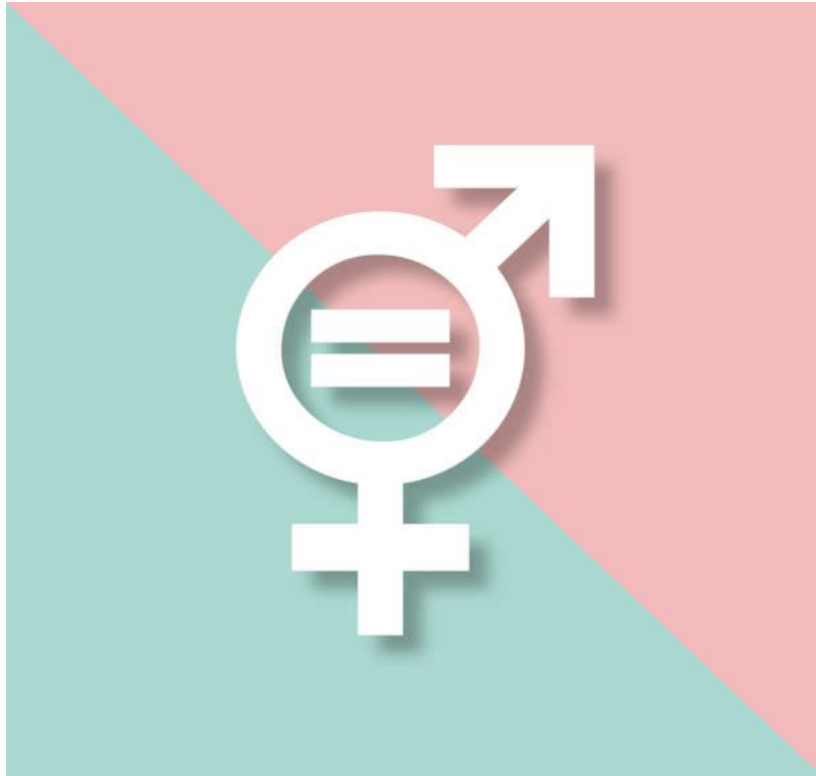


DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES BY SOCIAL ANIMATION (DISA)

GENDER EQUITY POLICY



DISA, BASIL BHAVAN

BEHIND CIVIL COURT, GANDHI NAGAR P. O

BASTI, UTTAR PRADESH – 272001

MOBILE: 9219682355, 8318567749, 9415038199,

EMAIL: disabasti@gmail.com

Web Site: www.cstdisa.org

DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES BY SOCIAL ANIMATION (DISA)

GENDER EQUITY POLICY

BACKGROUND

Equality between women and men is a matter of human rights and condition for social justice. Recognition of and respect for the dignity of human beings is at the centre stage of human development. Being born in the image and likeness of God, all human beings are equal. Article 14 of our Indian Constitution guarantees to every citizen Right to Equality. Article 15 further states that the State shall not discriminate against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. But, even the Indian Constitution was adopted on 26 November 1949 and came into force on 26 January 1950, there are discriminations and differences in the factors determining health, decision making, opportunities and resources available to women and men.

Discrimination still prevails among the uneducated and the educated in developing countries and the developed countries, among the poor sections of the society and the rich. It exists in the Society at large at every level. Gender Discrimination has a greater impact on women though men are also affected.

Women of the marginalized groups such as Dalits, Tribals, Backward Castes and Minorities suffer much due to poverty, ill-health, lack of access to literacy and appropriate knowledge and lack of hygiene and safe drinking water. In addition, they are being displaced from their lands and livelihoods. They suffer systemic and structural violence that enslave them and dehumanize them economically, socially, politically and culturally.

