GENDER POLICY

BSK

Touching Lives for Better Future

BOSCO SEVA KENDRA

Planning and Development Office of the Salesian Province of Hyderabad

Don Bosco Nagar Post, Bandlaguda Jagir, Hyderabad - 500 086, Telangana, INDIA

www.boscosevakendra.org, bskhyd1993@gmail.com, +91 9440053219

1. INTRODUCTION

BSK gender policy is rooted in natural law which is the rational participation in the eternal law. Its primary objective of formulating and enforcing this policy is to bring about a transformation of people's minds and hearts so that equality of sexes is maintained, dignity is respected and gender sensitivity is put into practice. The principles set forth in this policy are aimed at facilitating a change in the mind set of people so that what has been denied due to prejudices and attitudes is now given freely and willingly as a right.

BSK is well aware that gender issues cannot be limited to people of one sex alone. Rather they should embrace concern and engage one and all. Further, BSK will also consider gender issue from the view point of international community. Thus equality between men and women will always be seen as a human rights issue. BSK in line with the UN in reaching its millennium goals which includes women development as integral and sustainable only when it upholds equality of all sexes.

The rational for integrating a gender perspective in the activities of the BSK lies in the humanitarian mandate to prevent and alleviate human suffering without discrimination.Gender equality ensures that there is no sex-based discrimination in the allocation of resources or benefits, or in access to services. With this view in mind, BSK has evolved a gender policy after much deliberation and discussion.

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to define the main approach of the BSK is to how to address gender issues in its action.It is highly desired that all those who are currently part of BSK staff and all those who in future will become members of the staff will meticulously follow this policy imbibing not so much the letter of the policy but its spirit. The policy will become a reality only when it is implemented at all levels. Therefore, sincere efforts are needed by all to study the policy and earnestly put it into practice with commitment and dedication.

3. OBJECTIVEs OF GENDER POLICY

a. To provide a framework for effectively integrating gender concerns into the organization agenda: To create a conducive environment for women, men at work place and promote men, women in decision making at the administrative, programmatic and professional levels.
b. To bring about a change in the mind set, attitudes, values and beliefs of people on gender issues.
c. To ensure that all structures, policies, procedures and practices at BSK are gender sensitive and gender balanced.
d. To ensure that all programs implemented through Partners facilitate and support gender concerns at all stages of analysis, planning, implementation and monitoring, appraisal and evaluation by BSK.
e. To ensure BSK and its Partners continuously provide an enabling environment to all women, men to live and work in achieving their human potential to the full.

4. BSK UNDERSTANDING

a. That gender refers to the qualities and opportunities associated with being male, female and the socio-cultural relationships between women and men.
b. These qualities, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes.
c. These are context specific and can be changed.

d. The actual differences and inequalities between women and men are in activities undertaken, access and control over resource as well as decision-making processes and opportunities.
e. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context which takes into consideration several factors such as race, ethnic group, caste, economic status, class, group and age.
f. The overall effort is to provide an enabling environment for women within the organization, various partners and the communities with whom we are working and strengthen the gender sensitivity among all.

5. BSK BELIEVES IN

a. Gender sensitivity and gender equality.
b. Providing equal opportunities to all women, men.
c. Providing access and control over resource and decision making by women at all levels.
d. Right of all for equal wages for equal work.
e. Providing an enabling environment for women, men within the organization to strengthen gender sensitivity.
f. Making the organization committed and holding it accountability for implementing gender policy.
g. A mere statement of policy and objectives does not ensure the concerns relating to addressing the gender. Towards achieving the above objectives, clear indicators need to be defined to evaluate and assess the organizations commitment towards gender equality on a periodic basis.

6. DEFINITIONS

6.1 Gender Equality: Gender equality refers to the equal valuing of the roles of women, men. It does not view any persons as less than persons who belong to the other sex categories. Rather it holds every person in esteem recognizing the uniqueness of each individual and the potentialities of an individual to work and achieve one's goal in life. Gender equality means that persons of all sexes enjoy equal status and opportunities to overcome the barriers of stereotype and prejudices. Persons belonging to all sexes are able to equally contribute to and benefit from economic, social, cultural and political developments within society. The main domains where gender equality is actually felt and practiced are decision-making and control over wealth.

6.2 Gender Mainstreaming: Gender Mainstreaming is the process of making gender issue an important theme in all managerial, administrative, programmatic and professional affairs of an organization as a strategy towards realizing gender equality. It involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and spending programmes, with a view to promoting equality between women and men, and combating discrimination. So that women, men and transgender benefit equally.

7. TO WHOM DOES THIS POLICY APPLY,

BSK Gender Policy Applies to

a. Governing Body members and the Salesian Partners
b. Staff at all levels
c. All our present and future Partners in development of BSK in the field level activities

8. BASIC PRINCIPLES

BSK must:

a. gender equality as across cutting theme that needs to be integrated into all its policies and programmes.
b. Believe that gender equality can be achieved through healthy partnership among women, men.
c. Work in a decisive, creative and non-discriminatory way to guarantee that women, men have the same rights and the same opportunities to develop.

9. CODE OF CONDUCT AND COMMITMENT IN CONTEXT OF GENDER

A code of conduct should oversee that the Gender Policy is adhered to as detailed below:

a. The code of conduct will apply to everyone who currently works at BSK and all those who in future will become part of BSK Staff.
b. The interests of all women, men must be optimally served at all levels and in all activities of the organization.
c. There should be balanced representation and voice of all gender in all function, committees and decision-making processes.
d. Gender must not have any consequence that will prove to be a disadvantage for any person, male, female, or transgender:
e. The dignity and integrity of every human being must be respected. Sexual harassment and unhealthy behavior will violate the dignity of a human being.
f. Use of respectful language reflects the greatest possible amount of gender equality.
g. Provide accommodation especially to women in case the sessions are prolonged till late night.
h. Staff should be oriented on the gender policy in a continuous basis.
i. Gender sensitive and unresponsive behaviour should be identified and treated accordingly.
j. There should be an ongoing capacity building of the Board and the staff on gender sensitive issues.

