) will be entitled maternity leave with full pay for eight weeks.

**Paternity leave:** A male staff will be entitled to 10 (ten) days paternity leave with full pay during the period of childbirth of his wife to give mental support to his wife during childbirth and the succeeding days for postnatal care,

### **2.1.3. Promotion**

In case of promotion to 2 senior positions, one should be a female if available. In other positions female staffs would be given preference to be decided by the management .To bring a competent female staff to be promoted in senior level position special incentive could be given through training at home and abroad

### **2.1.4. Posting and transfer**

The rules of posting and transfer are same for the male and female staff but the following considerations will be made for the female staff:

- ❑ A female staff can be transferred to her nearest locality considering her workload.
- ❑ At the time of posting and transfer of a female employee, the workstation and

place of residence of the husband/parents are to be taken into consideration.

- During the period of pregnancy, i.e. from the first month till the fifth month after childbirth, the female staff is not to be transferred from her work place.

### **2.1.5. Dismissal**

There will be a provision of severe punishment for physical harassment to female colleagues by their male counterpart. In each cases, a prove committee will be formed with 3-members and out of them one should be female.

A staff, irrespective of sex, can be dismissed in accordance with the set service rules of the organization. But the male staff will be subject to dismissal for the following additional reason:

- If any male staff physically abuses or rapes a female staff and it is proved thereby, he will be dismissed immediately from his job; this news will be circulated officially.
- If any employee takes second wife without the consent of first wife, it will be treated as disqualification for continuing his job. The authority will take necessary step to suspend him from service immediately. If required, the organization will extend assistance to the first wife of the terminated staff for carrying out her legal expenses or her case could be referred to the relevant legal aid organization.
- Since dowry is a curse, has got much currency in our society at all levels, sometimes openly and sometime under the guise of gifts dowry taking by any staff should be treated as punishable offence by the authority concern.

### **2.2. Financial and other material benefits**

All staffs will be entitled to equal pay scale, house rent, travel allowance, increment, training allowance, overseas travel allowance, transportation expense, medical facilities, telephone (According to Service rule), etc.

A female staff occupying the position of Program Coordinator (PC) or any female worker of the equivalent rank will be entitled to an official transport if available for field visit. Even a female employee below the rank of PC may avail an office vehicle for field visits with the approval of the Executive Director.

### **2.3. Infrastructure and other special benefits**

Some Infrastructure and special facilities to be offered by the organization to the female staffs, which are as follows:

- There will be separate toilets for the female staff in all other offices of the



organization especially in HQ and Area Offices. Gradually this facility will be extended in other offices.

- ❑ While attending training, a female participant will be allowed to bring her baby along with her to the training center. She may also bring an attendant with her and all expenses on account of that is to be borne by the organization.
- ❑ A baby corner in HQ, Area Offices and other offices where feasible will be arranged for the lactating mothers.

## **2.4. Staff Development**

For staff development, the organization sends staff members to different institutions for skill development and provides opportunities to participate in training courses, seminars and workshops both at home and abroad. Participation of female staff in these staff development initiatives is ensured in proportion to gender-wise numerical strength in the organization and to ensure that the female staffs at the field level are not deprived of these facilities.

## **2.5. Measures for Solving Specific Problems of the Female Staff**

A 5-member Gender Promotion Committee (GPC) of whom at least 2 will be female members has been created to ensure gender equality within the organization. The major functions of the committee is to identify the problems faced by the female staff, take necessary steps to address those and forward recommendations to the management.

## **2.6. Values and Code of Conduct**

- ❑ Gender equity is one of the core values of the organization. All staff of RISDA-Bangladesh should believe this value.
- ❑ There will be no gender division of work in the organization. Opportunity to participate in all activities of the organization remains equally open irrespective of gender.
- ❑ Any comment, made directly or indirectly, which may cause humiliation to the female staff, is considered as a punishable offence.
- ❑ To create a congenial working atmosphere for both male and female staff, a set code of conduct will be prepared. All staff of the organization must abide by this code of conduct.
- ❑ To provide proper orientation about gender issues, the training on Women and Development has been made mandatory for all its staff members.
- ❑ Use of the term 'Nari' instead of Mohila'

## **2.7. Workload Review (Menstruation Period, Pregnancy Period, breast feeding)**

Management will take measure to determine the workload during Menstruation Period, Pregnancy Period, breast feeding, which are as follows:

Menstruation Period: During the period of Menstruation female staff will be permitted to do deskwork.

Pregnancy and Lactating Period: During pregnancy and lactating Period female staff will be permitted to have a liberal time period for a specific time.

Breast-feeding: A baby corner in HQ, Area Offices and other offices where feasible will be arranged for the lactating mothers. In future, organization will arrange a day care center in Area Offices

## **2.8. Promotion of Gender Parity**

### **2.8.1. Training on Gender Promotion**

Gender Promotion Committee (GPC) will assess the training need of all members of General Committee, Executive Committee and Staff Members and arrange orientation/training course on gender among all level of organizational people of the organization.

### **2.8.2. Increased Engagement of Women in Governance of the Organization**

The management of RISDA-Bangladesh will take initiatives to increase the percentage of women at least thirty percent within three years after commencement of the policy. It is noted that the women members will be adequately engaged with organizational activities.

### **2.8.3. Engagement of women participant in program cycle management**

In designing the projects and program, women's needs must be considered. Women participants should be engaged and consulted in decision making process in designing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the projects and have a fair share of resources and benefits.

### **2.8.4. Observation of National and International Days**

Observation of different National and International relevant days at the Upazila level especially International Women's Day, International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, World Rural Women's Day and International Human Rights Day.

### **3. Implementation of Policy**

#### **3.1. The Gender Promotion Committee (GPC)**

After commencement of the Gender Policy, a Gender Promotion Committee (GPC) will be formed with 5 (five) members where at least 2 (two) members will be female. The committee will implement and monitor the policy.

#### **3.2. Budget Allocation:**

As per recommendation of Gender Promotion Committee (GPC), the management of RISDA-Bangladesh will make necessary budgetary provision for undertaking infrastructure facilities and benefits for female staffs.

#### **3.3. Information flow**

The Gender Promotion Committee (GPC) will collect all sorts of information collectively from bottom to upper level in order to overcome misappropriation of any incidence against men and women of RISDA-Bangladesh.

#### **3.4. Monitoring & Evaluation**

The Gender Promotion Committee (GPC) will review the progress of gender parity at organization level at quarterly meeting and it will be documented in black and white. The management will publish a circular with the decisions of the meeting to all level of the offices.

Regular monitoring will be arranged with the help of proper specific guidelines and indicators to assess the present gender situation, which is friendly or not. In that assessment a format will be developed involving some common issues and indicators, after having the information. After recommendation of the committee, the management will take proper initiative and necessary action as per rule. An evaluation will be arranged in each three year by a Gender Specialist and the recommendation will be included in the next review.