

# Gender Policy



**Technology Resource Communication & Service Centre**

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## I. PREFACE

Gender Policy is a set of principles and ideal practices applied across different levels of employment in the organization to build a healthy workplace culture and equality among all employees. The policy also provides a framework for action to ensure that the staff are equally treated and given full access to different resources and opportunities. The policy also focuses on 'mainstreaming' of gender both in implementation work as well as in the decision-making processes. Gender Equality Tool of International Labour Organization (ILO) explains the degree of mainstreaming of genders "Mainstreaming is not about adding a 'woman's component' or even a 'gender equality component' into an existing activity. It goes beyond increasing women's participation; it means bringing the experience, knowledge, and interests of women and men to bear on the development agenda". The main objective of the policy is to maximize Fair Equitable participation and free access by all employees to key work areas in the organization.

As a gender sensitive organization, in the year 2015, TRCSC had developed a Gender Policy, which has now been amended, for all organizational staff and others associates so that everyone can work without of any bias, fear, sexual harassment or discrimination based on gender within its office and in the field.

## II. CONTEXT

The Constitution of India under Article 15 prohibits the state from discriminating on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex and place of birth in various day-to-day activities; and Article 39 urges the state to ensure that citizens, men and women equally have the right to an adequate means of livelihood, right to shelter, food, education and work. Gender equality is a global phenomenon with international community taking initiatives in fostering this positive change in all spheres of life.

While framing / doing amendment of this Gender Policy of TRCSC, the following Acts/Rules and Guidelines were considered -

- Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women 1993;
- Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1993;
- Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013; and
- Vishaka Guidelines against Sexual Harassment at Workplace - Guidelines and norms laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Vishaka and Others Vs. State of Rajasthan and Others (JT 1997 (7) SC 384).

## III. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Gender Policy are –

- a) To explicitly state the organizational commitment towards gender equity. Zero tolerance within the organization and amongst its partners for discrimination, sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. This includes a responsibility to promote woman and child safeguarding, to create and maintain an environment that prevents exploitation and abuse,

and to provide timely, confidential, and effective investigation, assistance, and support to survivors;

- b) To end discrimination for all as the responsibility of everyone at TRCSC, regardless of their role, title, or position, as well as the active participation of everyone in eliminating internalized gender bias and in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women;
- c) To achieve parity at all levels, including through addressing barriers to recruitment, retention, and career mobility for female staff and ensuring equal career opportunities for women, men, and persons of all genders in the organization;
- d) To serve as a framework for maximizing fair and equitable access to opportunities in terms of ownership, leadership, representation and governance;
- e) To promote and ensure gender equity and equality (in terms of rights and access to resources, responses and services) in strategies, projects and programs to reflect the efforts and aspirations of the poor and disadvantaged target communities in TRCSC's intervention areas who are the ultimate beneficiaries and owners of local development processes;
- f) To act as an effective deterrent against gender discrimination and harassment both in workplace and in program intervention areas; and
- g) To ensure compliance with the law of the land.

#### **IV. SCOPE**

TRCSC's Policy with regard to Gender encompasses all of its board and staff members, employees, volunteers, consultants, and associates/partners across the organization and its branches. TRCSC encourages women, men, and persons of all genders in the organization, if discriminated or harassed, to use the redressal mechanism as provided in this policy.

#### **V. POLICY AND ITS EFFECT**

TRCSC's Gender Policy includes all types of discrimination and sexual harassment or otherwise by fellow employees, employees, volunteers, consultants, and associates/partners and visitors including employees of outsourced entities.

This Policy has been in force effectively from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 and shall be amended from time to time to accommodate required changes as approved by the Board of Trustees of the organization.