Gender discrimination has negative effects on boys and men as well. It damages their psyche and increases the incidence of morbidity and crime among them. Relations of distrust, conflict, competition and many forms of subtle abuse emerge instead of those rooted in values of caring, sharing, compassion, mutual respect, collaboration and partnership. Such discrimination thus has negative consequences on human relations.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES

The culture of domination, marginalization and exclusion which embody ideas, beliefs, values, traditions, rules, norms, perspectives (ideologies) that prefer males / sons has been styled as 'the culture of patriarchy. Through dominating social structures the men own, control and manage financial, intellectual and ideological resources as well as the labour, fertility and sexuality of women and thus perpetuate gender discrimination. Such a culture produces stereotyped notions of how a woman or man should behave in words and actions, whereby they themselves become transmitters of the above value system. Consequently women also become both victims and victimizers.

The process of globalization which is market-centred and profit-driven, leads to further exploitation of women as cheap labour, resulting in the increasing pauperization of women. Fundamentalism and communalism reinforce the subjugation of women to men, suppress women's movements by dividing women along religious lines and intensify violence against women.

This discrimination exists due to class, creed, caste, religion, social, economic, cultural and political structures and the systems in the society. Therefore, DISA as an organization aims at

establishing a Society based on equality, and equity among men and women. Hence this Gender Policy is adopted to facilitate concerns related to Gender Equity and Gender Justice.

UNDERSTANDING GENDER

- Gender refers to describe those differences between women and men, which are socially constructed, while sex refers to those which are biologically determined.
- Gendered socialization attributes different roles and responsibilities to women/ men/boys/girls.
- Gender differences have been built up and toughened by social, cultural and economic institutions over time perpetuating discriminatory belief systems and attitudes, imbalanced positioning and inequalities among women and men.
- Gender equality is the absence of discrimination on the basis of a person's sex in opportunities, in the allocation of resources and benefits or in access to services.
- Gender equity refers to fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men. Gender equity is a means and gender equality is the result.
- Gender mainstreaming is to initiate and institutionalize progression that will bring about gender equality. Mainstreaming requires changes at different levels within institutions, in agenda setting, budget allocation, policy making, planning, implementation and evaluation.

Vision: Communion of human communities, for a Just, Responsive and an Inclusive Society and nurturing universal values.

Mission: To restore the human dignity of the poor, the excluded and the marginalized and achieve their rights as citizens.

Strategy: A process of social animation and rights based and inclusive development approach among the poor, the excluded and the marginalized for enabling awareness capacities and collective actions.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Equal Participation.
2. Collective Decision Making.
3. Freedom of Expression and Speech.

DISA

- Recognizes the innate power of human beings to bring about the transformation of unjust structures and practices and promote development at personal and societal levels;
- Acknowledges the new world order created by globalization and its effects on developing nations, especially women and seeks to address the imbalances;
- Understands gender equality as a cross-cutting goal that needs to be integrated into all its policies, programmes and projects.
- Realizes that gender differences are socially and culturally constructed and reinforced by caste, class, ethnicity, language, age region and religion and that restructuring gender relations to reclaim the dignity of girls/ women and boys/men is essential;
- Believes that gender equality can be achieved through a partnership among and between men and women;

- Promotes women's empowerment (social, economic and political) as being fundamental to achieving gender equality.

GENDER POLICY OF DISA: A STEP TOWARDS A GENDER JUST SOCIETY

Since gender equity and gender justice find the place in the very vision and mission of DISA where we envisage an Inclusive Society and Communion of Communities, we went ahead with the formulation and implementation of our gender policy. The policy aims at the facilitation of the emergence of a gender just working environment of the Organisation. Following are the fundamentals of our gender policy:

OBJECTIVES

- To increase the participation of women in leadership and decision making by providing equal opportunities and exposure and acknowledging their contributions in shaping sustainable development of the society.
- To promote and create a free and conducive environment for participation of women in all structures, meetings and activities and leading the gender equity-based campaigns of the Organization.
- To promote and create ambience wherein women get ample opportunities to speak out their differences and voice their positions on common problems / concerns and specific issues.
- To promote collaboration and networks with other like-minded Organizations to promote gender equality.
- To seek the participation, support and cooperation of men in taking shared responsibility for women empowerment and minimization of unequal power relationship in work place and society.

THRUST AREAS

- Conscientization and awareness creation on gender equality
- Gender and development programmes
- Replication of best practices on gender equality, Capacity building of partners, members, staff and stake holders.
- Information dissemination and resource mobilization.
- Research and documentation.

