

Engendering Workplaces

Framework for a Gender Policy

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Preface

On August 13, 1998, the Supreme Court of India passed a judgement, the Vishaka Guidelines, making it binding for all institutions, whether private or government, to institute certain rules of conduct and preventive measures to stop sexual harassment at the workplace.

In December 1998, in accordance with the judgement, PRIA's Governing Board mandated the formation of the Committee Against Sexual Harassment (CASH). The functioning of this committee was not merely a response to the Supreme Court judgement, it was an extension of PRIA's work with women, including occupational health and safety, non-formal education, leadership programmes and governance issues.

The Committee Against Sexual Harassment later evolved into the Committee for Gender Awareness and Mainstreaming in PRIA (CGAMP); it did not limit its involvement to the issue of sexual harassment alone, but took a deliberate decision to include mainstreaming gender in institutional issues and internal functioning. As a part of this role, the committee has brought about long-term changes within the functioning of the organisation, including institutionalising of paternity leave, more flexible per diem rates for women travelling alone, higher/safer modes of transport, support for women travelling with young children, day care centres, engendered processes of recruitment, induction and retention.

In 2000, on the basis of a review of CGAMP, it was decided to replicate these efforts of gender mainstreaming amongst the partners of PRIA. Beginning with a gender audit of each partner organisation, a number of steps were taken and these included setting up of committees to deal with issues of sexual harassment, engendering of the organisational structure and training of committee members—in order to help build up an environment that was safe for women and conducive for both the sexes. These efforts slowly grew and were followed by select organisations in the network of PRIA and its partners.

In 2004, in a bid to understanding the ramifications of engendering panchayats, PRIA started examining its work with panchayats and elected women representatives (taking into account that institutes of local self-governance were the workplaces of elected representatives).

The focus in all these initiatives was always on addressing gender issues at an organisational level. There were two main reasons for doing so.

First, gender mainstreaming within most organisations was already taking place at a programmatic level. This was partly due to mandates of donors, which necessitated that gender be an essential element of all stages of project cycles— planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The second, and more important, reason for focussing on gender at an organisational level was the assumption that if the structure of an organisation was engendered, it would affect functioning at every level, including programmes. For example, if the engendered policy of the organisation stated that women staff was permitted to take their young children with them when on official travel, with/without a caretaker, this policy would automatically be applicable to women from the community, who had to take their children along with them on similar programmes.

During PRIA's annual review of 2007, the gender team discussed the importance of examining gender mainstreaming of the entire voluntary sector, rather than specific organisations. This included gaining a basic understanding of whether there existed in organisations the following:

- Gender policy,
- Policy Against Sexual Harassment,
- Committee to deal with sexual harassment at the workplace
- Gender balance within their staff members
- Analysis of women's positions in the hierarchy, in leadership and decision-making roles
- Documentation of gender sensitive practices within organisations.

It was in this context that PRIA approached VANI and UNIFEM to collaborate with them on taking this process forward.

The result is a manual, based on information gathered from interactions with voluntary organisations that have gone towards the framing of a Gender Policy, which can be used by all in this sector. It is generally assumed that given the context of the voluntary sector, gender issues will be an essential part of their organisational mandate, specially as programmes focus on the inclusion and empowerment of women.

However, as explained in the manual, our findings refute this assumption and give insights into actual practices and environments within such organisations.

Other information shows that while organisations have different practices related to inclusion of women in the workplace, they are at a superficial level and not powerful enough to retain women nor give them leadership and decision-making roles, or break barriers that affect their work and life balance. The workplace in the voluntary sector still remains dominated by men, catering to their specific needs and roles, both within the workplace and at home. As we all value the work and contributions of women in the process of development and their importance in our organisations, we must make efforts to sustain their presence and maximise their potential. At the same time, we also need to include men as partners, and not competitors, in these processes of change and adaptation.

This manual, therefore, is a product of the work of several organisations. PRIA is happy to present it to the fraternity of voluntary sector and its supporters and well-wishers.

We hope that it contributes towards mainstreaming gender at the workplace.

Dr Rajesh Tandon
President, PRIA

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Executive Summary

In the last few decades, there have been political and social movements that have advocated equal rights for women and have paved the way to gender sensitive policies and rules in the workplace. In India, the State has taken steps to ensure women's access to labour welfare and social security. Legislations have been passed to improve the working conditions of women. These include the Minimum Wages Act, 1948; Plantation Labour Act, 1951; Factories Act, 1952; Maternity Benefits Act, 1961; Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1966; and Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.

But, most organisations still do not understand the need to mainstream gender within their workplaces; even organisations that have attempted to address gender issues within their workplaces have been able to do so only at a very superficial level.

The four major challenges that women face in the present day workplace are:

- Social mindsets as obstacles to economic participation;
- Stereotypical perceptions as obstacles to economic participation;
- Gender biased work culture and environment; and
- The reality of sexual harassment.

To counteract these gender imbalances, organisations must find creative and innovative ways in which to contribute to the creation of a just and equal society. One such way is the development of a Gender Policy, which clearly outlines the intentions of the organisation in its different facets to promote gender mainstreaming. These intentions must then be translated into practical realities of norms, practices and activities, both formal as well as informal, within the workplace. The implementation of a Gender Policy will require the commitment, participation and contribution of each and every staff member, starting right from the top, to ensure its success and sustainability.

This manual is designed for all organisations that wish to mainstream gender within their institutions, both at an organisational as well at the programmatic level. The manual is also intended for those organisations, which at an informal and practical level may be gender sensitive and inclusive, but need a formal policy to reiterate their commitment to issues of gender mainstreaming.

Section I of this manual helps professionals

and policy makers of organisations to develop an understanding of the concept of organisational gender mainstreaming, or internal gender mainstreaming. It gives a historical overview of the roots of gender discrimination and inequality in family and society, and which are further reflected in the workplace. Broad concepts and approaches to different aspects of gender have also been highlighted. Global efforts at understanding and addressing mainstreaming gender in the workplace as well as national efforts to develop a legal framework to address various issues related to the marginalisation and discrimination of women provide a backdrop under which organisations can frame a suitable Gender Policy.

In Section II, this manual gives an overview of all components of an organisational structure and reviews them through a gender lens. It also provides insights into the various methods that organisations have adopted to address issues of gender inequality and include women in their workplaces. Besides, this manual has simple and clear recommendations for translating commitments into practical actions in the everyday functioning of an organisation.

Section III deals with the operational aspects of developing and implementing the Gender Policy. Essential indicators have been focused upon to ensure that an organisation's commitment to gender is not compromised or diluted. This section of the manual is aimed at helping an organisation develop its own Gender Policy, based on its specific context and needs. It also includes illustrative examples for framing various aspects of the policy in the context of the organisational structure. A combination of legal guidelines and gender sensitive factors has also been indicated, giving the policy a balance between strategic needs as well as the legal mandate.

The chart in the following pages provides a snapshot of the recommendations vis-a-vis the issues that an organisation needs to look at while implementing a Gender Policy.

This manual is part of PRIA's efforts to bring forth gender issues across sectors and regions. PRIA has had a long history in actively pursuing the cause of gender mainstreaming within organisations, starting as far back as the 1980s when it worked on the empowerment of working women through its capacity building programmes, including Mini Social MBA for women entrepreneurs, building women lead-

ers within elected representatives and also addressing various social issues like girl child education and employment opportunities.

As a first step towards reaching its objective of developing a Gender Policy, PRIA worked closely with Voluntary Action of India (VANI) to help gather primary data on gender issues within the development sector. VANI is a network of civil society organisations that has an outreach in 25 States, with 273 organisations. The core objective of VANI is collectivisation and raising voice on issues that have an impact on political and social change.

After a careful selection process, 13 organisations, all VANI members, agreed to be a part of this study. These organisations ranged in size from medium to large, so as to get data to reveal the different realities, varied attitudes and mindsets, with specific reference to issues of gender within the workplace. Very small organisations, with below five staff members and operating on an highly informal basis, without even a regular building, let alone formal policies and service rules were not selected. A large section of this manual is based on experiences culled out of interactions with the staff and leadership of the selected organisations. These organisations are based in five States: Delhi, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa.

The first step was the documentation of gender sensitive work practices as well as an assessment of the processes that were directed at creating a gender-conducive work environment and culture. A detailed checklist was developed for the documentation of gender sensitive practices within the organisations. The methodology included focused group discussions with males, females as well as mixed groups, interviews with the top leadership, senior staff and newly recruited staff to get a varied yet holistic account of the realities of the organisations. It also served the purpose of corroborating information, assessing ambiguities and understanding the attitude and perspectives of the staff and management towards issues of gender mainstreaming within the organisation.

A key finding of the study was that 62 per cent of the organisations studied did not have a Gender Policy and neither had they ever felt the need for one.

A Gender Policy is a tool through which a formal proclamation can be made to initiate and promote the gender mainstreaming process within an organisation. Through a series of organisational processes, the policy reiterates the commitment of the organisation

towards gender inclusion and responsiveness, right from its vision/ mission statement to the internal as well as the external forces that affect its identity and culture.

These processes may include commitment towards conducting of gender audits; organising of gender awareness programmes for the staff; review of internal structures and policies; scrutiny of the work culture and image of the organisation; mainstreaming gender in the planning cycles of programmes; and above all a commitment to the monitoring and evaluation of all such measures.

The Gender Policy does not detail steps to be taken to restructure an organisation, it is only the expression of the commitment of the organisation to meet the gender needs of its varied components. The practical aspects of the policy have to get reflected in other systems and procedures of the organisation.

A Gender Policy can be applied to the organisational and programmatic aspects of an organisation. However, this document focuses on the organisational aspects of framing a Gender Policy. This is because if an organisation was engendered in all its elements, including vision/mission statements, leadership, structures, policies and workplace culture, programmatic interventions at the field level would automatically be affected.

Once the organisation has framed the Gender Policy and it has been mandated by the Board, its implementation involves a series of actions that not only enforce its purpose but reinforce the spirit behind the objectives of the policy. This manual outlines some illustrative steps that need to be followed to enforce a Gender Policy. Many of the steps follow a sequence, but some have to be undertaken simultaneously to maximise their positive impact within other systems of the organisation.

Organisations need to express a commitment to have periodic gender audits to review the implementation and success of gender concerns within the organisation. Along with periodic gender audits of the organisation, it is essential to have frequent reviews of the Gender Policy.

Many of the changes introduced by organisations are often not sustainable as they do not take into account the multiple roles that women play and the efforts they make in balancing their personal as well as professional lives. Therefore, gender equations remain at a status quo and organisations find themselves grappling with issues of women's inclusion and retention in the workplace.

