



Gender Policy

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Dakbhanga Bangladesh(DBD)

Nur Villa (Gd. Floor), Sipahir Para, Thana Road, Ramu, Cox's Bazar- 4730

Phone: +8801730744351

E-mail: dakbhanga@gmail.com, Website: www.dakbhanga.org

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1. Introduction

1.1 Organization Background

Dakbhanga-Bangladesh is a non-government voluntary development organization which is a country office of Dakbhanga-Belgium. The Organization came into existence in 1998. Since then as an outcome of the dedication, sincerity and tireless efforts of all irrespective of staff, volunteers, community people and development partners involved with Dakbhanga-Bangladesh, the organization has grown into one of the reputed non-government development organizations in Bangladesh, especially in Cox's Bazar. Dakbhanga engaged significantly in transforming the lives of underprivileged, marginalized and hard-to-reach people through education and health activities in Ramu, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. The organization launched its educational activities in a hilly village called Dakbhanga of Kacchapia Union, Ramu, Cox's Bazar through one primary school with 7 classes (Pre-Primary-1,2 and Class-I-V) with a total of 24 students but in 2018 our total admitted students are about 560 through 2 primaries school and 2 feeder school in two Unions of Ramu Upozilla, Cox's Bazar.

1.2. Vision

The vision of Dakbhanga Bangladesh is to create a society where children will grow to their full potential.

1.3. Mission statement

The mission of Dakbhanga Bangladesh is to support children and its community to realize the full potential of all children.

1.4.Values of the Organization

Dakbhanga-Bangladesh is committed to values of mutual respect, equity, justice, rule of law, transparency, accountability, integrity and impartiality.

1.5.Objective of the Organization

- To reduce illiteracy through both formal, non-formal and technical education;
- To promote healthy families, develop health awareness through the little doctors' program, health education and awareness on primary health care activities;
- To generate income/employment opportunities for the unemployed youth, destitute women and make them self-reliant;
- To encourage Child Centred development by providing support to the family with children through primary education including Early Childhood Development, limited secondary support, support to the orphans and disadvantaged etc,

- ❑ To enhance women's empowerment and eliminate gender inequalities and social injustices through different measures to ensure legal assistance and human rights;
- ❑ To conduct research, survey, study, advocacy and consultation programs to support and pursue development initiatives and promote good governance at local and national levels;
- ❑ To create organizational sustainability through enterprise development centres, information and technology centres, centres for basic and higher education, technical and vocational training institutes, centres for resources development etc.;
- ❑ Implement other relevant projects as per the goal and objectives of Dakbhanga-Bangladesh.

2. Gender Policy and its Purpose

This policy presents the standard procedure and policies of gender issues of Dakbhanga-Bangladesh. This is a guiding rule for all projects/programs, and staff members of this organization, which serves the interest of all its stakeholders.

Each section of this policy defines the policies and procedures of gender issues; however, not all events can be incorporated/ defined. As such, under special cases, management shall try to remain true to the intent of the welfare of the stakeholders of Dakbhanga- Bangladesh.

The goal of the policy is to establish a gender-friendly atmosphere in working areas where all staff (male & female) can take part equally in the development process. The specific purpose of the policy is:

- To ensure equality among all levels of staff both male and female of the organization.
- To ensure equal rights, dignity and opportunities among all level of staff and their equal participation in all activities.
- To create a gender-friendly and right-based environment to change and improve the status of women in society.
- To undertake affirmative action considering the historically created social backwardness and deprivation as well as the specific needs of women.
- To take forward the participation of women in development sectors.
- To create an environment where women's voices are heard and gender issues are raised.
- To contribute to strengthening the local and national institutions involved in Govt. or non-govt. level the improvement of the social, legal and economic status of women

3. Basic Concepts and Components of Gender Policy

Dakbhanga-Bangladesh is committed to promoting gender parity at the organizational and program level. Globally, there is a legitimate concern among the government, donors and stakeholders about gender parity at all levels. Therefore, every organization requires a gender policy to improve the situation of gender relations. It will assist the managers in making administrative planning, communicating, controlling and deciding over the program and organizational management.

4 Salient Features of the Gender Policy

4.1 Approval & Commencement

This policy will be effective through an office order after approval from the Executive Committee of Dakbhanga-Bangladesh. Once the policy is approved and issued the order for implementation, all existing policies, practices and conditions which are irrelevant to new ones will be void. Besides, Dakbhanga-Bangladesh management will develop, amend and review policies and procedures from time to time through memos and circulars. If such development, amendment and review, relevant to local law and policies, will replace existing policies and procedures.

If there is any controversy in the policy due to lack of/ explanation or there is no existence of such rules/ policies/ guidelines, the explanation and decision of the Executive Director will be final and will be included in the manual.

This policy is effective from the 1st of January, 2018 and shall apply to all financial transactions undertaken by Dakbhanga-Bangladesh.

