

Gender Policy

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Srijonshil Gaibandha Foundation

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The organization is registered with the Department of Youth Development (Reg. No. Gai-98/Sadar-20/22),
Department of Social Services (Reg. No. Gai/Sadar/1541/2023), and RJSC (Reg. No. RAJS-557/2025)

Background of the Organization

Srijonshil Gaibandha Foundation (SGF) is a youth-led organization that envisions a Bangladesh where young people, particularly women and adolescent girls, are empowered to become active, informed, and equal citizens. The organization works to support young people in realizing their full potential and ensures that women and adolescent girls are able to meaningfully and positively influence policies and decisions that affect their lives.

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Purpose, Goal and Objectives of the Gender Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear vision, direction, common language and consistent message to operationalize and communicate our commitment to the promotion of gender equality, girls' rights, and inclusion for all our staff, at all levels.

Goal: The overall goal of the policy is to set the standard and principles of gender equality, under which the organization create systems, programs, processes and practices for mainstreaming Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment to free from all forms of exploitation and discrimination where everyone has the opportunity to realize their potential.

Objectives: To clearly define the principles of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and take appropriate measures to adopt a shared vision to guide organizational staff in their work with a clear direction to promote Gender Equality and equity at an organizational and programmatic level. And to develop an organizational culture that demonstrates commitments towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

Key Principles

Motivate men and boys to be active agents in transforming the unequal society into an equal one. We confront and challenge discrimination and human rights violations based on gender, including gender-based violence, and other forms of exclusion. We also challenge stereotyping and unequal power relations between women, men, boys, and girls to promote gender equality, girls' rights, and inclusion. We foster an organizational culture that embraces and exemplifies our commitment to gender equality, girls' rights, and inclusion, while supporting staff to adopt good practice, positive attitudes and principles of gender equality and inclusion.

Organization's Gender Strategy:

- ▶ Encourage women's participation throughout the organization and develop strategies to increase their representation at decision making levels.
- ▶ Equal access to decision-making & planning process, participation in organizational development as well as to all kinds of organization's resources.
- ▶ Advocacy and lobby for equality of men and women at the national levels.
- ▶ Collect, produce, and disseminate gender and development related materials to the staff members to update knowledge and information.
- ▶ Establish linkages and working networks with potential organizations that are active, have a strong voice and exposed in the field of gender and development.
- ▶ Acting as a safeguard within the organization as well as in our targeted community to oversee, activate and guide to ensure gender-based actions and its practice.
- ▶ Develop and disseminate different types of IEC/BCC materials to support promotion of Gender and development concept and its practice.

Application of the Gender Policy within the Organization

We are an equal opportunity Organization. We employ member, staff and volunteers regardless of sex, gender, religion, race, language, HIV status, disability, class, ethnicity and other sexual orientation and sexuality etc. We provide equal opportunities to the male and female young people but in many cases women/girls are getting higher priorities in the organization. We try to balance the sex ratio of the staff as proportionate as possible, both in the senior and junior level.

- ▶ **Program Measures:** Integrate gender equality and gender justice dimensions in all new programs and project cycles (e.g., context analysis, planning, implementation, management and monitoring and evaluation, setting objectives, indicators and budgeting).
- ▶ **Staff Development:** Provide training to all levels staff for increasing awareness on gender and development related an environment where men and women can work with security and dignity. All staff members will have equal opportunities for career/professional development.
- ▶ **Salary, Promotion and other Benefit:** The organization offers the same salary scale for both the male and female staff in the same position. There is no discrimination of salary/wages, promotion or other benefits in this organization.
- ▶ **Leave:** All general leave (annual/earned leave, casual leave, sick leave and study leave) that are set out by the organization would be the same for the male and female staff. However, girls and women shall enjoy some extra facilities like 180 days of maternity leave.