Depending upon their mandate, organisa-

Overview Of Organisational Components And Recommendations

**Vision
Mission
Statements** Language used to be gender specific and not gender neutral

**Strategies and
goals** To be analysed for gender inclusiveness

Organisational Leadership

Governing Board

- Adequate, if not equal representation of women on the Board (33 per cent). Women are represented qualitatively rather than quantitatively.
- A greater emphasis on the status, caliber and public recognition of women Board members

Leadership

- Preference given to woman candidate if position of CEO is vacant
- Develop second line leadership, with adequate representation of women
- Develop capacities of women with leadership and managerial qualities

Top Management

- Identify women of competency and calibre within the organisation to take on roles of management and leadership
- Develop strategies and supportive measures to be adopted for retention of women
- Provide opportunities for growth and development of women in the context of furthering the organisation's growth.
- Recruit women from the external world to perform these key functions.

Informal Culture

Code of Conduct

- Develop a formal code of conduct which is applicable to all staff, as well as others who are a part of the institutional network.
- Apart from other norms of behaviour, the code should spell out a clear definition of sexual harassment and penalties for violations of the same
- Appointment letters should clearly define acceptable norms of behaviour as well a copy of the Anti Sexual Harassment Policy

Basic Amenities

- Basic amenities to be provided including clean drinking water, clean and comfortable environment, good seating arrangements
- Ensure safety and security in office premises, especially for women
- Adequate time and space for tea and lunch breaks

**Creating Informal
Spaces for
Families**

- Creating spaces for informal get-togethers for the entire staff, including lunches, picnics, national days and festivals
- Celebrating birthdays of the individual staff members
- Inviting family members to certain events

Human Resources

Recruitment

- Organisations need to conduct a thorough analysis to identify reasons for the gender imbalance within their structure.
- During interviews information should be sought in a positive and sensitive
- Suitability of candidates must emphasise on their ability to learn as opposed to their skills and expertise.
- Gender biased questions or statements should be prohibited.
- All positive affirmative actions of the organisation to be shared during recruitment

**Induction and
Orientation**

- Formal system of induction and orientation to be developed and implemented
- Induction process to cover all formal and informal aspects of organisational functioning
- Sharing and discussion on all policies and wherever possible copies of the same distributed.
- Check list of issues prepared to be covered during induction
- Norms of behaviour and penalties for violation of the same.

Retention

- Training local women staff for remote locations
- Recruiting professional staff for training of local staff with regular guidance and support
- Adopting work life policies for the retention of women staff
- Adopting work life policies to encourage men accept new roles and responsibilities
- Maintaining a data base of information regarding the attrition of women staff

Formal Systems/ Service Rules

Leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use government norms as a benchmark to develop leave policy ● Include leave for miscarriages within the rules ● Flexibility in the number of days an employee can go on leave ● More formality in leave rules to counter the negative impacts of discretionary measures ● Resolve the issue of compensatory offs ● Ensure at least one day off in the week
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Providing a higher/safer mode of local transport as well as travel arrangements to ensure the security of women ● Providing safe and secure accommodation to women staff, even if it exceeds her entitlement ● Develop a formal policy regarding shared accommodation with members of the opposite sex ● Provide supportive facilities to mothers of young children which enable them to take their young children along while travelling ● Formal policies to be relied upon rather than the discretionary measures of individuals ● Develop the capacities of women to travel alone.
Working Hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Examine and analyse the culture of overtime and its impact on the organisation ● Develop a culture where completion of task in stipulated time is a virtue ● Promote regular working hours for both men and women ● Ensure meetings and other events are held at timings conducive to the safety of women ● Consider alternative options to stipulated working hours.
Career Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Capacity building workshops/trainings for staff at regular intervals, targeting specific work areas, enhancing the capacity of the employee ● Encouragement to employees to go for higher education
Capacity Building for Gender Sensitisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In-house gender orientation to be mandatory for all staff across all levels. ● Phased sensitisation programmes ranging from the basics to detailed gender analysis ● Forums for discussions on gender
Other Policies	
Communications Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gender sensitivity in IEC/publication and other general communications ● Gender sensitive and gender inclusive image of the organisation in public forums ● Gender analysis in the conceptualising of advertising and marketing activities ● Strategy to communicate gender related policy to all staff and other stakeholders
Spouse Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Employers need to consider spouse employment as a positive step for individuals as well as the organisation. ● A formal policy needs to be developed to minimise conflicts in personal and professional relationships and to protect interests of the organisation.
Facilities for Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rest during the day for pregnant woman ● Relaxation from travel ● Special care if attending meetings outside of the office ● Warm and caring environment ● Breast feeding breaks
Facilities for Parents of Young Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Institutional arrangements which cater to the needs of staff with young children, including flexible working hours, work from home, part time occupations, etc ● Facilities for creches, day care centres or even a room designated to child care ● Promote the message that child care and domestic responsibilities are the responsibility of both parents. ● Coordinate and collaborate with other institutions to develop a child care system within the vicinity of different institutions
Policy Against Sexual Harassment and Committee Against Sexual Harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development of a Policy Against Sexual Harassment ● Setting up a Committee to deal with cases of sexual harassment in the workplace ● Capacity building of Committee members

tions determine and influence power, resource allocation, decision-making and participation of men and women, both in their own structure and the community that they work with.

For those of us in the development sector, we too must accept the fact that women have joined the workforce and are here to stay. As we all value the work and contributions of women in the process of development and their importance in our organisations, we must make efforts to sustain their presence and maximise their potential. At the same time, we also need to include men as partners and not competitors in these processes of change and adaptation.

Very often, the question that organisations ask is "For how long must we make these changes and for how long should we accommodate the needs of women?"

The answer is very simple. For as long as it takes for women to get equal rights, for as long

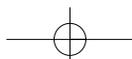
as it takes for men to fully share the roles of women, both in the home, in society and the workplace, for as long as it takes for women to be safe in her different environments – this is for how long we will have to take measures to ensure the participation and inclusion of women in all spheres of life.

Here, it is important to note that all organisations also have a role towards social transformation. Yet, despite this responsibility and the power they exercise, most pay little or no attention to the existing structural inequalities between men and women. Change has to reach the very core of organisational structures, its culture, institutional contexts and mandates, and restructure them to meet the challenges of promoting more equitable relations between men and women. The change must ensure that women and men take part more equally within its structures of power and decision-making processes.



SECTION 1

**SIGNIFICANCE OF A
GENDER POLICY**



Historical Overview

The word gender in its original definition is a neutral term, referring both to women as well as men. In today's context, the term "gender" has taken on a new meaning and refers to the roles of women and men as defined by their socio-cultural contexts. The social roles and expectations that are passed onto women and men are known as "engendering". Over the years, gender has been constructed in such a way that women as a group enjoy fewer rights, control fewer resources, work longer hours, have no or low decision-making powers and much of their work, like domestic chores, rearing children and caring for the sick and the aged, is not even considered to be in the realm of productive work (PRIA, 2005).

To counteract the negative impacts that women faced as a marginalised group, efforts to mainstream gender at the international front were first seen at the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1979, and the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (1985), and it was only in 1995, in the Beijing Declaration and the Platform of Action, that "gender mainstreaming" was established as the internationally agreed upon strategy for governments and development organisations to promote gender equality.

This was also a response to the consistent lessons that had emerged from at least 20 years of experience of addressing women's needs in development work (DfID, 2002).

Perspectives through which Gender is Approached

All humans are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

Gender equality has been one of the core goals in international development cooperation for several decades. It has evolved from its earlier forms of 'Women in Development' (WID) and 'Women and Development' (WAD) in the 1970s to its latest and most popular theory of Gender and Development (GAD).

Women in Development (WID) & Women and Development (WAD)

The WID theory felt that development processes would proceed much better if women were fully incorporated into them. WAD theorists took the position that women had always been a part of the development process and focussed on the relationship between women and development processes. Both approaches concentrated solely on women, in terms of integrating them into the economic sphere and production activities, and in terms of overcoming the oppressive structures of capitalism and patriarchy (Young in Visvanathan, 1997).

Gender and Development (GAD)

Gender and Development (GAD) is currently the most prominent approach with respect to gender issues in the field of development cooperation. This approach does not consider women, their roles, needs and aspirations in isolation from those of men. Therefore, GAD seeks to work towards gender equality, albeit from a more holistic perspective through the concept of gender (ibid.).

Based on the concepts of WID, WAD and GAD, several different approaches have been used in development programmes. Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the impacts on women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres. The objective behind such a strategy is that the priorities and concerns of men and women get adequate consideration and existing inequalities between them are not perpetuated.

Rights-Based Approach: This approach takes into consideration that women have rights to political, social, economic and health well-being.

Gender Equity Approach: The equity approach integrates positive discrimination with an aim to achieve equality as an end. Equity means treating women and men differently in order to achieve an equal status.

Gender Equality Approach: This approach provides equal opportunities and does not discriminate between any human beings on the basis of religion, colour, sex, socio-cultural or political background.

Practical Gender Needs Approach: Practical gender needs (PGNs) are identified by women,

within their socially defined roles, with the primary intention of improving their living conditions.

Strategic Gender Interests Approach: Strategic gender interests (SGIs) are identified by women as a result of their subordinate social status and tend to challenge gender divisions of labour power and control, and traditionally defined norms and roles.

Gender Sensitivity Approach: Gender sensitivity means the realisation of concerns, inhibitions, difficulties, aspirations and dreams of both women and men, and making adequate provisions to address or fulfil them.

Gender and the Workplace – A Global Overview

While all efforts have been made to include women in development processes, there have been no efforts to integrate women and their needs within workplaces. It was only in the 1990s that efforts were made at the global level to mainstream gender in workplaces.

- 1991 – Nuket Kardam was the first to highlight the importance of understanding the gendered nature of organisations in the development sector and their institutional environments (Rao et al, 1999).
- 1992 – Joan Acker focussed on the gendered substructure of an organisation being built on a fundamental separation and consequent devaluation of ‘life from work’.
- 1992 – Anne Marie Goetz analysed the gendered nature of organisations and their inability to have beneficial outcomes for women.
- 1995 – Several writers, including Naila Kabeer, Catherine Itzin and Janet Newman, examined the way culture blocks change toward gender equity in municipal governments.
- 1998 – Kathy Staudt identified institutionalised male privilege as a fundamental principle of organisations (ibid.).
- 1998 – Carol Miller and Shahra Razavi advocated feminist engagements with institutions that tried to promote change within existing bureaucratic structures.

The Reality of the Indian Workplace

All of these studies take on new relevance in the Indian context, as there has been a significant increase in the number of women working in the last few decades. During this period, there have also been political and social movements that have advocated equal rights for

women, and have paved the way to gender sensitive policies and rules in the workplace. In India, the State has taken steps to ensure women's access to labour welfare and social security.

