

- Gender Policy Formulation

Gender policy can be one of several tools needed for a gender-sensitive organization. The aim of a gender policy must be to guide the planning implementation and resource allocation of the organization's programs and projects in a gender sensitive and responsive manner. A good gender policy and gender sensitive planning requires accurate information and analysis about existing gender relations within the organization. In this regard "gender" can be used as an analytical tool for identification and understanding socially constructed roles and relations of women and men, and how these roles and relations impact development opportunities and outputs for women and men within and outside an organizational framework.

According to Naila Kabeer, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex; there are three alternative approaches to gender related policy:

Gender-neutral policies: Focuses mainly on realization of the objective of the project and do not attempt to change division of resources or responsibilities. This type of policy tries to target the appropriate group for the achievement of the policy objectives.

Gender-specific policies: Policies, which prefer targeting activities benefiting women and resources controlled by women. Although such policies may ensure that projects are gender sensitive they will still not address the issue of gender-based inequalities. Therefore such policies still leave existing division of resources and responsibilities unchanged.

Gender-redistributive/ transformative policies: Policies that try to change existing gender-based inequalities. Such policies attempt to redistribute the division of resources, responsibilities and power between women and men more evenly. Gender redistribution is not easy and is very challenging, since it requires sharing power between women and men. It also requires men to give up existing power as well as privileges in order to achieve equity and equality.

The first step of developing a gender policy is conducting a gender audit and analysis. The audit will help to identify the existing gender relation and situation within the organization. The analysis should look at different existing policies of the organization and identify the ways in which gender has been addressed or not addressed. Examining and analyzing the following areas will be useful to determine which type of policy is appropriate for the organization.

Areas to be reviewed are:

Organizational Rules: Official norms and practices, codes of behavior, principles of inclusion and exclusion.

People: Official rules of recruitment and promotion criteria. Who is the organization intended to serve? Who makes decisions? Who is regarded to be influential? Whose ideas are mostly accepted? Who is included or excluded from certain tasks and responsibilities?

Organizational Resources: Who benefits most from the resources? Who controls the resources? How are resources distributed? Is this favoritism in the distribution of resources? Who makes the decision in the distribution of resources?

Organizational Practice: Values and behavior of members of the organizations,

Power Relations: Relations of power between men and women. Who has authority over whom, authority between staff members?

NOTE

- ◆ For any institution, extensive analysis in all aspects of the organization, such as: structures, rules, resources, hierarchies of command and practices are needed.
- ◆ Understanding how gender is constituted as a relationship of inequality within the organization will help formulation of a policy that will at least minimize or at most abolish existing gender inequalities.
- ◆ Gender-linked inequalities within an organization are products of historically constituted practices within society at-large. They did not arise out of nowhere. They have to be reconstructed through practice in order to improve gender relations within organizations.

Once the analysis is completed the second stage is identifying the type of policy needed and integrating the analysis into the planning process of policy formulation.

What a gender policy hopes to do is enable women and men within an organization to reflect analyze, and act as change agents in unequal gender relations existing in the institutions structures and programs.

A gender policy document should include the following major sections:

Goal: The document should have a **goal statement** stating what the goal of the gender policy is.

Objectives: Clearly stated Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Time bound (SMART) objectives should be included for the organization as well as for the programs/projects of the organization.

Strategies: Implementation strategies that will be used to achieve the goal and objectives should be articulated and included in the gender policy document.

Indicators: Measured indicators for monitoring and evaluation of the gender policy should be developed and included in the policy document.