

Gender Policy



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Foreword

Management and Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) was established in the year 2001 with a mission to endeavour for developing the standards of media, skill and ethics of the media professionals, physical and mental health and well-being of the people and empowerment of women, adolescents, children, minority and other marginalised sections of the population.

Since its very inception MRDI has remained committed to giving highest priority on quality of works and transparency of its operations at all levels. To comply with this commitment MRDI, over the years, has developed some policy documents to guide the organization towards its stated mission. These documents have helped us to remain on the right track of our journey.

Gender is a vital issue in all development efforts. MRDI firmly owns and practices the belief that no man or woman can be deprived of his/her rights and entitlements due to gender, religious, ethnic, social, economic or cultural identity. This stand of MRDI applies to all staff, beneficiaries and other stakeholders. To uphold this stand, some guiding principles on gender need to be worked out and documented. This gender policy has been developed out of this felt need.

The document includes background, guiding principles, strategy, objectives and scope, policy measures and steps for implementation. This gender policy will hopefully increase gender awareness among staff members, strike a gender balance and create a gender friendly work environment in MRDI.

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Background

MRDI is a multi-disciplinary, not-for-profit, non-government organization, engaged in a wide spectrum of social development activities and developing the standard and quality of the media, along with skill and ethics of the media professionals. MRDI aims to improve capacity of media and the journalists to advocate on different development issues. Gender is an issue that can hardly be ignored in carrying out any development effort. MRDI has developed this gender policy with the purposes of creating a gender friendly environment in its workplace and placing more emphasis upon gender while planning and implementing its programmes.

Overview

Women constitute half of the world's population. Woman's contribution in human labour is 48 percent and this contributes 30 percent of the total GDP. In domestic activities, woman's contribution is 15 times more than man; they perform two-thirds of the total work but get only one tenth of the total income. Seventy percent of the poor people of this world are women, but they own only 1 percent of the world's total wealth.

Like other countries Bangladeshi women are also lagging far behind men. Though the constitution of Bangladesh provides equal rights to men and women, the scenario is totally different. Women are victims of discrimination in every sector including education, health, legal rights to employment and other human and citizen rights.

Government and Non-government initiatives taken under the poverty alleviation programme after independence mostly addressed economic upliftment of women. These efforts have produced some impact on the economic condition of women, but the issue of their social position has totally been ignored.

The Gender and Development approach aims to attain sustainable development through women empowerment. This does not mean only to provide loan, education and health services but also aims at removing the patriarchal social system. This patriarchal society has to be replaced by such a justice and equality based system which will provide men and women with equal rights and opportunities, and a woman will enjoy the right to take decision of her life.

Vision and Mission of MRDI

Vision

MRDI, a multi-disciplinary, not-for-profit, non-government organization as well as a company limited by guarantee is engaged to a wide spectrum of social development activities and seeks to render services to national and international organizations, both in the public and the private sectors.

Mission

To endeavor for developing the standard and quality of media, skill & ethics of the media professionals, physical and mental health and well-being of the people and empowerment of women, adolescents, children, minority and other marginalized section of the population.

Gender Policy Guiding Principles

Women empowerment has been focused in the Gender Policy, giving priority on discrimination against women in the gender equality issue. Gender equality refers to a social system where Man and Woman can stay together by sharing equal rights and respect.

There is a biological difference between man and woman that relates to woman's role in reproduction. Woman's need in this area is totally different. This difference has been taken care of while developing the policy. Moreover, women are lagging far behind men as a result of discrimination over thousands of years. To remove such discrimination, women will be given opportunities and priorities in some specific areas.

Women's participation in the activities of all levels of the organization has been emphasized.

- Gender equality is not a separate issue of woman. This can be achieved through joint efforts of men and women. This spirit has been carried out through the entire policy.
- This policy includes a structure for its testing and implementation.

Policy Principles:

- This Gender Policy will be considered as an integral part of other policies of MRDI like HR Policy, other policies and activities.
- The policy will play a complementary role in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating gender sensitive programmes.
- This policy will also help to achieve Mission and Vision of MRDI.
- This policy will validate MRDI's gender related activities.

Strategy:

- Develop gender awareness at all levels of the organization.
- Create gender balance by recruiting equal number of men & women at all levels of the organization.
- Make all the employees understand the policy properly.
- Take effective measures through positive discrimination in favour of women by identifying differences between man and woman, particularly biological difference and marginalized position of women in order to achieve the gender equality.

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Goal:

Establish gender equity at the institutional and programme levels of MRDI by bringing about positive changes between men and women.

Objectives:

- To give top priority on the equality of man and woman.
- To create an enabling environment for women in MRDI for their free and equal participation through positive discrimination.
- To ensure planning and implementation of development activities in order to achieve gender equality.
- To create necessary infrastructural and other facilities by developing gender sensitive budget.
- To take necessary steps to establish representation and authority of women at all levels of MRDI.
- To ensure analysis, monitoring and evaluation of all programmes of MRDI on the basis of the Gender Policy.

Scope:

This policy will be applicable to all employees and beneficiaries of MRDI.