Legislations have been passed to improve the working conditions of women. These include the Minimum Wages Act, 1948; Plantation Labour Act, 1951; Factories Act, 1952; Maternity Benefits Act, 1961; Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1966; and Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.

India's growing economy is witnessing the increasing participation of women in the workplace. However, while women's participation has increased in the workforce, they are still progressing at a slower pace in comparison to their male counterparts. According to the National Human Development Report 2001, the percentage of women in the labour force in rural areas in 1999-2000 was 45.6 as compared to 85.4 per cent for men. In the urban areas for the same year, it was 24.6 per cent for women as compared to 78.6 per cent for men. Again for the year 1999-2000, the growth of employment in rural areas for females was 0.8 per cent while for men it was 1.6 per cent. In the urban areas, the growth of employment was 1.5 per cent for females as compared to 2.6 per cent men. Yet, despite this growing presence of women, the workplace still reflects male standards of work ethics, which have been designed by men for themselves.

Most organisations do not even attempt to understand the need to mainstream gender within their workplaces. Even organisations that have attempted to address gender issues within their workplaces have been able to do so only at a very superficial level, as is evident from the marginal increase in the numerical representation of women in such organisations. Most organisations have not been able to break away from traditional norms and stereotypical images of both men and women to forge new paths and identities for them. Men remain dominant.

Challenges Affecting the Workplace

The workplace is, to a large extent, a reflection of the realities prevailing in society. It is important to recognise that gender relations are the outcomes of a whole set of cultural, economic and political relations within a given context. The process of socialisation results in individuals taking on gendered qualities and charac-

teristics, and thereby acquiring a sense of the self. It is through the process of socialisation that individuals also perceive and learn what society expects of them, as males and females. Associated with these expectations is the implicit understanding that individuals are accountable for their appropriate 'masculinity' or 'femininity' (Wharton, 2005: 31).

The four major challenges that women face in the present day workplace are:

- Social mindsets as obstacles to economic participation;
- Stereotypical perceptions as obstacles to economic participation;
- Gender biased work culture and environment; and
- The reality of sexual harassment.

Social Mindsets as Obstacles to Economic Participation

Dual burden of responsibilities

Women have traditionally been responsible for daily household chores and reproductive roles, including cooking, fetching water and looking after children. Along with these roles, a working woman now has additional responsibilities within the public sphere of her workplace. Simultaneously, the structure of the family has also undergone a metamorphosis, with an increase in the number of nuclear families, which lack traditional support systems. This change in the basic family structure poses serious obstacles to women in their pursuance of a career, as they do not fit into "the category of an ideal worker who can wholeheartedly devote time to work" (Rao et al, 1999: 5).

These obstacles are further enhanced with the women's biological and reproductive functions, which are viewed from a stereotyped lens. The women's primary role as caretakers forces them to take a break in their careers when it comes to the rearing of children. On their part, men do not face such challenges, nor do they face the traumas of balancing their work and personal lives as they have traditionally not been given the responsibility of reproduction and caring. The impact of socialisation processes run so deep that today women feel a sense of guilt and neglect of duty if they do not take a career break or if they leave their children with domestic maids or in crèches/day care centres.

Lack of decision-making power within families

Traditionally, women do not have the authority to take decisions within their family. As an

unmarried girl, it is parents who take decisions for her and after her marriage, it is her in-laws who take over this role. All decisions are taken for the woman by her family—whether she should work, the kind of sector that is appropriate, the hours, etc. This limits women when it comes to taking their independent decisions regarding the choice of their career, the location of posting, and the kind of work they do.

An organisation reported that a newly married young female employee wanted to resign as she was facing a lot of pressure from her in-laws to stop working. Her resignation was not accepted for three months, with the management hoping she would withdraw. During this period, senior staff even went to her in-laws home and tried to convince them of the importance in letting her continue. However, all efforts proved futile and the organisation had to release her. Thus, the organisation and the girl had to give in to pressures that newly married girls face from their in-laws to not work outside the home. For many families, daughters-in-laws can work full time only as long as it does not compromise with the responsibilities that they are expected to fulfil in their matrimonial homes.

Concerns over the sexuality of women

More often than not, the resistance that women face from their families is based on their safety and security concerns. Women's participation in employment outside the home is viewed as "slightly inappropriate, subtly wrong, and definitely dangerous to their chastity and womanly virtue" (Dube and Palriwala in Dunlop and Velkoff, 1999). This factor greatly limits the mobility of women and they are unable to take up jobs in remote places, as their families may perceive these to be unsafe. Women are often kept at home as a demonstration of the family's morality and as a symbol of its financial security (Dunlop and Velkoff, 1999). Besides, society also attaches moralities to certain jobs such as those in the hotel and travel industry, and more recently in the business process outsourcing (BPOs) organisations.

Women as secondary earners

There is also the prevalent perception that women's work and careers are subsidiary to that of the male in a family. An analysis of this factor throws up interesting results. Women as individuals in a marginalised group get less

access to educational opportunities, professional courses and skill-building activities, and this can be a major reason for their getting lower salaries than their spouses.

Also, the underlying truth is that men prefer to marry women who are lower to them in educational status and as a result will earn less than them, enabling them to maintain a position of control and dominance in a family. It is also true that at any moment of crisis or need within the family, whether nuclear or extended, there is pressure on women to sacrifice their career to tend to the need of the hour. There is also an implicit understanding that in case of marriage or in case the husband is transferred to a different centre, it is the woman who will give up her existing job and look for new opportunities. In fact, it is this thinking that compels many women to take on jobs that are part-time in nature, such as teaching, which not only gives her the space to fulfil her household responsibilities but where switching jobs is also easy.

Stereotypical Perceptions as Obstacles to Economic Participation

Stereotypical assumptions in the workplace are a set of perceptions that have persisted ever since the time when the workplace was a male dominated bastion and these exert an undue influence over women's participation.

Stereotypical representation in the workplace

There is a tendency for organisations and people to stereotype activities and tasks by gender within the workplace. In doing so, they assign those tasks or jobs to women and men that are seen to require distinctly feminine or distinctly masculine characteristics; work that suits their sex and not their capabilities. Jobs requiring a higher degree of education, training and skill are often held by men due to their easy access to education and acquisition of the requisite skills.

For instance, when asked to describe the qualifications for being a nurse, many will list characteristics that are seen to be more typical of women than of men, such as nurturance and care-taking ability. Similarly, many will say that jobs presumed to require aggression and competitiveness, such as that of a prosecutor, are more appropriate for men than women (Wharton, 2005: 182).

Here, it must be noted that when men enter predominantly female jobs, they are in danger of losing status and income, while women who cross gender boundaries stand to improve their situation. It is for this reason that women

may have entered jobs traditionally held by men in much larger numbers than men have entered jobs traditionally held by women (ibid.: 181). However, the flip side is also true: that those men who do join predominantly female occupations are likely to be rewarded more than their female counterparts, for example, hairdressers and designers. This is due to the fact that femininity is less valued than masculinity, and also because women entering predominantly male occupations need to struggle to fit in and demonstrate their competence, something that is not seen to be the case for men.

Again, organisations that prefer hiring women have a set of reasons that are not based on the capabilities of women alone. A reason often cited for hiring women is their supposed 'natural' docility and their perceived image of being less susceptible to unionism, to strikes, *hartals* and other forms of confrontational protests. Another reason is their 'trustworthiness', the infrequent breaks, such as smoking breaks, that women tend to take as compared to men. In several workplaces, women are preferred, as they are paid lower wages than their male counterparts for fulfilling similar tasks and responsibilities (Gothoskar, 1992: 7).

Discriminations in opportunities and benefits

Women professionals are exposed to a variety of exploitations, like discrimination in promotions, pay levels, and personnel functions, specially management development. The gender wage gap is most often expressed as a ratio of women's earnings to men's earnings (Wharton, 2005: 189). The pay levels of women are significantly lower than that of men. They were 69 per cent of men's earnings for managerial positions and 75 per cent for those in professions (Singh in Verma, 2005: 121). In India, which has a better record than most developing countries, even when women occupy similar positions and have similar educational levels, they earn just 80 per cent of what men do.

Challenges women face in reaching top echelons

The percentage of women at higher levels of organisations in all sectors, in both the developed and developing countries, is very small. Equal access and representation of women in higher management positions has been the least in developing countries. There is also research on the fact that most men grow up expecting to be in positions of authority over women and are uncomfortable when their

work requires them to receive orders from women (Wharton, 2005: 187).

Hence, although women have made inroads into managerial occupations in recent years, they remain much less likely than men to have jobs requiring the exercise of authority over resources and/or people. This lack of access to authority is referred to as a "glass ceiling", and it describes how while on the surface there may be what is a clear path of promotion, in actuality, there is a point beyond which women find it difficult to progress. The "glass ceiling" must be distinguished from formal barriers to advancement, such as education or experience.

Variations of the "Glass Ceiling" and other related terms

- **Bamboo Ceiling** - *The exclusion of Asian-Americans from executive and managerial roles on the basis of subjective factors, such as "lack of leadership potential" or "inferior communication ability", despite the Asian-American candidate having superior objective credentials.*
- **Glass elevator (or glass escalator)** - *The rapid promotion of men over women, specially into management, in female-dominated fields such as nursing.*
- **Glass cliff** - *A situation wherein someone has been promoted into a risky, difficult job where the chances of failure are higher.*
- **Celluloid ceiling** *refers to the small number of women in top positions in Hollywood, as documented by Lauzen (2002) and others.*

Source: en.wikipedia.org

Male work ethics

Since men do not have household responsibilities, they are considered to be more flexible in their working hours and uncomplaining about working overtime (Gothoskar, 1992: 10). Women, responsible for taking care of the young, the sick and the aged apart from their household chores, are perceived to be more eager to leave at the stipulated time. Moreover since women's employment is often guided by the legal responsibilities imposed on employers by way of special amenities to be provided to women, including maternity benefits and crèches in the workplace, the latter are prone to recruit women as temporary labour or home-based workers rather than as permanent employees (Mukherjee in Ray and Basu, 1999). Besides, employers do not want to be responsi-

ble for the safety and security of their women employees, when they have to stay on late and travel out of the city.

The fact that men can and do continue to work beyond the stipulated hours has resulted in their developing networks and collaborations outside of the office spaces (smoking, drinking and having dinner are the major hubs around which connections are developed and deals are struck). Women who are either uncomfortable being a part of these processes and/or those who do not find time away from family commitments lose out on growing in their careers.

Gender Biased Work Culture and Environment

Organisations have developed a culture where personal and professional lives are considered to be separate compartments resulting in the work culture reflecting male ethics and standards, not taking into consideration the needs of the women in the workplace.