10. GUIDELINES TO MAINSTREAM GENDER AT ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAM LEVEL

For these following systems would be put in place and necessary strategies would be tried out internally and externally: at organizational level and at partner's level.

BSK has been working in issues of women through women empowerment interventions with its Partners. It has become sensitive to the gender issues and concerns that have impacted the welfare of women, minors and families. It believes in restoring dignity to women respecting their fundamental rights for equal opportunities and equal wages. However, at the organizational level, BSK has not yet become fully gender sensitive and gender balanced. There are no women at the management level.

BSK is dedicated to advancing the role of women and mothers in the workforce, we seek to hire highly dedicated women employees to advance the mission of our organization.

10.2 Organization Level

10.2.1 Staff composition/representation

a. Recruiting adequate women staff and ensuring the balance also at senior levels; with an objective of achieving a gender balance in all posts at all levels
b. Ensuring equal opportunities among male and female staff for personal growth, in promotion benefits, training and working conditions
c. Ensuring representation and participation of men and women in the core group, Board of trustees and in various functional committees of the organization

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10.2.2 Workplace

a. Providing a safe and secure workplace for women staff, free from sexual harassment with a Gender Complaints committee to look into specific concerns.
b. Providing an enabling and friendly work environment where both men and women enjoy and actively participate in work. This includes providing flexible working hours and allowing working from home, wherever possible
c. Extending work related concessions and relaxations for women staff depending upon the situations and requirements; e.g. providing secure transport facilities when they work late hours; giving relaxation over travel time for the next day for those in the field; ensuring security measures along with minimum basic facilities for women staff traveling in the field.
d. Reviewing the organizational structure, functioning, problems in relation to gender imbalances among staff and the work environment time to time and taking definite steps to address the same
e. Strategic orientation to staff in the field-based programs and advocacy initiatives towards increasing women's access, control and ownership over the management.
f. Analyzing specific gender needs and taking affirmative action to address those needs. For example, (Toilets / Freshening room, Maternity leave, Paternity Leave, Leave for Miscarriage)
g. Men employees when their spouses have children shall be entitled for 30 days of leave either immediately after child birth or fifteen days before child birth and fifteen days after child birth for primary parenting and child nurturing. In case of miscarriage / abortion, women staff can avail 2 weeks of Maternity Leave with full pay and spouses are entitled for one week leave.

10.3 Community Level

BSK has implemented several programmes on women empowerment and is currently working on the issue. It's programmes have largely resulted in empowering women at the grassroots level but the lasting changes have not been achieved. The decision-making power and control over assets is still with men at large extent. It leaves much to be desired at the family level and local institutions level.

10.3Program Level

a. Ensure BSK and its Partners incorporate gender as a component in situational analysis tools or use gender analysis tools.
b. Ensure Gender/Sex disaggregated data of various aspects is collected/made available on the following:
c. **As**certain the general social, educational, health, economic status, access to and control over resources, participation etc.,
d. Analyze if any gender discriminatory practices and stereotypes prevail which lead to unequal opportunity for and status specific vulnerabilities of women and men
e. Understand specific vulnerabilities of women, men in relation to program intervention.

f. Analyze, based on the social structure and norms, to find out if women, men will not be able to participate as decision makers or contributors in project management through normal means.
g. Analyze gender role of women, men workload.

Ensure Partners have a Gender Policy of their own and implement it.

11. PLANNING

a. Ensure BSK and partners actively involve women, men in entire process of planning, implementation and monitoring of program-with special measures to ensure that women will not only be represented in the committees but will also participate actively.
b. Incorporate gender sensitive practices and strategies on the basis of above analysis in implementing various programs by the Partnership.

12. IMPLEMENTATION (PROCESS & STRATEGY)

Ensure that the implementing Partners;

a. Deal with family as a complete unit and not women alone as target group.
b. Keep focus on family as well as community level mainstreaming.
c. Make sure that the specific strategies related to gender are being implemented, for example, sensitizing the community in gender issues.

13. MONITORING OF GENDER BEING ADDRESSED

Ensure that the Partners develop monitoring tools to monitor gender related data and its analysis (men, women, family and community) on following aspects:

a. Reducing vulnerabilities of the women through the respective programs and projects.
b. Countering discriminatory practices through the respective programs and projects.
c. Enhancing the chance of benefits reaching equally to the individuals (women, men), family and community through the respective programs and projects
d. Changes in the power relations/meeting of strategic gender needs through the respective programs and projects

14. REPORTING

Ensure that Partners collect data on the "following aspects which has to be reported during normal reporting period:

a. Reduced discriminatory practices through the respective programs and projects.
b. Enhanced chances of benefits reaching equally the individuals (woman, men) family and community through the respective programs and projects.
c. Changes in power relations / meeting of strategic gender needs through the respective programs and projects.

15. GOVERNANCE OF GENDER POLICY

a. Governing body members/ Executive director / Management Team should monitor and evaluate the gender policy. Every 2 years there will be an evaluation of the policy and it will be revised as required.
b. All the staff will be communicated regarding the revision of policy.
c. The policy after revision will be communicated to all levels of staff.

16. PERSONS RESPONSIBLE

The BSK Executive Director with the Senior Management team will be responsible for the effective implementation, review and revision of the Gender Policy.