- ▶ **Childcare:** As a social responsibility of human beings, mothers whose children are at least two years of age can be considered for breast-feeding their baby three times a day during the working hours with other support services.
- ▶ **Transport Facilities:** Make best endeavors to provide suitable transport and accommodation when travelling for work purposes, particularly for women staff and persons with disability.
- ▶ **Disciplinary Procedures:** All major and minor disciplinary procedures will be taken against the staff members irrespective of gender, nature of offence or positions of staff. In the event of any serious grievance, both male and female staff will have the same options to place the problem in writing to their Line Manager. In some cases, they can also place the problem with the SMT.
- ▶ **Advocacy, Networking, Partnership:** Ensure women and girls participation with gender diversity and intersectionality in different forums/committees/meetings at local, national and global levels. Build partnerships/allies by networking at national and global levels with like-minded organizations who believe in gender equality and women's empowerment. Influence national policies for empowerment of women, gender equality and justice and for implementation of policies by upholding women's human rights at different levels.
- ▶ **External Representation:** Ensure representation of women and girls at every setting with respect and dignity at programmatic and organizational levels of different countries. Use gender-sensitive language and images in all internal and external communications.
- ▶ **Girls' and Women's Rights:** Strengthen the commitment to girls' rights, women's rights, diversity and inclusion at all levels of the organization, guiding all staff and stakeholders on the importance of gender equality with an intersectional approach.
- ▶ **Equity Approach:** Promote a gender equity approach, aimed to ensure justice in the way women and men are treated and involving the adoption of specific measures to tackle gender inequalities and to increase women's independence.

Specific Roles and Responsibilities

All our staff members, regardless of function or location, are responsible for the implementation of the requirements outlined in this policy. These requirements are reflected in recruitment processes, job descriptions and performance reviews of staff at all levels and in the way we hold each other to account. The organization may assign Gender Focal Person to incorporate the gender policy into the respective program interventions, appropriate training to the staff to enhance capacity for integrating gender concerns and to assist practicing organizational Gender and Safeguarding policy.

Glossary:

Gender: Gender refers to socially constructed roles played by women, men and other gender identities that are assigned based on sex. Gender is used to distinguish similarities and differences between women, men and other sexual orientation people without direct reference to human biology, but rather to the behavioral patterns expected of women and men and their cultural reinforcement. These roles are usually specific to a particular area and time.

Gender Analysis: Gender analysis is a systematic way of looking at the different impacts of development, policies, programs and legislation on women men and other sexual orientation that entails, primarily, 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 men and other sexual orientation, as social actors, engage in strategies to transform existing roles, relationships, and processes in their own interest and in the interest of others.

Gender as Crosscutting: Cross-cutting issues are topics that affect all aspects of a program (i.e., cut across) and therefore need special attention. They should be integrated into all stages of programs and projects, from planning through to impact assessment but this has not always been the case. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that gender will always be one of the cross-cutting issues at a programmatic and organizational level.

Gender Balance: This is a human resource issue calling for equal participation of women and men in all areas of work and in programs that agencies initiate or support. Achieving a balance in staffing patterns and creating a working environment that is conducive to a diverse workforce improves the overall effectiveness of our policies and programs and will enhance agencies' capacity to better serve the entire population.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV): An umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between females and males. The nature and extent of specific types of GBV vary across cultures, countries and regions. Examples include sexual violence, including sexual exploitation/abuse and forced prostitution, domestic violence, trafficking, forced/early marriage, harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, honor killings and widow inheritance.

Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (GBVIE): In emergencies, such as conflict or natural disasters, the risk of violence, exploitation and abuse is heightened, particularly for women and girls. At the same time, national systems and community and social support networks may weaken. An environment of impunity may mean that perpetrators are not held to account. Preexisting gender inequalities may be exacerbated. Women and adolescent girls are often at particular risk of sexual violence, exploitation and abuse, forced or early marriage, denial of resources and harmful traditional practices. Men and boys may also be survivors. GBV has significant and long-lasting impacts on the health and psychological, social and economic wellbeing of survivors and their families.

Gender Bias: Making decisions based on gender that result in favoring one gender over the other which often results in contexts that are favoring men and/or boys over women and/or girls.

Gender-Biased Sex Selection: Sex selection can take place before a pregnancy is established, during pregnancy through prenatal sex detection and selective abortion, or following birth through infanticide or child neglect. Sex selection is sometimes used for family balancing purposes but far more typically occurs because of a systematic preference for boys.

Gender Discrimination: Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on the basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

Gender Equality: Gender equality entails the concept that all human beings, both men, women and other gender identities, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, or prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviors, aspirations and needs of women men and other gender identities are considered, valued and favored equally. It does not mean that women men and other gender identity have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender Equality is the ultimate goal in sustainable development.