However, it is becoming increasingly difficult to visualise the home and the workplace as completely different spheres, with no links or overflows. Women do bear the brunt of this divisive culture by suffering from dual burdens, though this is now beginning to affect men as well resulting in tensions and stress in both spheres.

Handling circumstances related to child rearing, care of the aged and the sick, ill health and other personal obligations make it critical to have a balanced work and home life, for both female and male workers. To support their staff, organisations can play a vital role in developing policies and norms that help in the realisation of this work-life balance. Most importantly, they need to recognise and acknowledge that human capital is one of the most critical resources. With work-life harmony, organisations will be able to address the time and energy crunch, give working parents more time for children and elderly parents, and singles more opportunities to socialise.

The Reality of Sexual Harassment

Women are slightly more than half the world's population. Thus, in this context, the workplace needs to be a place that is safe for its workers and is free from sexual harassment and violence. Recent cases like rape and murder of call centre female employees in Bangalore and Pune, while returning after the work-shifts, call for an attention from employers to address this issue.

The Supreme Court in 1997 passed a set of

Bhanwari, a 40 year old Kumhar (low caste) woman from the village of Rajasthan worked as "Saathin" in 1985. In 1992 just before Akha Teej as part of her work, she tried to stop the child marriage of the one-year-old daughter of a Gujjar. The state machinery tried to prevent the marriage, by sending police forces to stop the ceremony, but it was too late, as the marriage had already had taken place. The Gujjar community became aggressive in registering its anger at the "temerity" of a low caste individual and that too a woman in daring to advise them. Various forms of harassment were undertaken against Bhanwari Devi, culminating in September 1992, with an assault by five prominent men of the village on Bhanwari and her husband, Mohan, while they were working on their field. This assault culminated in the gang rape of Bhanwari Devi.

The case of Bhanwari Devi was taken up in court by an NGO working in Rajasthan-Vishaka. On August 13, 1997, the Supreme Court of India passed a judgement in the case of Vishakha vs. State of Rajasthan and others, recognising the need to address the issue of violence and sexual exploitation of women in their workplaces.

guidelines to deal with cases of sexual harassment in the workplace, the Vishakha Guidelines. The guidelines mandate every organisation to constitute a committee to deal with cases of sexual harassment. Based on this, legislators formulated the Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace Bill 2007. To ensure that the judgement is followed in spirit as well as word, organisations must develop stringent measures to provide protection to women in the workplace.

Considering the above challenges that are barriers to women's participation in the workplace, it is crucial to develop an environment that identifies and addresses the challenges women and men may face in existing gender roles and relations, which may impact their work-life balance, leading to gender distortions.

Relevance of a Gender Policy

Organisations are microcosms of society and therefore reflect the attitudes, value systems and thought processes present in society. They are evolving and dynamic bodies, where people of different social structures and back-

grounds meet, interact and work together. They are the space where individuals spend more than 50 per cent of their waking hours together. However, taken out of the framework of the larger society and in a specific context, organisations can be the place where individuals can be influenced to review strategies and make changes, which affect their lives within the organisation as well as at a personal level. They have to understand the impact of social and cultural processes on relationships and structures that exist between men and women within the workplace. In a fast evolving social order, women have created new spaces and defined new roles for themselves, yet deep-rooted values, beliefs and centuries of behaviour are etched in one's psyche.

Organisations exist in the real world and as such mirror the dominant ideologies that exist, specially with regard to gender roles and relations. Within most organisations, there exists a sexual division of labour, which reflects what exists in the society beyond the organisation. While men tend to hold managerial positions, are in positions of authority and decision-making, and control resources and finances, women play roles that are subordinate and low on skills and professional qualifications.

More often than not, the structures, systems and policies of organisations focus on the needs of men rather than those of women. But in today's fast changing world, where women are creating spaces for themselves at every level, organisations need to create corresponding changes in the environment of the workplace, making it amicable for both women and men to work to the best of their abilities. Practices, culture and environment have an important bearing on developing conducive working conditions for women. At a very cursory level, these include working hours, provisions for leave, facilities like toilets and drinking water, etc. But, beyond these, women also need to be included in leadership roles and responsibilities; given access to avail of opportunities that put them on an equal footing with their male counterparts; and given roles based on their learning abilities rather than just their skills set.

However, all of these changes will remain superficial and lack sustainability if organisations fail to take into consideration the multiple roles that women play and the efforts they make in balancing their personal and professional lives. To counteract these gender imbalances, organisations must find creative and innovative ways in which to contribute to the creation of a just and equal society. One such way is the development of a Gender Policy,

which clearly outlines the intentions of the organisation in its different facets to promote gender mainstreaming. These intentions must then be translated into practical realities of norms, practices and activities, both formal as well as informal, within the workplace. The implementation of a Gender Policy will require the commitment, participation and contribution of each and every staff member, starting right from the top, to ensure its success and sustainability.

Who Should Use This Manual

This manual is designed for all organisations that wish to mainstream gender within their organisations, both at an administrative as well as a programmatic level. The manual is also intended for those organisations which at an informal and practical level may be gender sensitive and inclusive, but need a formal policy to reiterate their commitment to issues of gender mainstreaming.

An organisation does not have to be working directly or indirectly on gender issues or issues of women's empowerment to introduce gender sensitive measures into their culture. Any organisation which realises the value of creating a gender conducive, safe and healthy environment for its employees will find this guide to be a roadmap for structural changes.

Though this manual has been designed with inputs primarily from the development sector, other sectors like the private and public sectors, the government, and the corporate sectors will also find it relevant, as its focus is on organisational change rather than workplace change.

The processes and measures adopted by an organisation, irrespective of the workplace they are introduced in, will help development professionals, human resource development professionals, administrative and personnel staff, policy makers and senior managers of development and other organisations in enhancing their understanding of gender mainstreaming.

How Can This Manual be Used

The first section of this manual helps professionals and policy makers of organisations to develop an understanding of the concept of Organisational Gender Mainstreaming, or internal gender mainstreaming. It gives a historical overview of the roots of gender discrimination and inequality in family and society and which are further reflected in the workplace. Broad concepts and approaches to different aspects of gender have also been highlighted. Global efforts at understanding and addressing mainstreaming gender in the workplace as well as national efforts to develop a legal framework to address various issues related to the marginalisation and discrimination of women provide a backdrop under which organisations can frame a suitable Gender Policy.

In Section II, this manual gives an overview of all components of an institutional structure and reviews them through a gender lens. It also provides insights into the various methods that organisations have adopted to address issues of gender inequality and include women in their workplaces. Besides, this manual has simple and clear recommendations for translating commitments into practical actions in the everyday functioning of an organisation.

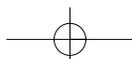
Section III deals with the operational aspects of developing and implementing the Gender Policy. Essential indicators have been focused upon to ensure that an organisation's commitment to gender is not compromised or diluted. A combination of legal guidelines and gender sensitive factors has also been indicated, giving the policy a balance between strategic needs as well as the legal mandate.

The manual has been written in a manner that allows readers to move between sections and also focus on areas of specific importance to them. The annexures carry additional information as well as samples and illustrations of policies and other guidelines of use in understanding gender mainstreaming and the development of a Gender Policy.



SECTION 2

**ENGENDERING
ORGANISATIONS
THROUGH
A GENDER POLICY**



Methodology

PRIA has had a long history in actively pursuing the cause of gender mainstreaming within organisations, starting as far back as the 1980s when it worked on the empowerment of working women through its capacity building programmes, including Mini Social MBA for women entrepreneurs, building women leaders within elected representatives and also addressing various social issues like girl child education and employment opportunities.

In 1997, when the Supreme Court made it mandatory for all organisations, private and government, to have a committee to deal with cases of sexual harassment within the workplace, PRIA was one of the first NGOs to formally follow its dictates. PRIA officially launched its committee in 1998, mandated by its Governing Board.

Initially named Committee against Sexual Harassment (CASH), it dealt primarily with the redressal of reported cases of sexual harassment.

Later, it evolved into the Committee for Gender Awareness and Mainstreaming in PRIA (CGAMP), going beyond the mandate of merely addressing complaints of sexual harassment to creating an environment that prevented the occurrence of sexual harassment, including conducting gender awareness and sensitivity amongst all staff. Gender audits, documentation of gender sensitive work practices as well as assessing the extent of a gender conducive work culture were some of the areas that the committee focused upon. In addition, PRIA also committed to and promoted similar programmes amongst its partner organisations and other civil society organisations.

Gender Community-Solution Exchange, UN, took up the issue of sexual harassment of women at workplace through a query and an e-discussion and analysed the issue in greater details in the visioning workshop to plan action projects, in the form of a pilot. With a view to eliminating violence and harassment in the workplace, on the basis of the Vishkha judgement guidelines of the Supreme Court, PRIA volunteered to take up the issue of preparing a framework for a Gender Policy, to be placed in the public domain and to enable the community of development practitioners to benefit from it.

As a first step towards reaching its objective of developing a Gender Policy, PRIA worked closely with Voluntary Action of India (VANI) to help gather primary data on gender issues within the development sector. VANI is a net-

work of civil society organisations that has an outreach in 25 States, with 273 organisations. The core objective of VANI is collectivisation and raising voice on issues that have an impact on political and social change.

After a careful selection process, 13 organisations, all VANI members, agreed to be a part of this study. These organisations ranged in size from medium to large, so as to get data to reveal the different realities, varied attitudes and mindsets, with specific reference to issues of gender within the workplace. Very small organisations, with below five staff members and operating on an highly informal basis, without even a regular building, let alone formal policies and service rules were not selected. A large section of this manual is based on experiences culled out of interactions with the staff and leadership of selected organisations. These organisations are based in five States: Delhi, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa.

The first step toward the objective of drafting a Gender Policy was the documentation of gender sensitive work practices as well as an assessment of the processes that were directed at creating a gender-conducive work environment and culture. A detailed checklist was developed for the documentation of gender sensitive practices within the organisations (*see Annexure I*).

The methodology included focused group discussions with males, females as well as mixed groups, interviews with the top leadership, senior staff and newly recruited staff to get a varied yet holistic account of the realities of the organisations. It also served the purpose of corroborating information, assessing ambiguities and understanding the attitude and perspectives of the staff and management towards issues of gender mainstreaming within the organisation.

These discussions yielded vast amounts of information and, perhaps the most significant of all, created and renewed an interest in examining issues of gender within the specific context of their organisations. Discussions were kept confidential, (no names were taken in the report), were non-threatening as senior staff were not included in the group, and the staff were encouraged to share both positive and negative experiences with a view to improvement of the functioning of the organisation.

This resulted in an open and frank exchange of information and a rich source of data, with suggestions from the staff on issues that the management needed to focus upon.

