



# Gender Policy

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## RISDA-Bangladesh

Registered Office: House # 18, Road # 1, Block # B, Section # 6, Mirpur, Dhaka-1216

Permanent Office: 26/2, Kaliakoir, Birulia, Savar, Dhaka

Phone # +88-02-48033958-9, Cell: 01552 350687

Email: [info@risda.org.bd](mailto:info@risda.org.bd), [risda.bangladesh@yahoo.com](mailto:risda.bangladesh@yahoo.com),

Website: [www.risda.org.bd](http://www.risda.org.bd)

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## 1. Introduction

RISDA-Bangladesh (“the Organization”) 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.

This policy presents the standard policies and procedures of gender issues of the Organization. This is a guiding instruction for all projects/programs, staff members of the Organization, which serves the interest of all its stakeholders.

Each section of this policy defines the policies and procedures of gender issues; 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 the Organization.

## 2. Purpose of the Gender Policy

The goal of the Gender Policy is to strengthen the Organization as a gender sensitive organization and to contribute towards reducing gender inequality in the family, community, society, and the state. The Gender Policy aims at facilitating narrowing the gender gap and strives for attaining an equitable social and economic development by integrating gender perspectives in development programs. The specific purpose of the policy is:

- To protect human rights for women and men and eliminate all forms of discrimination
- 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 opportunities for empowerment of women in the political, social, cultural, administrative and economic sphere
- To incorporate gender issues in management planning, decision making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of 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

## 3. Organization Related Measures

### 3.1. Organization Governance Structure

The number of female members in General Committee (GC) and Executive Committee (EC) in the Organization will be increased gradually. To increase the number of female members, priority will be given to female candidates in selection process whether the number of female members raised to at least 30% in both committees.

### 3.2. Recruitment, leave, promotion, posting, transfer, termination and dismissal of staff

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:

### 3.2.1. 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% -100% for the female. The number of female staff in the Organization 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 candidates.
- 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.

### 3.2.2. 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 7 (seven) 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,

### 3.2.3. 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

### 3.2.4. 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.

### 3.2.5. 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.

### **3.3. 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 Manager 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 Manager avail an office vehicle for field visits with the approval of the Executive Director.

### **3.4. 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 Head Office 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 Head Office, Area Offices and other offices where feasible will be arranged for the lactating mothers.

### **3.5. 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.

### 3.6. 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.

### 3.7. Values and Code of Conduct

- ❑ Gender equity is one of the core values of the Organization. All staff of the Organization 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'.

### 3.8. 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 Head Office, Area Offices and other offices where feasible will be arranged for the lactating mothers. In future, organization will arrange a day care center in Head Office and Area Offices.

## 4. Program Related Measures

### 4.1. Program designing, planning and implementation

The Organization will focus on the following areas in order to ensure that all development programs and projects contribute to the gender equality.

- Incorporate gender equality measures into all project design documents and tools and at all stages of project life cycle, including planning and implementation
- Develop **Gender Analysis Frameworks (GAF) and checklists** as tools to assist staff in integrating gender issues into programs.
- Incorporate gender strategic planning for programs and projects in consultations with all stakeholders, especially women, using GAP.
- On-going projects will be reviewed and revised as and when necessary, to ensure compliance with gender policy.
- Design implementation strategies to take into account existing gender relations and attempt to readdress inequalities.
- Devise mechanisms for promoting women's participation in decision making processes at all levels and in all spheres-project, program, community and family.

- Ensure equal access to technology related activities for women and develop necessary mind-set to encourage women's participation in technical matters.
- Include resources in monitoring to access the effectiveness of programs in addressing gender issues.
- Address the issues and special needs of adolescents in the Organization's Programs
- Emphasize and ensure male participation in addressing violence against women.
- Incorporate gender as an essential component in project evaluation, analysis and research.
- Ensure that documentation including reports and communication materials are gender friendly and responsive.

## **4.2. Advocacy & networking**

The Organization will focus on the following areas of advocacy and networking:

- The Organization will actively participate in local and national level networks promoting gender equality
- Through these networks, the Organization will undertake advocacy initiatives for the formulation and implementation of policies promoting gender equality
- The Organization will extend support to all organizations working for women empowerment and accept and adopt knowledge and best practices from them
- The Organization will establish partnership and networks with organizations having gender expertise for project implementation, trading and technical assistance.

## **4.3. Information, Education and Communication (IEC)**

The Organization will focus on the following areas of IEC:

- The Organization will continue to support that promotional message will be disseminated highlighting women's empowerment
- Use positive messages, illustrations or presentations to highlight gender and parenting roles, as opposed to the stereotypical gender roles, that are interchangeable among women and men.

## **5. Promotion of Gender Parity**

### **5.1. 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.

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

The management of the Organization 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.

### **5.3. 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.

### **5.4. 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.

#### **5.4. Campaign from Digital Platform**

Gender Promotion Committee (GPC) will create campaigns to support and create awareness on gender equity among staff and stakeholders on regular basis with maximum support from digital platforms

#### **5.5. Circulation of the Policy**

Gender Promotion Committee (GPC) will circulate/display a short version of Gender Policy at all locations within the establishment of the Organization

### **6. Implementation of Policy**

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

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.

#### **6.2. Budget Allocation**

As per recommendation of the Gender Promotion Committee (GPC), the management of the Organization will make necessary budgetary provisions for improving infrastructure facilities and benefits for female staffs.

#### **6.3. 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 the Organization.

#### **6.4. Monitoring & Evaluation**

The Gender Promotion Committee (GPC) will review the progress of gender parity at organization level at quarterly meetings 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, the Gender Promotion Committee (GPC) will review the situation. With the recommendation of the committee, the management will take proper initiative and necessary action as per policy. An evaluation will be arranged in each three year by a Gender Specialist and the recommendation will be included in the next review.

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## Annexure-1: Glossary of Terms

**Gender:** Gender refers to the socially constructed roles played by women and men that are assigned on the basis of their sex. Gender is used as a means of examining similarities and differences between women and men without direct reference to biology, but rather to the behavioral patterns expected from women and men and their cultural reinforcement. These roles are usually specific given to a given area and time.

**Gender Equity:** The equality of being fair and right-a stage in the process of achieving gender equality. In order to ensure fairness measures must often be taken to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level-playing field.

**Gender Equality:** Gender equality means that all staff members irrespective of their gender enjoy the same status. Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, opportunities, benefits, treatment and valuation of all people.

**Gender Mainstreaming:** Focuses on the institutions, policies and programs that have a broad impact in setting the conditions under which communities, households and individuals function. It seeks to ensure that these institutions, policies and programs respond to the needs and interests of all people and distribute benefits equitable to them. Overall, it seeks to reduce existing disparities of all people in incomes, resources and opportunities.

**Gender Awareness:** Gender awareness is the recognition that development actors are women and men, and these women and men are advantaged and constrained in different ways with implications for all people having differing needs, interests and priorities. Rethinking the assumptions and practice of gender-blind policies through gender analysis and learning about gender differences have resulted in what is referred to as gender-aware policies.

**Gender Analysis:** Gender analysis is a systematic way of looking at the impacts of development, policies, programs and legislation on women and men that requires, first and foremost, collecting sex disaggregated data and gender sensitive information about the population concerned. Gender analysis can also include the examination of the multiple ways in which women and men, as social actors, engage in strategies to transform existing roles, relationships and processes in their own interest and the interest of others.