Gender Equity: Gender equity means the fairness of treatment for women, men and other sexual identities, according to their respective economic, social, cultural needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. To ensure fairness, measures must be taken to compensate historical and social disadvantages and create a level playing field for both men women and other sexual orientations. It is a means to achieve the ultimate goal of Gender Equality.

Gender Gap: The gap includes the disproportionate difference between men and women and boys and girls, particularly as reflected in attainment of development goals, access to resources and levels of participation. A gender gap indicates gender inequality.

Gender Identity: Gender identity refers to how an individual feels about their own gender. Individuals may identify as male, female or as something else and their gender identity may or may not be the same as the sex that they were assigned at birth. Everyone has a gender identity and expresses their gender in a unique and personal way.

Gender Justice as the full equality and equity between women and men in all spheres of life, resulting in women jointly, and on an equal basis with men, defining and shaping the policies, structures and decisions that affect their lives and society as a whole.

Gender Mainstreaming: Gender mainstreaming has been embraced internationally as a strategy towards realizing gender equality. This involves making gender perspectives - what women and men do and the resources and decision-making processes they have access to - more central to all policy development, research, advocacy, development, implementation and monitoring of norms and standards, and planning, implementation and monitoring of projects. Both dimensions - gender representation and gender responsive content need to be taken into consideration in all phases of project/proposal/institutional development.

Gender mainstreaming does not entail developing separate women's projects within work programs, or even women's components within existing activities in the work programs. It requires that attention is given to gender perspectives as an integral part of all activities across all programs. Organizational culture and Organizational values are important in terms of creating work environments which are conducive to gender mainstreaming.

Gender Responsive Behavior: Gender responsive behavior includes having a non-discriminatory attitude, promoting dignity and respect of all human beings irrespective of their sexual identity. Staff feel comfortable with this type of behavior from their colleagues and are able to fulfill their career aspirations in a safe working environment.

Gender Responsive Work Environment: Creating an environment that reflects an understanding of the realities of women's lives and addresses the issues of the women. A gender responsive work environment recognizes several important differences in life circumstances and behaviors between female, male and other sexual identity staff and takes these differences into account when designing logistics, culture, practices in the institution that produce the best outcomes for women, men and other sexual identity.

Gender-Roles: Social and behavioral norms that, within a specific culture, are widely considered to be socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex. These often determine the traditional responsibilities and tasks assigned to men, women, boys and girls. Gender-specific roles are often conditioned by household structure, access to resources, specific impacts of the global economy, occurrence of conflict or disaster, and other locally relevant factors such as ecological conditions.

Gender Socialization: The process of girls and boys, women and men learning social roles based on their sex, which leads to different behaviors and creates differing expectations and attitudes by gender. An example is that girls and women do more household chores, such as cooking and cleaning, while boys and men do more work out of the home. Gender roles often lead to inequality.

Gender Transformation refers to efforts to change gender and social norms to address inequalities in power and privilege between persons of different genders, in order to free all people from harmful and destructive norms. These norms include gender roles, expectations, stereotypes, and harmful attitudes, customs, and practices, including gender-based violence (Men Engage Alliance, 2017). Gender transformation enables individuals to question and critically analyze issues of gender inequality and injustice and provides them with opportunities to challenge harmful norms.

Diversity: Gender diversity is an umbrella term that is used to describe gender identities that demonstrate a diversity of expression beyond the binary framework. For many gender diverse people, the concept of binary gender-having to choose to express yourself as male or female - is constraining.

Exclusion: Exclusion is the process that prevents certain individuals or groups from fulfilling their rights. Exclusion is caused by inequality in the distribution of resources and power, by inequality in the value assigned to different groups, and by the social norms that perpetuate these differences. These causes are interlinked and compound each other. It is most often those that are not valued whose rights are not realized. For example, girls, boys and youth with disabilities are often stigmatized and not valued; schools are not designed to be accessible and teachers are not adequately trained which means that their specific needs are not addressed and subsequently their right to an education is denied.