Open ended interviews with select senior staff, the management, representatives from administration and support services, gender focal points or members of the committee to deal with sexual harassment (where existing) added a different dimension to the inputs given.

This exercise not only threw up valuable information which is the basis of this manual, but every organisation got a detailed report of the assessment of gender issues within its own workplace along with specific recommendations that would help enhance the functioning of the organisation from a gender perspective.

Simultaneously, a simple survey was distributed through an e-discussion forum, to all other members of VANI to elicit further information regarding gender sensitive practices and policies adopted by them.

A desk review of the existing gender policies and gender sensitive practices across the corporate sector, the government, NGOs and the bilateral and multilateral sectors was also undertaken to ascertain their gender concerns.

The data was also shared with the Gender Community Solutions Exchange, UN, comprising of 2,300 members, to get a wider perspective. A draft of the manual was shared with UNIFEM and with the gender community prior to finalising the same. The manual was also opened to a core group of gender experts at a round table.

It is intended that this manual be disseminated through the UN and VANI networks,

through the CSR division of the CII and PRIA's own mailing database. This manual will also be translated into Hindi so as to increase its coverage as well as its use.

Organisational Structure

Before proceeding to mainstream gender in an organisation, it is important to understand the structure that makes an organisation (see chart below). This encompasses both tangible and intangible components, which ultimately guide and control the organisation's goal fulfilment pace and the way it functions. In this section, the manual attempts to give the readers an overview of an organisation.

Organisations can be defined as bodies that translate their vision through their activities or tasks. These tasks or the work of the organisation are enabled by the various components, which essentially include:

- Human resources
- Formal structures and systems
- Programmes and tasks
- Informal culture
- Leadership

Thus, an organisation is a system operating with other relevant systems in its environment and exists to pursue certain goals. In pursuance of these goals, an organisation needs to perform a set of primary tasks, for which it requires inputs from the environment in which it functions. One of these inputs and, perhaps



the most crucial, is human resources.

To manage and coordinate these human resources, which includes each and every individual in the organisation irrespective of his/her position, the organisation develops formal structures and systems that include roles, hierarchies, departments, divisions, rules and other procedures that guide the behaviour of the organisation and of its human resources.

These arrangements evolve over a period of time but are not static, they remain vibrant and dynamic. In fact, in time an organisation develops its own specific 'informal culture', which operates throughout the organisation, yet is not visible in its formal processes and structures.

The vital and unifying link in all these elements is the leadership of the organisation. The leadership is the central point, as it is the leaders who are the first to see where the organisation is going, and it sets an example in forging ahead in a way for others to follow and learn.

In organisations, the power and resources are shared between individuals, both males and females, that form the workforce. The allocation of these resources is a reflection of the specific social context that the organisation is a part of. Depending upon their mandate, organisations determine and influence power, resource allocation, decision-making and participation of men and women, both in their own structure as well as the community that they work with.

Here, it is important to note that all organisations also have a role towards social transformation. Yet, despite this responsibility and the power they exercise, most organisations pay little or no attention to the existing structural inequalities between men and women. As a consequence, their structures and their programmes perpetuate and entrench gender inequalities, and further marginalise the women who form a part of their system.

Change has to reach the very core of organisational structures, its culture, institutional contexts and mandates, and restructure them to meet the challenges of promoting more equitable relations between men and women. The change must ensure that women and men take part more equally within its structures of power and decision-making processes.

Gender Policy Framework

Introduction

This segment deals with the relevance and the positioning of Gender Policy in the context of

the organisational structure.

A Gender Policy is a tool through which a formal proclamation can be made to initiate and promote the gender mainstreaming process within an organisation. Through a series of organisational processes, the policy reiterates the commitment of the organisation towards gender inclusion and responsiveness, right from its vision mission statement to the internal as well as the external forces that affect its identity and culture.

These processes may include commitment towards conducting of gender audits; organising of gender awareness programmes for the staff; review of internal structures and policies; scrutiny of the work culture and image of the organisation; mainstreaming gender in the planning cycles of programmes; and above all a commitment to the monitoring and evaluation of all such measures.

The Gender Policy does not detail steps to be taken to restructure an organisation, it is only the expression of commitment of the organisation to meet the gender needs of its varied components.

The practical aspects of the policy have to get reflected in other systems and procedures of the organisation.

A Gender Policy can be applied to the programmatic and organisational aspects of an organisation. However, in this document, we have focused on the organisational aspects of framing a Gender Policy. We believe that if an institution was engendered in all its elements, including vision/mission, leadership, structures, policies and workplace culture, this will automatically affect its programmatic interventions at the field level. For example, if the culture of the organisation is against late night meetings and if these do occur, then it is its responsibility to ensure the safety and security of women in reaching home. This same principle must be applicable in a field situation as well.

Programmatic Aspects of Gender Policy

To accomplish its goals, an organisation performs certain primary tasks. These tasks or programmes also carry an element of gender. The organisation needs to set up systems to ensure that gender equity forms an essential element of all stages of project cycles, including planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Special focus on having indicators, which are gender-specific, helps measure the progress that has taken place for both men and women in the programme. All reports and evaluations must also include a specific focus

on the gender component.

It is interesting to note that there is enough information available on how to mainstream gender in programmes. The gender policies of various organisations also focus on the engendering of the programmes.¹

Organisational Aspects of Gender Policy

The changing context of social relations needs to be reflected within an organisational structure. Since organisations are working with the ultimate aim of transforming social relations, they should ideally be a model of social realities as they vision it.

Historically, a workplace has catered to the needs of men, overlooking the needs and concerns of women. Given the prevalence of gender inequalities, institutions need to make the workplace conducive to the needs of working men as well as women.

As compared to achieving gender equity and equality within programmes, organisational gender equity and equality is often ignored. It is a gradual process that needs to be entrenched in all elements of an organisation's working.

Based on the data collated from the study of primary and secondary sources on each component of an organisational structure, presented here are the findings of the study as well as recommendations that organisations can incorporate within their own systems and structures to mainstream gender.

Vision/Mission Statements

The first reflection of an organisation's commitment to gender mainstreaming is its vision and mission statements. The stronger the expression of the commitment to gender in these statements, the stronger will be the Gender Policy's intention to meet them. A vision statement is the objective of an organisation on the basis of which it was set up. It is a dream, which the organisation visualises for society or for self.

This is often the first thing that describes the purpose of the organisation. It is very important that the vision statement be fairly assessed for its gender sensitivity, as it is an important statement that helps in explicitly expressing the organisation's commitment of reaching out to both women and men of the community.

The UNESCO guidelines on gender neutral language (1999) note that ambiguity is a major problem of language, because almost all languages are gender biased in their usage. Therefore, while using general terms like man,

people, community, children, elderly and so on, there is always lack of clarity as to whether both the sexes are being referred to or not. Even if these terms refer to mean both the sexes, evidence shows that the initial visualisation of these words is frequently that of a male image.

So, when we use the term people, we are sure it represents men in the social and cultural context, while it is as yet not clear whether it is inclusive of women or not.

Therefore, in this context, if the vision/mission statements of an organisation do not refer specifically to gender, or focus on women as their specific target group, it is possible that these aspects will not be covered explicitly in its programmes.

Besides, it is also possible that data may not be collected in a dis-aggregated format and during assessment and evaluation, valuable information related to women's participation or lack of it might not get reflected.

Findings

In our analysis of the organisations visited, approximately 50 per cent of them did not have engendered vision/mission statements. In some organisations, while the strategy and goals specifically mentioned the inclusion and empowerment of women and gender justice as milestones, this was not reflected in their vision/mission statements. In discussions with staff as well as with heads of such organisations, the argument put forth for not having engendered vision/mission statements was that it was clearly visible through the programmes that the organisation focused on women and gave priority to their needs and issues.

Therefore, they did not think it relevant to have this explicitly stated in their vision/mission statements.

In the present context, since the lives of men and women are different, therefore, different strategies are required to be implemented in order that both sexes are equally reached out to. It has been found that most of the time, a single strategy does not work for both women and men together. For example, in work or developmental interventions directed towards members of the society, community or people, it is easier to reach out to a particular section of that community rather than strive to reach at the entire community.

Therefore, it is always easier to reach the mainstreamed of that community rather than the marginalised. Even if one were to reach out to the marginalised, it is still easier to reach out

Given below is an example of how an organisation has amended its Vision/ Mission statements to make them gender inclusive.

PRIA's Mission prior to an evaluation for gender sensitivity

To promote people-centred, holistic and comprehensive evolution of society characterised by Freedom, Justice, Equity and Sustainability, by

- *Creating opportunities of sharing, analysing and learning among formations of Civil Society in particular, people's organisation and NGOs*
- *Engaging in independent and critical analysis of societal trends and issues, development policies and programmes; and*
- *Enabling dialogue across diverse perspectives, sectors and institutions.*

PRIA's Vision/Mission post evaluation of gender sensitivity

Vision

PRIA's vision of a desirable world is where relations across individuals and families, communities and nations are characterised by equity and justice. Beside socio-economic equity, PRIA believes in gender justice as a cornerstone of such relations in the family, community and society. A balance between economic and social development with ecological regeneration requires thoughtful balance between local priorities and global demands. Informed, empowered citizens participate in deepening democracy, with respect and tolerance for plurality and diversity. A balance between citizen's rights and responsibilities is nurtured through a balance between authority and accountability. Individual freedom and autonomy is sustained with collective solidarity for public good. PRIA's vision of a desirable world is based on values of equity, justice, freedom, peace and solidarity.

Mission

To work towards promotion of policies, institutions and capacities that strengthen the voice and participation of the poor and the marginalised in improving their socio-economic status through democratic governance in society.

PRIA's analysis of existing situation of discrimination in society provides the basis for identifying the poor and the marginalised.

Gender discrimination necessitates focusing upon changing women's roles and status, as agents and leaders of change

Economic discrimination requires addressing issues of poverty and powerlessness

Social exclusion entails mainstreaming participation by children, youth, tribals, dalits, minorities, elderly and others.

Discrimination of rights brings focus on workers (particularly women in the informal sector) and ordinary citizens.

to the prominent section of that group rather than the whole section.

For example, when reaching out to the disabled as a marginalised section, it is easier to reach out to men of this section as opposed to the women.

This is due to the fact that culturally and socially, it is the male group which is dominant and will come forth to be a part of the programme. The women generally remain in the background and are only called in if specifically invited.

