

GENDER POLICY

2005

LOK KALYAN SANSTHAN

BLOCK- BAITU
DISTRICT- BARMER

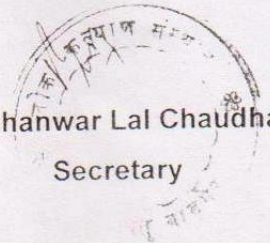
FOREWARD

Women are subjugated in family, society and workplace. Through out the world women's marginalisation is justified on the grounds of culture and tradition. The current situation of women is more worsening as it is leading towards acute poverty and vulnerability, despite cosmetic changes in their conditions.

The status of women in Rajasthan is very depressing considering traditional patriarchal feudal structure of the society. We being a part of larger civil society have to be constantly and periodically reflect upon women's condition not only in the society but also within our structure, systems and culture. This would also demonstrate a model of gender mainstreaming in a set up.

Though, informally we have been making efforts for more gender sensitive behavior, attitude and systems in the organisation. But formal policy was always a need as it provides sustainability, just practices and systems. We are thankful to Ms. Sophiya Khan, SAFAR, Ahmedabad who facilitated the process of gender audit and formation of policy. Also we appreciate UNNATI, Jodhpur who supported the whole process.

We, as an organisation believe that developing policy is a starting of the process and this document would not be meaningful without commitment of our management. The policy would help us in developing gender sensitive environment in the organisation and gender mainstreaming in our programmes which would contribute towards women empowerment in larger society.


Bhanwar Lal Chaudhary
Secretary

GENDER POLICY

ABOUT US

Lok Kalyan Sansthan (LKS) is a non government, apolitical voluntary organization registered under the Societies Registration Act. Geographically the organization is working in Barmer and Jaisalmer districts of Rajasthan. It has identified women, children and dalits as their focus group.

RATIONALE

Gender equality has been a major concern of LKS. Looking at the highly patriarchal nature of the society, addressing women itself is a big challenge in the region. Decreasing sex ratio of young girl child and increasing unnatural deaths of young women, lower literacy rate, untouchability, sexual harassment, rape etc. says a lot about the violent and discriminatory nature of the society towards women and especially towards Dalit women. There are many laws to prevent all these discriminations and injustices but the question is how many women have access to those mechanisms.

LKS has initiated a process of addressing gender inequality, however it could not take up the issues of domestic violence, gender based division of labor etc. for various reasons. It realizes this fact hence to systematize its efforts in the area of gender equality has decided to have a formal policy on the subject.

OBJECTIVES

1. Assessment of the gender mainstreaming status and policy in Governance, Organisational management, its systems and staff rules and Programmes.
2. To prepare an institutionally binding gender framework to guide the organization in all aspects of its functioning.
3. Women can have equal access to and control over resources, exercise their fundamental rights and get advantages of all developmental processes.

THE POLICY

LKS is committed to establish an equitable and just society, based on values where every individual can enjoy their fundamental rights, guaranteed under The Indian Constitution. To forward its interventions to the marginalized and disadvantaged sections of the society the organization has identified women as the largest vulnerable group.

We believe that due to dominant patriarchy in the region women play a subservient role in the society and are relegated from any decision making process. Gender discrimination, early marriages, Ghunghat, physical-mental harassment, son preference leading to repetitive births, sexual harassment are some of the reason requires organizational interventions. To strengthen our efforts in the area of gender equality we adopt the present policy.

PRINCIPLES

- ✓ Any developmental process affects women and men differently.
- ✓ Lop-sided scenario of our society compels us to take specific extra measures to ensure women's participation in all developmental processes.
- ✓ Women's rights are human rights. To ensure this we need to apply the constitutional principle of positive discrimination in favor of women.
- ✓ Gender equality cannot be achieved by excluding any sex. The participation of Men –women is equally essential.
- ✓ Our socialization process is responsible to create gender biases, which need to be and can be changed over a period of time through dialogue.
- ✓ Achieving gender equality is a long term gradual process that requires lots of patience and experiments

INTERVENTIONS

To ensure gender equality we propose the following interventions.

I) GOVERNANCE

- ❖ Efforts shall be made to invite women members in the governing body to end the lop-sided gender status. We also propose to conduct gender orientation of the present board members to increase their contribution in organizations programmes and policy formulation process.