#### **VI. DEFINITIONS**

- a) 'Gender' refers to the socially determined ideas and practices of what it is to be female or male.
- b) 'Gender discrimination' is the systematic, unfavourable treatment of individuals on the basis of their gender, which denies those rights, opportunities or resources.
- c) 'Sexual Harassment' includes Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated. It includes situations where a person is asked to engage in sexual activity as a condition of that person's employment, as well as situations which create an environment which is hostile, intimidating or humiliating for the recipient.
- d) 'Aggrieved person' means a person in relation to work place whether employed or not, who alleges to have been subject to any act of discrimination or harassment by the Respondent.
- e) 'Respondent' means a person against whom the aggrieved person has made a complaint.
- f) 'Complaints Committee' means a committee constituted by TRCSC as per this Policy.

## **VII. INTERPRETATION**

Terms which have not been defined in this policy shall have the same meaning as assigned to them in the Act/Rules as amended from time to time.

## **VIII. ELEMENTS OF THE POLICY**

TRCSC is committed to make this Gender Policy an integral part of all organizational policies, programs and projects and would involve building a culture that understands and respects gender related concerns. It would also try to eliminate all sorts of discrimination and harassment on the basis of gender which is any act of threat / harm or otherwise.

Thus, the basic elements of TRCSC's Gender Policy are –

- a) Promotion of equity and equality between men, women, and transgender;
- b) Creation of a gender sensitive and conducive working environment;
- c) Elimination of all sorts of harassment and discrimination on the basis of gender; and
- d) Ensuring fairness and equity as a right for all in the outcomes of its developmental interventions.

To achieve this, TRCSC aims to take the following immediate steps –

- 1) Improving Staff Composition/Representation
  - a) Reviewing the existing organizational structure, functioning, problems in relation to gender imbalances among staff and the work environment and taking steps to address them so as to improve staff composition;
  - b) Giving top priority to recruiting and retaining adequate women staff at all levels to ensure gender balance in staffing pattern;
  - c) Ensuring equal opportunities among staff, irrespective of gender, in working conditions, for personal growth, in promotion benefits, and training; and
  - d) Ensuring equitable representation and participation of men and women in the Managing Committee and various other functional committees of the organization.
- 2) Capacity Building of Staff on Gender Issues
  - a) Facilitating staff capacity building processes and trainings to enhance perspectives and conceptual clarity on gender issues;
  - b) Ensuring that all trainings (internal and external) facilitated or organized by TRCSC, are gender-sensitive;
  - c) Conducting gender trainings for all staff; and
  - d) Ensuring participation of women in all the field level activities, meetings and trainings.
- 3) Building a Gender Sensitive Workplace
  - a) Providing a safe and secure workplace for women staff, free from all sorts of discrimination and harassment based on gender with an Internal Complaints Committee in existence to deter and to prevent harassment through dissemination of information/rules and also for investigating into cases of discrimination and harassment when they are reported and ensuring justice;
  - b) Extending work related concessions and relaxations for women staff depending upon the situations and requirements, e.g. providing secure transport facilities when they work late hours; ensuring security measures along with minimum basic facilities for

