

GENDER POLICY

HAQ: CENTRE FOR CHILD RIGHTS

HAQ's gender policy is based on the universal human rights and democratic values. It is an articulation of our understanding of gender and provides the rationale and starting point for promoting gender equality and sensitivity in all our activities. It is a step contributing to the establishment of an inclusive, equal and non-discriminatory culture in the organisation.

Understanding of 'Gender'

Gender refers to the attributes and opportunities associated with being a female, male or third gender and the socio-cultural relationships between them. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are largely socially constructed and learned through a process of socialization.

Application of the Policy & Dissemination

The guidelines for the Gender Policy apply to the entire HAQ team while they are at office, travelling for field activities or for any other relevant programme organised by it as part of campaigns, solidarity groups/networks; consultants appointed by HAQ; project partners; interns and volunteers; and, vendors or service providers rendering their services to HAQ.

This Gender Policy forms part of the terms of service contracts and service rules. HAQ shall make all efforts to make this policy known to all person(s) associated with the organisation and in turn expects them to conform to and promote HAQ's gender approach in all aspects of life, especially their families and homes.

The policy shall be displayed on HAQ's website at all times. Since it is an ever evolving document that can capture new thoughts, ideas, debates and concerns on gender, changes or amendments made to it shall be communicated to all concerned at the earliest and also displayed on HAQ's website.

1. Guiding Principles

We recognise that: -

- Integration of gender issues in HAQ's activities and programmes is an important strategy for realizing our overall goals of a society free of all kinds of discrimination.
- Various forms of discrimination and deprivation existing in our society, social and political instability or conflicts may affect women, men, girls and boys and those from the third gender in all age groups differently.

- Similarly, long term strategies for social change and emergency responses may impact women, men, boys and girls and the third gender (adults and children) differently.
- Equal participation and inclusion of women, men and the third gender in all HAQ's activities and those of the organisations it supports, promotes gender equality as well as increases effectiveness of the work.
- Affirmative action measures, like maternity benefits, paternity benefits and safe travel for its employees/consultants, particularly women and third gender, are integral to HAQ's functioning.
- Protecting confidentiality and privacy of women and children as required under existing laws shall guide HAQ's work. Where publication of photograph or name is permissible under the existing laws, obtaining consent of the concerned child or person is mandatory.
- The principles laid down in HAQ's Gender Policy will be an integral part of its internal policy documents such as the child protection policy and the service rules.

2. Gender in HAQ's Programmes and Processes

A 'gender equality and non-discrimination perspective' shall be promoted at all levels and stages of HAQ's programmes with the objective of ensuring that the activities offer equal opportunities, benefits, participation and rights to women, men and the third gender, and consists of the following:

Promotion of numerical and qualitative gender balance

- HAQ shall take all appropriate measures to modify social and cultural patterns of conduct of men, women, girls, boys and the third gender which are based on notions of discrimination, inequality or gender inequity;
- HAQ shall take appropriate measures for deepening the understanding and analysis of all its relevant stakeholders (programme personnel, project partners and their team and children etc.) on gender relations within our society, thereby providing an informed basis for gender equality struggles;
- Such activities shall be included in HAQ's work areas that are directed towards contributing to changing unequal gender power relations in households, workplaces, programme activities and in all society in general;

- HAQ shall ensure that there is a gender perspective and sensitivity in its all organisational processes and programmes such as trainings, workshops, capacity building programs, dialogues and events;
- All publications and information material prepared under HAQ's programmes shall reflect commitment to gender equality and include gender sensitivity as explained above.

Providing a conducive and safe working environment for women, men and the third gender

a. Working Environment

- ***To provide comfortable and safe psychological and physical working environment for women, men and the third gender.***

A psychological and physical work environment that suits women, men and the third gender should advocate, stimulate and create a climate where their full competence and capacities are acknowledged, used and appreciated. Furthermore, the environment shall be free from norms and cultures that divide duties on the lines of discrimination instead of gender sensitivity.

- ***To facilitate the combination of gainful employment with successful parenting for women, men and the third gender.***

We believe that pregnancy and parenthood are a natural part of life. An organisation contributing positively to parenthood enables commitment from members who are parents and forms long-term relationships between people and the organisation as much as its vision, mission and goals. We believe that a better balance between the parents regarding parental responsibility will have a positive and wide-ranging impact on the society as a whole. To this objective, norms are laid down for paid and unpaid parental leave as per law.

- ***To encourage and use gender-neutral and gender sensitive language in all its activities as well as conducts.***

HAQ recognises that the use of language is an integral part of communicating and advocating gender equality and gender sensitivity. Language that is discriminatory, derogatory, disrespectful of a person's dignity shall be treated as misconduct. Gender-sensitive language and behaviour shall be actively promoted to become the organisation's culture.

b. Employment

(i) Recruitment

Overall objectives:

- Recruitment to be based on the highest standard and in accordance with the needs of the institution.
- A numerical gender balance shall be promoted at all levels.

Women, men and the third gender are different in a number of aspects. Having all sexes at the workplace in equal numbers encompasses more perspectives and more quality and inputs. Gender equality is a fundamental element for equal rights and opportunity. As an organisation that supports people's organisations and movements, it is of utmost importance that we reflect these conditions in HAQ's own culture, structure and activities.

(ii) Performance Appraisal

- Each staff member's potential is to be used and explored to the optimum level.
- Principles of gender equality and sensitivity shall be included in the Performance Appraisal process.

We believe that making sure that women and men, on equal terms, are able to use their full capabilities, both individually and as a team will lead to the most beneficial result. As gender equality is a priority, it shall be made visible as a value and rewarded. Principles of equity will be followed in HAQ's internal policy documents, programme initiatives, evaluations and administrative measures.

(iii) Salaries and Job Evaluation

- HAQ works on the principle of equal pay for equal work for women, men and the third gender.
- Posts at HAQ shall be objectively valued regardless of the sex of the person.

We recognise that establishing pay criteria and the value placed on different posts may derive from subjective judgments. **It is therefore highly important to eliminate any aspects that could lead to discrimination or be interpreted as such.**

c. Prevention of Sexual Harassment at workplace

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HAQ shall provide a safe and secure workplace, free of sexual harassment for women, men and the third gender.

HAQ implements the provisions of 'The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013' (The 'Act') and rules framed there under.

HAQ will have a duly constituted Committee against Sexual Harassment at Workplace as per the Act at all times, which will:

- Ensure compliance with HAQ's Gender Policy;
- Address any incidence/instance of gender discrimination within HAQ or in its activities undertaken in partnership with other organisations; and
- Take up complaints of sexual harassment in the work place and follow due procedure as laid down in the Act, within HAQ or in the course of the partnership other organisations.



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Distribution:

All Staff/Governing Body Members