Recommendations

- *The language used in the vision/mission statement of an organisation must be gender specific and not gender neutral (example, women and men, instead of people, and girls and boys rather than children). This reiterates the commitment of the organisation towards focusing on issues of women, recognising that programmes need to be inclusive of women and their specific needs.*

Organisational Leadership

Governing Board

The Governing Board also known as Executive Committee is responsible for the highest level of decision-making and legal authority in an organisation. By law, it is ultimately accountable for and has authority over an organisation's resources and activities. The Board articulates and communicates the organisation's vision to its members and community. Through policy, the Board defines the parameters within which the organisation will carry out its work.

Responsibilities of the Board towards an organisation include:

- It's purpose, by establishing and implementing the organisation's mission and vision
- It's continuity, by providing continuity for managing and implementing the organisation's programmes
- It's progress, by setting the rate of progress that the organisation takes in reaching its mission and vision
- It's identity, by securing community support and appreciation for the organisation's objects, beliefs, vision, mission and long-term direction.²

Findings

Primary data has shown that 85 per cent of the organisations have ensured that there is an adequate representation of women on the Governing Board. However, in the remaining 15 per cent, it was noted that some of the women on the Board represented more members from the community rather than women of independent repute and stature.

In an example where women were not represented adequately, it was stated that the specific rules under which members were nominated to the Governing Board were so formulated that these posts were technical in nature and were largely occupied by men and the chances of such posts being taken up by women were very remote.

Discussions with organisational heads revealed that they too believed and acknowledged the importance of having capable women on the Board, not only to add numerical value but also as individuals who would be able to give direction and guide the organisation in meeting its goals.

In this context, it may be observed that if the Board has adequate representation of women as its members, it is ensured the interests and issues of women in the community as well as those within the institution are given priority.

Besides, all other aspects in the functioning of the organisation would be considered from a more gendered perspective. The inclusion of women on the Board is also a clear indication of the organisation's recognition of the value of women in decision-making, their competence in matters of management, policy-making, and other higher order functions. Women on the Board are also a symbol of solidarity and support for other female staff, who are assured that their interests too are being put on the agenda.

Therefore, organisations must make a conscious effort to ensure that their Governing Board has an adequate, if not equal, representation of women. In situations where equal numbers are not possible, organisations need to ensure a 'critical-mass'³ (that is, at least 33 per cent).

Recommendations

- *There must be adequate, if not equal representation, of women on the Governing Body (the minimum representation of women must not be less than 33 per cent of the entire body).*
- *It must be ensured that women are not only represented quantitatively but qualitatively. A greater emphasis on the status, caliber and public image of women Board members as individuals, who play a valuable role in guiding and leading the organisation forward in achieving its mission.*

Leadership

One of the most apt definitions of leadership is the one stated by Peter F. Drucker (1985), 'the lifting of people's vision to a higher sight, the raising of their performance to a higher standard, the building of their personality beyond its normal limitations.'

Leadership can be defined in many ways with reference to the organisational context. With reference to the development sector, the leader is generally an individual who is usually also its founder and the driving force behind its activities, identity, culture and environment. It is this individual who is responsible for processes that take the organisation forward in the fulfilment of its vision and mission. These include:

- Building and sustaining effective partnerships;
- Managing stakeholder relationships for long-term benefit of the organisation;
- Developing second line leaders in areas

such as strategic and organisational leadership, and team leadership;

- Aligning the culture of the organisation, developing capacities of individuals in fulfilling the goals of the organisation;
- Responding to national needs and other environmental situations through strategies and interventions of the organisation; and
- Strategising on consolidation, diversification, downsizing, growth, restructuring with a view to developing a road map for the organisation.

Findings

Our findings revealed that the leadership in all organisations was male dominated. However, in 15 per cent of the organisations, women played secondary leadership roles of Secretary. One of these women was a prominent personality within that organisation's geographical area of work as well as within the sector.

Thus, even though most organisations worked closely on the advancement and empowerment of women, it was not surprising that, as in other sectors, males dominated leadership positions. The reason for this could be that almost all leaders in this sector were also the founder members of the organisations they head and, therefore, have continued to play this role. It was noted that decision-making and authority was vested largely in this individual, even though there were several examples where women played a key role in the leadership position and were closely related to the head of the institution.

However, even in these situations, the position of women was always secondary to that of the key leadership.

Recommendations

- *In an organisation, if and when the post of the CEO falls vacant, the Board must create a strategy to identify and recruit a competent woman for this post, to take on the leadership role and guide the organisation forward in achieving its goals and objectives.*
- *As an intrinsic part of its future planning, organisations must prepare second line level of leadership, where there is an adequate representation of competent women at senior levels.*
- *The capacities of women, who have leadership and managerial qualities, must be further developed and opportunities created so that they can take up key leadership positions in an organisation.*

Top Management

The top management is a group of people with professional skills, and/or adequate and relevant experience to run the organisation. This group of people plays an important role in decision-making and development and implementation of policies and strategies, which guide the organisation forward in fulfilling its goals. The top management includes people who look after programmatic interventions as well as administrative responsibilities. Therefore in this context, it is essential to not only assess the backgrounds, experiences and values of top managers, as these are crucial to the choices that they make, but to also analyse the gender component of such a team. The top management is responsible for strategic choices and organisational performance, which again is dependent on the decisions they make, based on their view of the world.

Not only is it important to have members of the top management selected on the basis of their experience, values and capabilities but to ensure their sensitivity to issues of gender and its mainstreaming. Factors for selection to the top management are equally applicable to women. Yet, having said that an organisation will need to have an adequate, if not equal representation of women, it will also have to ensure that the priorities of gender issues, women's perspectives and views from within the organisation are voiced and women are part of the decision-making and strategic choices of an organisation.

Findings

The findings on the representation of women in leadership positions within the organisations were very encouraging, with 46 per cent of the organisations having an adequate representation of women in positions of authority and decision-making. These organisations had made conscious efforts to ensure that women were nurtured and supported to take on positions of leadership at different levels. However, it should be noted that while broadly these figures were representative of women, yet in specific cases, their representation fell below the norms of adequacy.

Secondary data from the corporate sector reveals that in this sector women have not been able to achieve the same status and recognition as leaders within their organisations when compared to women leaders in the voluntary sector (CII, 2005).

These women in leadership positions included those who had been externally recruited for the role and in many cases were drawn from

Recommendations

- *Women of competency and calibre within an organisation need to be identified and their skills developed in order that they take on roles of decision-making and authority, both at an institutional as well as a programmatic level.*
- *Strategies related to the retention of these women staff must also be developed to ensure that their specific needs are taken care of and other supportive measures taken to ensure their sustainability and longevity within the organisation.*
- *Women at this level must be given opportunities for growth and development in the context of furthering the vision of the organisation.*
- *In the event that the organisation cannot identify competent women from within, they must then adopt strategies to hire competent women professionals from outside to fulfil the leadership and management responsibilities within the organisation. However, it must be noted that these women too will need supportive measures and an environment that sustains their long term commitment to the organisation.*

within the organisation and were groomed to play roles related to management and leadership. Organisations had also made special efforts to promote initiatives that supported the retention of women. These included flexible hours, part time jobs, work from home, privileges when travelling, and opportunities for growth and development.

Informal Culture

In this sub-section, we shall be dealing with the informal culture of an organisation, which includes its norms, values, traditions, as well as the basic amenities provided by it which act towards the development of the culture and environment of the workplace.

Work Culture and Environment⁴

Culture is the environment that surrounds the workplace at all times. It cannot actually be seen but is represented in different forms by individuals and groups, and includes language, decision-making, symbols, stories of the organisation and daily work practices. For example, the culture of the workplace may predominantly be Hindi speaking, or the culture in relation to decision-making process may be participatory in nature.

Culture is a powerful element in an organisation and it shapes the individual in her/his work enjoyment, work relationships and work processes. It is made up of the values, beliefs, underlying assumptions, attitudes and behaviours shared by a group of people. Culture is the behaviour that results when a group arrives at a set of generally unspoken and unwritten rules for working together. For example, the culture of working late or the culture of coming to work on holidays can be found in some organisations.

An organisation's culture is made up of all of the life experiences each employee brings to the organisation. It is specially influenced by the organisation's founder, executives, and other managerial staff because of their role in decision-making and strategic direction. It is also reflected in the bulletin board content, the newsletter and other publications, the interaction between employees and the way in which activities are conducted – simple or elaborate treatment of guests. All of these form an intrinsic part of organisational culture.

Culture Represents Behaviour: Culture also describes the behaviour of individuals. The inclusion of a gender perspective, refrain from the use of abusive language, positive affirmative action taken by the organisation, the role and authority that women yield all go into creating workplace culture. Culture is not usually defined as good or bad, although some of its aspects are likely to support progress and success of an organisation while other aspects may impede them. Having representation of committed and capable women in decision-making bodies only reflects an organisation's commitment to the inclusion of women in the workplace.

Culture is Learnt: People learn to perform certain behaviours through either rewards or negative consequences that result from their behaviour. If a document using gender insensitive language is accepted and its contents openly valued, this behaviour will be repeated and it soon becomes part of the culture. Similarly, accepting tardiness and late coming will soon make it a part of the cultural functioning of an organisation. Against this, if special arrangements made to ensure women reach home safely after late night meetings are applauded, this behaviour will be repeated and will soon become part of the culture of the organisation. These patterns are observed and learnt by individual members and this gets translated into workplace culture.

Culture is Learned Through Interaction: Employees learn culture by interacting with

other employees. Most behaviours and rewards in organisations involve other employees. An informal culture gets reflected quickly through interactions between the staff of an organisation. Addressing seniors by title as opposed to first names is a cultural aspect learned through interaction. Even as early as during interviews, gender sensitivity present in an organisation comes out from the type of questions raised. Ideally, an organisational culture should support a positive, productive, environment. It must support different aspects of productivity, growth and development for both individuals as well as the organisation. The unwritten norms at times compete and at times complement the written norms. Working culture varies from organisation to organisation and is influenced by the geographic and the social contexts of which the organisation is a part.

Since culture is influenced by gender issues and vice-versa, we should examine all factors and aspects which influence organisational culture through a gender lens. Though there are several aspects to organisational culture, we are dealing with three major factors that affect and influence the environment of an organisation have been focused on in the section:

- Code of conduct
- Basic amenities
- Informal spaces for staff

Code of Conduct

A code of conduct specifies standards of ethical-based behaviour and practices that organisations expects their employees to follow. This set of values and behaviour forms an integral part of the culture of an organisation and knowledge of the same is derived through informal practices as well as what is formally defined in the rules and policies of the organisation

The formal code of conduct is usually a writ-

A male employee sharing his experience on the working culture stated that when he joined the organisation, there were no written directives about the "No Smoking" policy being followed by the organisation. But he followed the cultural pattern existing in the organisation and did not smoke in the office premises as no one else, including his seniors, appeared to do so. He would go outside to smoke and this has now become part of his habit, even outside of the organisation.

ten document, which forms a part of the employment letter that is issued to employees. This sets the tone for acceptable and non-acceptable norms of behaviour as well as the non-negotiable aspects of the organisation's policy (for example, zero tolerance towards sexual harassment or irregularities in financial transactions).