- ❖ The organization shall try to put focus on women's empowerment in its Vision-Mission statement as women forms the largest category of disadvantaged human beings.
- ❖ Efforts shall be made to integrate gender concern in a meaningful way.
- ❖ The organization shall encourage women staff's participation through out the organization and shall constantly monitor its efforts to develop strategies to increase their representation at decision making levels.
- ❖ LKS shall adopt rights based approach in all its programmes and develop mechanisms to assess the impact in the areas of reducing gender inequality.

II) ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT, SYSTEM, STAFF RULES

LKS recognizes the fact that unless there is commitment from the management to implement the policy nothing is going to change. LKS shall make necessary changes in the above mentioned areas to create gender sensitive environment.

- ❖ Efforts shall be made to recruit women members to avoid lop-sided gender status in the organization
- ❖ LKS shall analyze the causes for staff turn over, specifically to understand women's exit. And shall take corrective measures to avoid the situation in the future.

- ❖ To promote and encourage women's participation in management as well as in programmes. LKS shall try to formulate written gender policy for recruitment, promotion, suspension and removal of any staff member.
- ❖ LKS shall develop gender sensitive performance appraisal system to promote or demote.
- ❖ The organization shall provide sufficient orientation to sensitize the staff members so that they feel comfortable in raising gender issues at organizational as well as at field level.
- ❖ The forum or committee shall be formed to promote gender equitable environment and to address the gender concerns. It shall have a tri- party representation. (the management, the staff and external person) It is needles to mention that a gender balance in the composition of the forum\committee shall be maintained and it shall be headed by a woman. The organization head shall not be a part of the committee. This is necessary to maintain the confidentiality and for the fair process of justice. The committee shall meet quarterly and as and when need arises for the same.
- ❖ More transparency and information sharing culture shall be encouraged, especially to familiarize and include women members in the management and the planning process.

ORGANISATIONAL FACILITIES

LKS takes cognizance of the harsh social realities and believes that social change is a long term process that requires more inclusive and participatory approach. It shall promote gender sensitive

practices so that women can participate fully in the process of social change and development. In future LKS proposes to increase the strength of women, hence it shall have a written policy to implement its intention about the followings.

ACCOMMODATION- Wherever accommodation is provided by the organization it shall be mandatory for men –women to stay at separately provided place. Looking at the social surrounding and the increasing incidences of sexual harassment at workplace this has become an important concern for the organization. Social acceptability of the staff is an important issue. This is also necessary to avoid any possible misuse of powerful or vulnerable position of any staff member associated with the organization.

FIELD VISITS –Safety and level of comforts shall be given due importance. Women staff shall be encouraged to learn vehicle. In the absence of any transportation facilities the staff shall be given special allowance to reach the place. Special relaxation shall be given by way of accommodation and travel if women members are traveling out side the field areas. This has been considered necessary to provide a sense of security to women who join the organization and are willing to take up the non traditional responsibilities.

FLEXIBLE TIMINGS- It is the fact that today women are compelled to balance between their domestic as well as professional role to maintain the social fabric of the society. To encourage gender sensitivity LKS shall provide flexibility of the timings to both men and women.

LEAVE: LKS shall make arrangements to provide maternity leave as per the govt. rule. It may consider about paternity leave in future. To accommodate women, leave without pay or part time working arrangements, non field activities could be allowed

LAVATORIES: LKS shall make arrangements for separate toilets for men –women. Till then it shall make temporary arrangements to avoid any inconvenience to both men and women.

MEDICLE KIT: Sanitary napkins shall be kept in the first aid kit in the office and during travel or training programmes.

III) **PROGRAMMES:**

LKS is committed to bring a meaningful qualitative change in women's lives. After the process of gender auditing of its programme, it has arrived at the following suggestions to be incorporated in planning as well as in monitoring and evaluation system

- ❖ LKS shall recognize gender as a cross cutting issue in all the programmes and shall pay attention for engendering development.
- ❖ Women do not form a homogeneous group. Their cast, class, religion, marital status, socio-cultural beliefs of their surrounding affects them differently. While planning any intervention LKS shall consider all these factors carefully.
- ❖ The organization shall focus on social discrimination and intra family patriarchal norms responsible for women's subjugation