4.2 Process of updating

The gender policy of Dakbhanga-Bangladesh is not a static document; it is expected to review and update from time to time to be a living and evolving document. It is to be assumed that the promotion of gender equality in an organization reflects its organizational requirements. Therefore, with the change of requirements, this Policy must be also updated/ modified with the approval of the Executive Committee. The Chief of the Gender Promotion Committee (GPC) shall notify changes to the manual with the concern of the Country Representative. All pages are dated to ensure accuracy. The manual will have loose-leaf binding as the interim amendment (page) can be included easily.

In each three years, management will form a review committee or recruit an external consultant to review the whole documents and the committee/consultant will submit the proposed amendments to the authority of Dakbhanga-Bangladesh. The employees of Dakbhanga-Bangladesh can recommend any amendment/inclusion/exclusion to the committee/consultant. If possible, one female staff will be included in the committee. All

types of amendment/ inclusion/exclusion will be done subject to prior approval of the Country Representative.

4.3. Accountability

On principle, the Executive Director can only authorize the direction of Dakbhanga-Bangladesh, but, in practice, to a certain extent, this authority is delegated to the operational management Manager-Administration/Area Manager/Project Coordinator/Project Manager/ Accounts Manager so that the project of Dakbhanga-Bangladesh can be managed on a day-to-day basis without the direct involvement of the Country Representative.

5. Areas of the policies:

The Gender Policy covers the following areas:

- Recruitment, leave, promotion, posting, transfer, termination and dismissal;
- Financial and other material benefits;
- Infrastructure and some other special benefits;
- Staff development;
- Specific problems of the female staff
- Values and code of conduct. Workload
- Workload; (Menstruation Period, Pregnancy Period, Breastfeeding)
- Promotion of Gender Parity

5.1. Recruitment, leave, promotion, posting, transfer, termination and dismissal

In the existing recruiting policy, certain rules are equally applicable in the case of male and female staff. However, to increase the number of female staff the following affirmative actions have been taken:

5.1.1. Recruitment

The recruitment will proceed as per the personnel policy of Dakbhanga-Bangladesh with proper handling by the recruitment committee:

- a) Formation of Recruitment Committee with 3-5 members of whom at least one member will be a female.
- b) Recruitment must be balanced with the gender and it will be within the range of 30% for the female. The number of female staff in Dakbhanga-Bangladesh will be increased gradually. This increase will be at the field level as well as at all other levels of management.
- c) Priority will be given to female candidates with equal educational qualifications but relaxation in experience for the case of recruitment.
- d) For the recruitment of female staff, the qualifying marks for both written and viva voce will be 50, while it will be 45 considered marks for female candidates.
- e) To achieve the target of increasing female staff, a certain percentage will be reserved (at least 30%) for female candidates at probation-level positions. If the job nature permits, applications will be invited from female candidates only.

- f) In case of the applicant must mention the mother's name in his/her application along with the father's name.

5.1.2. Leave

The policy for annual leave, medical leave, and casual leave is the same for both male and female staff, but there is a provision for maternity for the female staff and Paternity leave for male staff, which is as follows:

Maternity leave: A female staff will be entitled to 4 months of maternity leave with full pay as per Govt. the rule in the first two issues of childbirth and, if necessary, medical leave, annual leave and leave without pay may be added to this leave by the approval of the authority.

If a female staff adopts a baby (up to 5 months) will be entitled to maternity leave with full pay for twelve weeks.

Paternity leave: A male staff will be entitled to 7 (seven) days of paternity leave with full pay during the period of childbirth of his wife to give mental support to his wife during childbirth and the succeeding days for postnatal care.

5.1.3.Promotion

In case of promotion to 2 senior positions, one should be a female if available. In other positions, female staff would be given preference to be decided by the management. To bring a competent female staff to be promoted in senior level position special incentive could be given through training at home and abroad.

5.1.4.Posting and transfer

The rules of posting and transfer are the same for the male and female staff but the following considerations will be made for the female staff:

- ❑ A female staff can be transferred to her nearest locality considering her workload.
- ❑ At the time of posting and transfer of a female employee, the workstation and place of residence of the husband/parents are to be taken into consideration.
- ❑ During the period of pregnancy, i.e. from the first month till the fifth month after childbirth, the female staff is not to be transferred from her workplace.

5.1.5.Dismissal

There will be a provision of severe punishment for physical harassment of female colleagues by their male counterparts. In each case, a proof committee will be formed with 3-members and out of them one should be female.

A staff, irrespective of sex, can be dismissed following the set service rules of the organization. But the male staff will be subject to dismissal for the following additional reason:

- ❑ If any male staff physically abuses or rapes a female staff and it is proved thereby, he will be dismissed immediately from his job; this news will be circulated officially.
- ❑ If any employee takes a second wife without the consent of the first wife, it will be treated as a disqualification for continuing his job. The authority will take the necessary step to suspend him from service immediately. If required, the organization will extend assistance to the first wife of the terminated staff for carrying out her legal expenses or her case could be referred to the relevant legal aid organization.
- ❑ Since dowry is a curse, sometimes openly and sometimes under the guise of gifts dowry taking by any staff should be treated as a punishable offence by the authority concerned.