A workshop held in an organisation on non-verbal communication and body language made its staff aware of many aspects of their behaviour that were not considered acceptable in the culture of the organisation. The discussions highlighted that most of these could be unconscious and done out of habit, without being aware of their impact on others and negatively affect the work environment.

A reason stated for such behaviour that as a part of the individual's socialisation processes, there was no curb on such behaviour and therefore these got reinforced as set patterns in the individual. What was, however, more important was that the group perceived the need to be sensitive to the impact of their behaviour on others and make efforts to change them in a working context.

The habit of repeatedly touching people or patting them on the back was cited as inappropriate behaviour in a work setting. Talking in loud tones over the phone, in a hall where there were other people was disturbing and needed to be modified. Wearing flashy, loud or revealing clothes was disturbing to colleagues and needed to be avoided.

However, what was stressed that in other given situations, these behaviours may be acceptable but in a work culture, they needed to be modified.

It was also important that colleagues gave each other feedback on discomforting behaviour, so that if one was not conscious of their negative impact, the feedback could be an opportunity to improve.

Findings

Every organisation has a policy, written or unwritten rules, about the code of conduct that is expected in the behaviour of the individual, when s/he is in the organisation or represents the organisation in other venues. In most of the organisations, the orientation and induction processes make a brief mention about the code

of conduct, but do not cover the same in great detail.

This is because there is a general expectation that these behaviour patterns and norms of functioning will be passed on informally by word of mouth, or the observed behaviour of other staff members.

Every organisation had a strictly enforced policy of no smoking within the premises. All organisations also had a culture banning the consumption of alcohol on the premises as well as other venues where the staff were together, or individuals represented the organisation. Only 30 per cent of the organisations had a policy against consumption/serving of non-vegetarian food within the premises, as well as in all official functions of the organisation.

It was also noted that no staff member had any objections to these norms and it was accepted that if this was the culture of the organisations, then they would be adhere to it.

Recommendations

- *An organisation should develop a code of conduct that is applicable to all staff – temporary, permanent or contractual. It should also be shared with all others who are part of the organisational network – partners, guests, visitors, interns, volunteers, vendors, service providers, etc. This code needs to clearly spell out what is acceptable to the culture of the organisation – smoking drinking, discrimination, dress code, etc.*
- *However, the code must explicitly state what is meant by sexual harassment. There should be no ambiguity in this respect and penalties for violation of the same must be clearly defined. Sexual harassment should be listed as one of the non-negotiables in the code of conduct.*
- *In the appointment letter, the code of conduct, including zero tolerance towards sexual harassment, should be clearly defined. This will set the tone for acceptable behaviour and the employee can fit into this culture.*
- *There are some behaviours that may be acceptable in another context but in a work culture, they needed to be modified.*
- *It is also important that colleagues give each other feedback on discomforting behaviour, so that if one was not conscious of their negative impact, the feedback could be an opportunity to improve.*

Restrain from using abusive language, speaking in low tones, treating all colleagues, specially women, with respect and dignity, addressing colleagues in terms culturally acceptable in the organisation were all part of the code of conduct that formed an informal part of the work culture. These were learned from observations and interactions from colleagues who shared acceptable norms of behaviour within the organisation.

Issues relating to sexual harassment in the workplace, what constituted the same as well as the penalties in case of violation were not discussed in orientations or inductions. These issues are dealt with in a subsequent section.

Some aspects of the culture of an organisation were so deeply engrained that new comers did not even question them (ban on drinking, smoking and the consumption of non-vegetarian food).

These cultural aspects are accepted and followed by the staff during her/his stay in the organisation. However, aspects of culture, which were new and had not been deeply imbibed by the organisation, were often questioned and sometimes sidelined or ignored, depending on the circumstances. For example, if the culture of the organisation does not promote or support male staff to avail of paternity leave, either the man does not avail of the same or his colleagues/supervisors recall him from leave to complete official tasks.

Basic Amenities

Provision of basic amenities is essential for a safe and conducive work environment. There are certain amenities that an individual expects from an organisation and which it is expected to provide to its employees. These include facilities of a clean well-ventilated and secure environment, potable drinking water, hygienic and separate toilets for men and women, space for having lunch, adequate time for tea and lunch breaks, etc.

On the surface, these amenities may appear as inconsequential to productivity but studies have proved this to the contrary. In fact, the government on its part also lays down rules that specify the basic facilities that an employer is obliged under law to make available to the employees.

Basic amenities are to be provided to all staff without any discrimination (*see also Annexure VII*). However in organisations that are sensitive to the needs of women, additional benefits in terms of separate toilets with dustbins and other related facilities are essential for their comfort and convenience.

Findings

The data shows that 69 per cent of organisations have the amenity of a lunch room for staff to sit together while eating their lunch. This gives the staff an opportunity to interact during their lunch hour and creates an atmosphere of warmth and sharing. In the other 31 per cent organisations, people either sat in small groups or pairs at their tables to have lunch. This did not provide them with an adequate respite from their working space, which is considered to be important for the mental health of an employee.

Sharing a meal or even being in the same space together for some time was missing in the culture, as the organisations had made no provisions for the same. In 8 per cent of the organisations, though all the staff sat down and shared their meal, the lunch break was only for 15 minutes, a time considered to be inadequate for eating their food, let alone interaction with colleagues. Both the above aspects need to be reviewed from an institutional framework as to whether or not the organisation is providing space for employees to have lunch or whether adequate time is provided for the same. Either of the options is counterproductive to the welfare of the employees.

While 61 per cent of the organisations had separate toilets for both women and men, in some, there were no provisions for dustbins, old newspapers, soap or even adequate water. Not all the toilets were hygienic by normal standards and this was a feature many staff found uncomfortable in dealing with. In one example, there were adequate toilets and segregation was possible, but this had not been looked into. All the toilets were deemed to be common to be used by both men and women alike.

Again, 39 per cent of the organisations faced a constraint in the fact that the offices were running in rented accommodation and these did not have provision for separate toilets. Perhaps, organisations need to keep in mind these factors when they seek accommodation, considering that they have women staff and providing them with a separate toilet does not amount to giving them luxuries but just bare necessities.

While it is a fact that organisations have rented accommodation, where there is no provision for separate toilets, it was also noted that there had been no effort on the part of the administration to make these toilets convenient to women staff.

This is a point brings out very clearly that the

workplace is still the domain of men: it takes the needs and considerations of men into account and forgets that women are an integral part of the workplace.

Very few of our workspaces are designed or created to be cheerful spaces with individualised touches to them. They reflect a culture where while work is the focus, supportive structures to be able to fulfil those tasks are sadly missing.

Lack of hygiene, dust, poor lighting, cramped spaces, piles of unattended files and overcrowded desks are a common feature in all of our office spaces. If this is the environment, then how can an organisation expect much more in terms of high quality and high standards of work and productivity. If as an organisation we accept uncared for surroundings, do not pay heed to small issues, then the message sent out is very clear that the organisation puts in substandard inputs and, therefore, also accepts sub-standard levels in its outputs.

Recommendations

- *It is the responsibility of the organisation to provide basic amenities to all employees, to make the period of time they spend in the office premises comfortable and motivating. These amenities include separate toilets for women and men, clean drinking water, a hygienic environment, comfortable working conditions, including a lunch room, well-ventilated work spaces and well-designed seating spaces and furniture.*
- *The organisation should take care to provide adequate time and spaces for tea and lunch breaks, to encourage staff members to interact with each other, develop strong bonds between staff members and inculcate a sense of solidarity and trust in one another. These periods also allow individuals to take a break from their routine work, share work related concerns with colleagues, hold dialogues on interesting developments in the organisation or society at large, seek clarifications and advice for their problems and concerns, both personal as well as professional.*
- *At all events within the office premises or outside, safety and security must be the priority issues considered in the checklist of planning and implementation. Needless to say, the safety of women should be considered of prime importance.*

Informal Spaces for Staff

Informal spaces include get-togethers and casual social gatherings for people in the workplace, including colleagues, peers, supervisors and seniors, as also the leadership, management, partners and other stakeholders, which may even extend to families of staff. Informal get-togethers enable building of team spirit -and provide a break from work tensions and schedules.

These spaces are an important element of the work culture, where attempts are made to know individuals at a personal level, discover likes and dislikes, skills and dreams, as also their ambitions for themselves and their families. Under normal working conditions, one may not get to know a person at a level deeper than what relates to their work, but such occasions enable one to know individuals in a more holistic manner.

Such events enable building team spirit and rapport amongst staff who usually do not get to meet and interact, as their work lies in different areas of the organisation. They also boost the image of the organisation, in its ability to recognise and create spaces where institutional barriers and hierarchies are set aside, where staff meet as individuals, and where interactions are not based on institutional designations.

Findings

Data shows that 76 per cent of the organisations had scheduled at least one annual event, which was purely recreational in nature and where staff was able to get away from the routine of everyday work and spend time with each other. Such events were either day-long picnics, lunch together, two-day-long outings or even seeing a film together. These events were sponsored by the organisation but planned and implemented by the staff. In some cases, there were contributions from the staff as well.

It was seen that the staff enjoyed such occasions and, in fact, looked forward to these opportunities where they could interact with each other outside of their workspaces. These events served the purpose of individuals seeing themselves as part of a larger unit and associating themselves as an integral part of the organisational family.

In 38 per cent of the organisations, families were invited to such get-togethers. This was appreciated by the staff, who felt the organisation was interested in them as individuals and also perceived their families to be vital to their identity. It enabled their families to meet the

people they often talked about at home but had never met.

Their children too felt it important to know more about where and how their parents spent a considerable amount of their time. For some families, meeting the head of the organisation and other senior members, and being able to speak to them were important to their self-image apart from the enhancement it gave to their image in the society they were associated with.

Against this, it was seen in 24 per cent of the organisations, which did not encourage such opportunities for sharing, learning and celebrations, there was a definite sense of disconnect. In such cases, the staff noted something as little as the fact the organisation did not even wish them on their birthdays—an important day in their lives—leaving them with a sense of having missed out on something vital and dynamic, specially when they had heard of similar experiences from staff in organisations where such matters were emphasised upon.