Girls' Rights: Girls everywhere face significant barriers to rights simply because they are young and female. To effectively support girls and achieve equality, it is essential to recognize that girls as a cohort represent one of the largest excluded social groups. Yet, as a group they have the potential to achieve collective agency and work together as a movement for change and achieve common strategic interests.⁶ Girls are right holders and not only a subgroup of 'women' or 'children'. Girls' rights are covered by both the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Inclusion: Inclusion is about bringing people into a process in a meaningful manner. It is the process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society and to fully enjoy their rights. It requires addressing the root causes of exclusion and understanding how intertwined the roots of different forms of exclusion are. Inclusion involves improving the opportunities available to girls, boys, youth, in particular those who are vulnerable and excluded, including children with disabilities, who are excluded on the basis of the social groups they identify with or are associated with, as well as respecting their dignity.

Intersectionality: Awareness of all forms of discrimination combined and simultaneously experienced by women. This theory asserts that it is necessary to examine how the many forms of discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, social class or disability interact to fully understand the experiences of women. All women are therefore not equal.

LGBTQ+: Umbrella term for all persons who have a non-normative gender or sexuality. LGBTQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer and/or questioning. Sometimes a + at the end is added to be more inclusive.

Practical Gender Needs (PGNs): Practical gender needs (PGNs) are the needs women identify in their socially accepted roles in society. PGNs do not challenge, although they arise out of gender divisions of labor and women's subordinate positions in society. PGNs are a response to immediately perceived necessities, identified within a specific context. They are practical in nature and often inadequacies in living conditions, such as water, provision of health care and employment.

Sex: Refers to the biological and physiological reality of being males or females.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR): This can be understood as the right for all, whether young or old, women, men or transgender, straight, gay, lesbian or bisexual, HIV positive or negative, to make choices regarding their own sexuality and reproduction, providing they respect the rights of others to bodily integrity. This definition also includes the right to access information and services needed to support these choices and optimize health.

Sexual Orientation: Sexual orientation is a continuum that refers to each person's capacity for profound emotional, affectional and sexual attraction to, and/or intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender or the same gender or more than one gender.

Social Norms: Social norms are a pervasive feature of all our lives. Norms are shared beliefs about what is typical and appropriate behavior in a group of people, including women, girls, men and boys. Social norms are like informal rules, which also influence (and are influenced by) formal rules such as laws and

regulations. Norms shape expectations and attitudes and can sustain and prescribe gender inequality. Around the world, social norms on gender shape the unequal status of women and girls and the expectations of their role in society.

Son Preference: The practice of preferring male offspring over female offspring, most often in poor communities, which view girl children as liabilities and boy children as assets to the family. This can result in families instilling superiority in male children and inferiority in female children, manifesting in such actions as sending boys to school, especially to higher levels, and not girls or household practices where boys are fed better than girls.

Strategic Gender Needs: The necessary requirements of women and men to improve their position or status in the community or society is termed as Strategic Gender Needs. Addressing these needs allow people to have control over their lives beyond socially defined restrictive roles. Strategic gender needs for women might include land rights, more decision-making power, equal pay and greater access to credit. This strategic gender need link with dignity and position of women at family, workplace and wider society.

Transformative Gender Programs/Policies: These programs/projects include policies and programs that seek to transform gender relations to promote equality and achieve program objectives. This approach attempts to promote gender equality by:

- 1) fostering critical examination of inequalities and gender roles, norms and dynamics,
- 2) recognizing and strengthening positive norms that support equality and an enabling environment,
- 3) promoting the relative position of women, girls and marginalized groups, and transforming the underlying social structures, policies and broadly held social norms that perpetuate gender inequalities.

Women's Empowerment: Women's empowerment as the capacity of women to be economically self-sufficient, with control over decisions affecting their life options, and to be free from violence.

THE SDGS AND GENDER EQUALITY

The needs and rights of girls are encapsulated in-

Goal 5: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and cut across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Other SDG targets and indicators that resonate with gender work are:

Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being - reduce maternal mortality, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under five, ensure access to sexual and reproductive health and end HIV and AIDS and other diseases.

Goal 4: Quality Education universalize access to quality education, from pre-primary to tertiary levels, with a specific mandate to redress social inequalities undermining access to educational opportunities. Eliminate gender disparities at all levels and make sure education facilities are gender-sensitive to create effective learning environments.

Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation - specifically calls for paying attention to the needs of women and girls.