OUR COMMITMENT

DISA is committed to striving for a just society where oppression, exploitation and violence are absent. We have a long-standing commitment to the elimination of women's subordination, the transformation of gender relations, and the empowerment of women in terms of their participation, representation and leadership. Its chief concern is to work among the poor and the marginalized especially among the most deprived and voiceless women with the motto of *'Empower Women, Transform Society*.

In its journey over years since 2001, DISA has earned vast experiences and knowledge. A very important fact that is revealed is that, although our country has advanced technically, scientifically and economically, the growing number of crimes, violence and discrimination against women has not declined as it should have been. This further substantiates the negligence of authorities in not paying adequate significance to the gender issues.

Gender disparity, gender discrimination and the denial of women's basic human rights is a major cause of subordination of women.

Gender inequality and unequal power relations between men and women are rampant in society in countless ways:

- Domestic violence is the biggest cause of injury and death to women worldwide. Gender based violence causes more deaths and disability among women aged 15 to 44 than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents and war. (World Bank Discussion Paper) Two-thirds of children denied primary education are girls, and 75 per cent of the world's 876 million illiterate adults are women. Every extra year a girl spends at school, could reduce child mortality by ten per cent. (UN, World's Women)
- Women work two-thirds of the world's working hours, and produce half of the world's food, yet earn only ten percent of the world's income, and own less than one per cent of the world's property. (UN)
- More than half million women die in pregnancy and child birth every year: of these deaths, 99 per cent are in developing countries. (UN, World's Women)
- Women hold only 14 per cent of parliamentary seats worldwide, and only eight per cent of the world's cabinet ministers are women. Only eleven countries have met the UN target of 30 per cent female decision makers. (UNIFEM, Progress of the World's Women).
- Only a nominal percentage of women Panchayat representatives / members are really active. In most cases, they are the rubber stamps and their duties are performed by their male counterparts who are not very gender sensitive. Therefore, women-oriented issues often remain neglected at the Panchayat level leading to a nationwide negligence.

This is why, working for gender equality, gender mainstreaming or considering gender issues as social issues and integrating it in every aspect of our work, is one of our chief priorities. This would mean that both men and women are consulted and both profits equally.

Programmes can ensure that they promote a fairer balance of power between women and men, at household, local, national and global levels. Women need to be incorporated in decision making processes and Civil Society Organizations be supported to confront national policies which make life harder for women and hamper change. Overcoming gender inequality and violence against women means confronting sociological and cultural barriers, and this cannot be done by working exclusively with women. Experience has shown that working with men and women jointly can have a swift and permanent impact on beliefs and behaviour, than working with women alone.

Promoting gender equality is not to be seen as advantaging women and dis-empowering men. Gender inequality and rigid gender stereotypes can often prevent a household or community from progressing. Ensuring equality and justice and unlocking women's potential is to the benefit of both men and women and at the wider society.

PROGRAMMATIC INTERVENTION

- Finalization of a Gender Policy and approval by the Governing Body of DISA
- 50% of women as staff, as far as possible.
- Just wages, maternity and other benefits and equal wages for the similar works
- No discrimination only because a person is female;
- Ensuring safety for women at work place.

- Recognizing, valuing and promoting the feminine and masculine qualities in both men and women;
- Inclusion of gender sensitization in the capacity building programmes.
- Prioritizing the gender issue programmes
- Collaboration and networking with Organizations / NGOs, for the promotion of gender equality.
- Facilitating campaigns towards the participation of women in the Local Self Governance.
- Undertaking research, unearthing gender inequalities and highlighting the best practices for replication.
- Gender balance in different committee and bodies A 'women-friendly' environment of work.
- Application of the HR Policy of DISA both for Men and Women.

STRATEGIC GOAL

A society where women and men enjoy equal status, valuing the differences.