- women staff while traveling in the field; flexible working hours for women staff and provisions for working from home under special circumstances; and
- c) Overall, appropriate work conditions should be provided in respect of work, leisure, health and hygiene to further ensure that there is no hostile environment towards women at workplaces and no woman employee should have reasonable grounds to believe that she is disadvantaged in connection with her employment.
- 4) Making Provisions for Maternity/Paternity Leave Benefits
    - a) A woman employee after confirmation shall be entitled to Maternity Leave up to 180 days during the pregnancy period;
    - b) The leave can go up to 45 days during the entire service of the employee for cases of abortion or miscarriage;
    - c) Paternity Leave is granted for 7 days to male employees for either before or after childbirth; and
    - d) Maternity/Paternity leave can be availed for only up to two live children.
  - 5) Organizational Policies and Systems to Reflect Gender Needs
    - a) Making all human resource systems and policies gender-sensitive and responsive, and integrating gender indicators into staff performance appraisal systems;
    - b) Incorporating and explicitly mentioning gender sensitivity as an essential element in the tasks/job profiles in all terms of reference, including TORs for external consultants;
    - c) Ensuring that the conceptual clarity and sensitivity on gender issues will be one of the important selection criteria in recruitment processes and capacity building efforts of staff; and
    - d) Ensuring gender segregated data for all programs.
  - 6) Ensuring Women Empowerment and Participation in intervention areas
    - a) Strategic orientation to staff in the field-based programs and advocacy initiatives towards increasing women's access, control and ownership over the natural resources, processes and organizations;
    - b) Ensuring benefits of Government welfare schemes or programs actually pass on to the eligible women and are not usurped by other male members of the family or outsiders who seek to benefit from such schemes or programs by utilizing women;
    - c) Ensuring integration of gender concerns into the scaling-up of and mainstreaming developmental programs/projects;
    - d) Empowering women members of communities by informing them about their rights, the laws of the land, and ensuring capacity building through trainings to inculcate leadership qualities in them so as to be assertive in governance issues and thus ensure gender balance in community/village representation in the governance mechanism;
    - e) Furthering deliberate and intense efforts to promote representation/participation of women and their collectives in various developmental programs of the organization or state;
    - f) Promoting women's leadership in community-based organizations to ensure sustainable use of resources, and provide livelihood/earning opportunities for its members;
    - g) Ensuring equal wages for equal work for both men and women and also ensuring gender friendly facilities in their workplace, like creche, provision for women supervisors,

- separate rest areas and toilets, so that women members may participate and perform in work areas without feeling disadvantaged or insecure in any manner;
- h) Making special efforts for identifying vulnerable women and girls and provide them the necessary support and guidance to voice their needs and assert their rights and to deter sexual harassment, trafficking, child marriage, domestic violence, and any other types of discrimination or harm; and
  - i) Building awareness and sensitivity among men and mobilizing their support towards gender balance in families and/or communities in TRCSC's intervention areas.

## **IX. INTERNAL COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE**

To consider and redress complaints of Gender Discrimination or Harassment, an Internal Complaints Committee (Hereinafter "the Committee") shall be constituted at the organization's Registered Office level by the Board of Trustees of TRCSC consisting of five members of which at least three will be woman in senior position and one external person who is committed to the cause of protection of women. This Committee shall be chaired by a senior woman member of it. However, it is at the discretion of the Board of Trustees to make changes in the composition of the complaints committee from time to time, based on availability of members.

This Committee shall be empowered to receive complaints, conduct enquiries and recommend appropriate actions for redressal and punishment. In case, a complaint is received against a member of the Complaints Committee itself, the concerned individual shall be required to step down, and shall be replaced by another person from the same category by the Board of Trustees.

## **X. COMPLAINING & REDRESSAL MECHANISM**

Any aggrieved person of any gender may make a complaint of discrimination or harassment due to his/her gender in writing to the Committee within a period of three months from the date of incident.

On receiving the complaint, the Committee shall respond within ten (10) days and take necessary action to initiate investigation. It shall complete its investigation within thirty (30) days and submit a report to the Board of Trustees of TRCSC. Appropriate action shall be taken immediately by the Secretary-cum-Executive Director on basis of the Committee's investigation report and/or recommendation.

## **XI. CONCLUSION**

This policy outlines the spirit behind the TRCSC's approach in bringing absolute transparency in communication as regards to its Gender Policy. Therefore, personnel covered by this policy are expected to respect the rules and standard procedures governing this policy. Where circumstances are abnormal or situations not anticipated or defined in this policy arise, such matters should be referred to the Board of Trustees for resolution in a matter that is consistent with the whole aim and spirit of this policy. This policy superseded all other policies, procedures and practices prevalent on this subject till date. However, the Organization reserves the right to add to, alter to, amend or cancel this policy at its discretion

Deviation to this policy in any form will not be entertained and will be viewed seriously.