Areas of positive Steps for the Employees:

1. Values, behavior and culture
2. Recruitment, promotion and leave
3. Financial and other practical facilities
4. Infrastructural facilities
5. Staff development and training
6. Show cause, suspension and termination
7. Other facilities
8. Programme and work station

Gender Development Policy:

1. Values, behavior and culture

All the employees of MRDI of every level will maintain an environment within the organization that will play a facilitative role in achieving gender equality in all the activities of MRDI.

1.1 All staff members will believe that all men and women are equal human beings and this belief will be reflected in their activities.

1.2 All staff members of MRDI will believe in equality of all irrespective of their gender, religious, ethnic and other identities.

1.3 Respect will be shown to women's role in every sphere of the society.

1.4 Gender friendly words will be used while speaking.

1.5 Rules and regulations will be made in a way that all facilities are provided on the basis of justice.

1.6 Management of MRDI should remain alert that men are not deprived in the name of gender equality.

1.7 Special motivation drive will be taken to convince male staff for their support to implement this gender policy.

1.8 Meeting will be organized from time to time to discuss on gender issues so that the staff members properly understand the issue. This will also be an open forum to discuss problems at personal and organizational levels and find out solutions.

1.9 Gender related publications including books, magazines and periodicals will be procured on regular basis.

1.10 Experience sharing meetings will be arranged with organizations specialized in gender.

1.11 Employees will be facilitated to take part in national and international training, workshop and meetings on gender.

2. Recruitment, promotion and leave:

2.1 Recruitment

Recruitment Policy:

- Recruitment policy will be developed on the basis of gender sensitive HR policy.
- Programmes will be taken focusing women's marginalization, security and reproductive rights in order to increase gradually the number of woman staff to 50%.
- At least one third of the recruit committee members will be female.
- People of all regions of Bangladesh irrespective of their religion, race and social identity will enjoy equal opportunity in jobs.

Vacancy Announcement

- The sentence "Women are especially encouraged to apply" will be mentioned in all vacancy announcements.
- Special facilities for female workers that prevail in the organization will be mentioned in the vacancy announcement.

Application sorting and selection procedure

- In addition to other qualifications and experiences of the candidate, gender awareness issue will be considered.
- Parents' name for unmarried candidates and spouse's name for the married candidates have to be mentioned in the application and in the personal document as well.
- Female candidates will be prioritized while sorting the applications.

2.2 Promotion

- In case of employees with similar qualifications, female employee will be given priority for promotion. If required, specialized training will be arranged for the female employee/s for promotion.

2.3 Leave

- In case of earned leave, casual leave, festival leave, medical leave same rule will be applicable for both female and male employees. Female and male employees will be entitled special leave for the following causes.
- Female employees will be entitled four months' maternal leave with salary on maximum two occasions. If required, another two months' leave without pay can be taken with the maternal leave.
- Male employees will get seven days' paternal leave for taking care of wife and the new born baby.
- To facilitate the multiple roles of women, both female and male employees will be entitled to take three days' extra leave to attend sick children and in case of death of close relatives (parents, spouse, children, parents-in-law).

3. Monetary and other facilities

Both female and male employees will get equal salary, house rent, travel allowance, gratuity, increment and medical allowance. Enough budgets will be allocated in the core program and project as well for ensuring special facilities of female employees. Organization will keep budget for part time staff during the four months' maternal leave of female staff.

4. Infrastructural facilities

- There will be separate toilet for female staff at the MRDI office.

5. Staff Development and Training

Training for capacity development of staff will be arranged in and outside the organization. Special training will be arranged for female staff to ensure their participation at all levels of the organization.

5.1 Female staff will get priority in case of training inside the country and abroad

5.2 Organization will provide all information to increase knowledge of female employees.

5.3 Technical training will be provided to female staff for development of their technical knowledge.

5.4 Gender and Development training will be arranged for all staff emphasizing the women's special needs, violence against women and multiple roles of women.

- 5.5 Special Management training will be arranged for ensuring participation of female staff at the management level of the organization.
- 5.6 Initiatives will be taken to facilitate female staff's visit to different organizations of Bangladesh and other countries to increase their experience.
- 5.7 Special steps will be taken for participation of female staff in Women Rights related programmes at national and international levels.

6. Show cause, suspension and termination

Staff can be terminated according to the HR policy. But if any staff is sexually harassed by another staff, the perpetrator will be terminated through proper procedure.

7. Other facilities

- 7.1 Long journey during pregnancy and menstrual period will be relaxed.
- 7.2 Administrative and legal measures will be taken at all levels of the organization against any kind of sexual abuse and harassment.
- 7.3 If any staff is assaulted by any outsider, organization will extend every kind of help (legal and economical if required) to her
- 7.4 Organization will arrange counseling and other assistance if any female employee is tortured mentally and physically by her family member.

8. Gender Policy in programmes of MRDI

Media and journalists are at the center of all activities of MRDI. Female participation will be especially encouraged in the training, fellowship and other activities of capacity building of media and journalists. Quota for women will be kept in possible cases.

MRDI's Steps in implementing Gender rules

1. MRDI Board of Directors and all staffs have been informed about this policy.
2. HR rules and other activities will be in compliance with this policy.
3. Required budget will be allocated to implement this policy.
4. Board of Directors, Executive Director and senior officials of the organization will play vital role in implementing this policy.
5. This policy can be reviewed in future.