Objectives

1. Possess institutional capacity in terms of know-how, attitudes, structures and resources to carry out gender mainstreaming in DISA and facilitate the same process among the partners/collaborators.
2. Influence regional, national and international policies to include gender aspects and its implementation by advocacy and networking efforts.
3. Ensure that all structures, policies, procedures and practices at DISA are gender sensitive and gender balanced.
4. Ensure that all programs implemented directly or facilitated or supported by DISA mainstream gender at all the stages of analysis, planning, appraisal, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
5. Work towards ensuring that gender is mainstreamed in the structures, procedures, policies and practices at all levels.

Activities to achieve the Objectives

Objective 1

Possess institutional capacity in terms of know-how, attitudes, structure and resources to carry out gender mainstreaming in DISA and among the partners/collaborators.

Activities for Objective 1

- ❖ Workshops, discussion sessions to bring about shared / common understanding on gender and related concepts.
- ❖ Organize gender sensitization programs for DISA staff, members of committees etc
- ❖ Organize trainings for capacity enhancement to be able to practically implement gender-mainstreaming mechanisms.
- ❖ Creation of a think tank including the gender specialists.

- ❖ Creation of a reference group within the Organization.
- ❖ Ensure availability of a functional gender department, international conventions and other civil society organizations.
- ❖ Production/ Dissemination of literature on gender related issues among partners and collaborators.

Objective 2

Influence regional, national and international policies on gender aspects and its implementation by advocacy and networking efforts.

Activities for Objective 2

- ❖ Engage in critical review of existing regional and national policies on gender aspects and its implementation.
- ❖ Develop strategic alliances with other advocacy groups and organizations, civil society, people's movements and state and central governments.

Objective 3

Ensure that all structures, policies, procedures and practices at DISA are gender sensitive and gender balanced.

Activities for Objective 3

- ❖ Periodical review of structures, policies, policies, procedures and practices from gender sensitivity and balanced perspective and execute the decisions that are made with a view to provide equal opportunities for women with special focus at professional levels.
- ❖ Ensuring sufficient space for women in all the decision-making bodies and providing for equal representation of women at all levels including Governing Body and encourage partners and collaborators.
- ❖ Ensuring access to grievance redressal systems for gender justice.
- ❖ Ensuring that the middle and senior staff are responsible for developing gender perspective in the organization and the development programs.

Objective 4

Ensure that all programs implemented directly or supported by DISA mainstream gender at the stages of analysis, planning appraisal, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Activities for Objective 4

- ❖ Ensure that each program / project is prepared after gender analysis as a part of overall situational analysis based on clear guidelines
- ❖ Develop guidelines for gender mainstreaming at all the levels of:
 - Program planning, Appraisal, Monitoring and evaluation.
- ❖ Promotion of the programmes that aim at:

- Enhancing access to opportunities and resources.
- Increasing women's control over assets / resources and decision-making.
- Challenging the subordinate role of women in homes, communities and society.
 - Accompany selected projects of the partners to demonstrate best practices on gender mainstreaming.
 - Carry out Gender audits as a mandatory process.

Objective 5

Work towards ensuring that gender is mainstreamed in the structures, procedures, policies and practices at all levels.

Activities for Objective 5

- ❖ Organize gender sensitization programs for leaders, members and staff.
- ❖ Facilitate the development of plan of action based on the gender policy.
- ❖ Facilitate the implementation and periodic review of the gender policy and the plan of action.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Organisation will have a committee for checking sexual harassment at organizational level. The committee will comprise five members out of which at least three will be women. There will be an invitee member for ensuring unbiased decisions. The committee will not have the management members as its members. The President of the organisation will constitute the committee consisting of five members out of whom one represents the accused and the other aggrieved. The quorum will be of three members.

CONCLUSION

Gender is a category which is socially constructed and the implementation of the Gender policy will require the commitment, participation and contribution of every staff member / Partner organizations / stakeholders / networking agency etc. Our commitment to integrate gender perspectives will need to be reflected in work plans and in our programme implementations and other activities. Coworkers will be expected to develop plans of action for integrating gender perspectives into their work. These action plans will be used to monitor progress. We will always be engaged in relentless efforts to fight discrimination and subordination wherever possible. We hope that this Gender Policy will assist DISA to achieve gender equality in the workplace, home, community and the society at large.

**Secretary,
Development Initiatives By Social Animation (DISA)**