5.2. Financial and other material benefits

All staff will be entitled to equal pay scale, house rent, travel allowance, increment, training allowance, overseas travel allowance, transportation expense, medical facilities, telephone (According to service rule), etc.

A female staff occupying the position of Program Coordinator (PC) or any female worker of the equivalent rank will be entitled to official transport if available for field visits. Even a female employee below the rank of PC may avail of an office vehicle for field visits with the approval of the Executive Director.

5.3. Infrastructure and other special benefits

Some Infrastructure and special facilities to be offered by the organization to the female staff, are as follows:

- ❑ There will be separate toilets for the female staff in all other offices of the organization especially in HQ and Area Offices. Gradually this facility will be extended to other offices.
- ❑ While attending training, a female participant will be allowed to bring her baby along with her to the training centre. She may also bring an attendant with her and all expenses on account of that is to be borne by the organization.
- ❑ A baby corner in HQ, Area Offices and other offices where feasible will be arranged for the lactating mothers.

5.4. Staff Development

For staff development, the organization sends staff members to different institutions for skill development and provides opportunities to participate in training courses, seminars and workshops both at home and abroad. Participation of female staff in these staff development initiatives is ensured in proportion to gender-wise numerical strength in the organization and to ensure that the female staff at the field level are not deprived of these facilities.

5.5. Measures for Solving Specific Problems of the Female Staff

A 5-member Gender Promotion Committee (GPC) of whom at least 2 will be female members has been created to ensure gender equality within the organization. The major functions of the committee are to identify the problems faced by the female staff, take necessary steps to address those and forward recommendations to the management.

5.6. Values and Code of Conduct

- ❑ Gender equity is one of the core values of the organization. All staff of Dakbhanga- Bangladesh should believe in this value.
- ❑ There will be no gender division of work in the organization. The opportunity to participate in all activities of the organization remains equally open irrespective of gender.
- ❑ Any comment, made directly or indirectly, which may cause humiliation to the female staff, is considered a punishable offence.
- ❑ To create a congenial working atmosphere for both male and female staff, a set code of conduct will be prepared. All staff of the organization must abide by this code of conduct.
- ❑ To provide proper orientation about gender issues, the training on Women and Development has been made mandatory for all its staff members.
- ❑ Use of the term 'Nari' instead of 'Mohila'.

5.7. Workload Review (Menstruation Period, Pregnancy Period, breastfeeding)

Management will take measures to determine the workload during the Menstruation Period, Pregnancy Period, and breastfeeding, which are as follows:

Menstruation Period: During the period of Menstruation female staff will be permitted to do deskwork.

Pregnancy and Lactating Period: During pregnancy and lactating Period female staff will be permitted to have a liberal period for a specific time.

Breast-feeding: A baby corner in HQ, Area Offices and other offices where feasible will be arranged for the lactating mothers. In future, the organization will arrange a daycare centre in Area Offices.

5.8. Promotion of Gender Parity

5.8.1. Training on Gender Promotion

The Gender Promotion Committee (GPC) will assess the training need of all members of the General Committee, Executive Committee and Staff Members and arrange orientation/training courses on gender among all levels of organizational people of the organization.

5.8.2. Increased Engagement of Women in Governance of the Organization

The management of Dakbhanga-Bangladesh will take initiatives to increase the percentage of women by at least thirty per cent within three years after the commencement of the policy. It is noted that the women members will be adequately engaged with organizational activities.

5.8.3. Engagement of Women Participants in program cycle management

In designing the projects and program, women's needs must be considered. Women participants should be engaged and consulted in the decision-making process in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the projects and have a fair share of resources and benefits.

5.8.4. Observation of National and International Days

Observation of different National and International relevant days at the Upazila level especially International Women's Day, International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, World Rural Women's Day and International Human Rights Day.

6. Implementation of Policy

6.1. The Gender Promotion Committee (GPC)

After the commencement of the Gender Policy, a Gender Promotion Committee (GPC) will be formed with 5 (five) members and at least 2 (two) members will be female. The committee will implement and monitor the policy.

6.2. Budget Allocation:

As per the recommendation of the Gender Promotion Committee (GPC), the management of Dakbhanga-Bangladesh will make necessary budgetary provisions for undertaking infrastructure facilities and benefits for female staff.

6.3. Information flow

The Gender Promotion Committee (GPC) will collect all sorts of information collectively from the bottom to the upper level to overcome misappropriation of any incidence against men and women in the organization.

6.4. Monitoring & Evaluation

The Gender Promotion Committee (GPC) will review the progress of gender parity at the organization level at quarterly meetings and it will be documented in black and white. The management will publish a circular with the decisions of the meeting to all levels of the offices.

Regular monitoring will be arranged with the help of proper specific guidelines and indicators to assess the present gender situation, whether is friendly or not. In that assessment, a format will be developed involving some common issues and indicators, after having the information. After the recommendation of the committee, the management will take proper initiative and necessary action as per the rule. An evaluation will be arranged in each three years by a Gender Specialist and the recommendation will be included in the next review.