The culture of being able to celebrate together also allowed the staff to create more informal spaces for celebrating personal joys and sharing sorrows, and thus, developing a healthy and holistic work environment. Such culture created a bonding and a sense of being able to rely upon colleagues in times of joys and sorrows, specially among members who

Recommendations

- *Organisations will benefit from informal get-togethers, which create an environment for rapport building apart from enabling sharing of different aspects of personal and official lives. Informal events also provide a break from the daily routine and give the staff other matters to look forward to.*
- *Organisations should take the initiative and encourage an atmosphere of celebrating and sharing each other's joys and sorrows. These could be around individual's birthdays, celebrations centring around festivals, picnics, lunches, screening of films, national holidays, etc.*
- *If possible, families should be invited to an exclusive event to help them understand the culture of the organisation, meet other colleagues and to perceive themselves as a part of the extended family of the organisation. Events, small or large, formal or informal, should thus be organised around all staff.*

lived away from their families.

Staff retreats, thematic workshops, and guest speakers on specific subject matters were other opportunities where the entire staff met and interacted with each other in a learning environment.

These were also appreciated by the staff as opportunities for their growth and development apart from making them feel as an integral part of the organisation. For staff involved in processes of strategic change and organisational development, such events reiterated their commitment to the organisation.

Human Resources

As mentioned earlier, organisations can be defined by their vision that is translated through their activities or tasks. These tasks or the work of organisations is enabled by the various components, key to which is human resources and its management. Human resource brings skills, ideas, feelings, needs and aspiration to an organisation, using technology, operating structures and performing

tasks, individually or in groups. Management of human resources at an individual level must focus upon:

- Identifying human resources to perform organisational tasks;
- Recruiting the best to carry out these activities;
- Training for enhanced performance;
- Monitoring and appraising performance, including 360 degree feedback;
- Skills management and career development; and
- Mentoring.

At the organisational level, however, human resource management is more holistic. It includes some of the elements given above, but also covers aspects relating to

- Employee benefits
- Employee compensation
- Organisation policies
- Process improvement
- Cost reduction
- Quality enhancement
- Performance improvement

Participatory Lunch (PL) is one of the most popular events that take place in an organisation. This is organised every quarter as a means of informal gathering and team building. A coordinating team, consisting of 8-10 members, is selected by the HR department of the organisation to arrange and coordinate the lunch. A new team for every PL is organised, so that everyone gets the chance to lead. The entire staff, from President to the peon, is divided into teams based on the number of menu items decided by each. Each team then decide the recipe to be followed, purchasing of raw material, cooking of food, etc. The expenses of the team are divided amongst the team members. PL has proved to be a gender ice-breaker on every occasion. Discussion around cooking, menu planning, recipes to be followed are normally considered to be a woman's domain. This gender myth gets debunked during the process of PL. The open atmosphere encourages men and women to take part in every stage of the process, including washing and cutting of vegetables, cooking food, cleaning utensils, during and after preparation, serving of food, etc. Many men and women have learnt cooking in this process and have been proud to take back home samples of their culinary

skills. People like to be placed in different teams to be able to experience cooking different items. It was seen that preparations like grinding masalas, making pastes could be done at home while the bulk of cooking was done by the team in office. The only item which could be outsourced was making of rotis. Usually, the team which took this on would have women with small children who did not have time to do any preparations at home, young people who lived in a hostel with little or no facilities, those who were travelling apart from those who did not have time to actively take part in the entire planning process. There is no role in this process, which is considered specific to either men or women. Individuals participate in all stages of the process and there is no pressure to conform to any stereotypes. This activity is supported by the management and there have been investments in purchasing utensils of a large size to facilitate cooking, rather than having individuals bring this from home. PL is also used as an occasion to introduce and welcome new staff, giving gifts for weddings, birth of children, apart from farewells for those who are moving ahead, etc. This is an activity that has served to create a positive atmosphere within the organisation.

Within the development sector, a large majority of its human resources are committed to the vision/mission of the organisation and to working under severe constraints and difficult circumstances, for a better future. Even so, organisations in this sector spend enormous amounts of time and energy in the recruitment, orientation, training and retention of its staff. In this context, it is essential to understand that human resource decisions play an important and unique influence on the performance of the organisation. The internal work culture, which comprises norms, values, beliefs, behaviour patterns, rituals and traditions, also influences the management of human resources.

In this sub-section, we shall examine the components of human resource management, the findings of the study and contextualise them from a gender perspective. A detailed analysis of organisational gender equity and equality in the various elements of an organisation is also given below.

Recruitment

Recruitment is a process of stimulating prospective employees to apply for positions in an organisation. This process can be communicated through word of mouth, advertisements in newspapers, websites or portals and other venues. Recruitment is slightly different from the selection process, which is choosing the appropriate candidate from results yielded as part of the recruitment.

Through the processes of recruitment and selection, an organisation seeks to get the best human resources to carry out its activities. The recruitment and selection processes need to recognise the barriers and the challenges that hinder the equal representation of women within the structure of an organisation. Appropriate strategies need to be deployed so that women candidates are attracted to look towards an organisation for employment opportunities.

Therefore, in the very initial stages of recruitment, an organisation needs to send out clear messages about its commitment towards recruitment of women candidates. Once selected, the organisation will then have to find ways to retain these women employees.

An ideal balance suggests that there should be an equal ratio of female and male staff. However, it is possible that for certain roles and responsibilities, the recruitment of women is difficult. In such cases, organisations must ensure that the critical mass of 33 per cent prevails at different levels of the organisation. Yet,

at the same time, this implies that constant efforts must be made to ensure that this ratio reaches perfect equality.

However, it is not only a game of numbers in the context of women's representation. Roles and responsibilities that are played by women are equally important in maintaining a gender balance. Usually, women are recruited for roles that are softer, for example, receptionists and telephone operators while men are hired in positions of supervisors and managers. Therefore, while the political correctness of equal representation of women in the workplace has been understood by almost all organisations, the real commitment to achieve this always lacks strategies and resources. Organisations find themselves struggling with the problem of not having adequate representation of women at senior managerial and leadership positions.

As discussed in Section I, in many cases stereotypical images of women as being unable to cope with professional roles go against their recruitment while male candidates are given preference over women who are equally qualified. During recruitment, the subtly voiced expectation of employees having to work beyond stipulated hours, on holidays and other off days is an immediate deterrent to potential women candidates.

In some instances, organisational filters are so stringent, that they miss out on competent women in their interview processes. There is a focus on assessing the candidate's knowledge base rather than their learning abilities. There might be some skills that women might not have, but can soon grasp once they are employed. For example, if the role of a supervisor requires driving skills, the question posed to a woman is usually, "Can the candidate drive?" Given our cultural context, it is found that more men than women learn how to drive. A negative response to such questions results in the rejection of the woman candidate. However, if the query was posed in a more open manner asking, "Is the candidate willing to learn driving, if selected?", it would result in a very different outcome. Many times, the working environment and culture of the organisations are so geared to the presence of men that women find themselves unable to cope with gender neutral or blind policies and informal work practices.

Changing gender relations even within the workplace is a gradual process for which organisations will need to continuously strive towards taking into considerations the changing contexts.

Findings

The findings of the study indicate that on an overall basis, the representation of women in organisations is adequate, with only 46 per cent organisations having more than one-third of their staff as women. Another 15 per cent of the organisations have more than 50 per cent of female representation on their workforce but 38 per cent of the organisations do not have an adequate representation, i.e., women are less than 33 per cent of the total employees strength.

These figures are also supported by the earlier findings that show the representation of women in top management roles to be as high as 46 per cent of the workforce. Indeed these figures are encouraging and demonstrate that the voluntary sector is indeed successful in its efforts to include women as part of its workforce.

With a little more innovation and creativity organisations may be able to devise further methods whereby the strength of women can go beyond 50 per cent which in the long run can truly change the face of the workplace, making it a space where the environment is conducive for the optimum functioning of both men and women.

It was also noted that generally women recruited in organisations have a lower level of qualifications and/or experience as opposed to their male counterparts. So while this strategy has increased the ratio of women within organisations, it had also resulted in the more serious issue of lack of women in decision-making roles.

A widespread and common excuse is that female candidates with the requisite skills are not available, even though organisations are willing to hire them. What makes the issue even more complex is that since women are not recruited to these posts, these continue to remain male dominated bastions, resulting in a continued stereotyping of roles, making it near impossible to find women with the same skills in the near future.

A typical example is that of chartered accountants. Organisations do not hire women for these posts, as they are not available; men continue to be dominant in these posts; women observing the culture, which is not inclusive of their gender, do not even attempt to seek jobs in this sector. At the same time, it is interesting to note that in other sectors like finance managers, there has been an increase in the number of women, which implies that more and more women are looking at these sectors as a professional option.

Recommendations

- *Organisations need to conduct a thorough analysis to identify reasons for the gender imbalance within their structure.*
- *During the time of recruitment, organisations need to be positive and sensitive in their questions and seeking of information from women candidates. Emphasis should be on assessing their ability to learn as opposed to only detailing their skills and expertise.*
- *Gender biased questions or statements should not be raised. Example – Are you thinking of getting married in the near future? What are your plans for beginning a family? How will it affect your responsibility towards your job?*
- *Organisations should share the benefits and facilities they offer to women staff at the time of the interview, revealing the culture of the organisation. These could include, flexible hours, part time employment, provisions to work from home in certain situations, child care facilities, equal opportunities for growth and development of all employees, and other positive affirmative action focused on the special needs of women staff.*

Induction and Orientation

The processes of orientation and induction are vital aspects of human resource planning. Orientation is the process of acquainting employees with their work environment in relation to physical and interpersonal aspects. Induction is the process of formally introducing an employee to the workplace, ensuring s/he adheres to predetermined management policies and procedures when carrying out their duties.

Very often, these two processes are conducted within the same time frame to enable the new employees to gain a holistic understanding of their roles and responsibilities. These terms are also used interchangeably to denote the process of introducing the employee to the organisation.

They are very influential processes and a powerful way of motivating new employees to commit to the vision of the organisation. This helps in lowering the turnover of the staff as well as saves costs incurred on repeated recruitments. It is also used to welcome newcomers to being a part of the new establishment that s/he has joined.

The method of induction is mainly designed

In an organisation there is a well-developed system of induction, which takes the form of attaching a newcomer to a senior staff member as an apprentice for the first three months. It is expected that both individuals will work closely together and that the newcomer will be introduced to the work culture, acceptable and unacceptable norms of behaviour, facilities and benefits offered to staff, priorities and issues of focus within the structure of the organisation. After this period of induction, the new recruit has thoroughly imbibed the values and the culture of the organisation as well as its method of dealing with programmatic and thematic aspects at the field level. It also allows the supervisor to gauge the attitude of the new recruit and her/his ability to fit into the culture of the organisation. In the event that the supervisor is of the view that an individual will not be able to fit into the organisation's environment, his probation is not cleared.

to give details of the organisation, its policies, practices, structure and staffing patterns, general rules, and expectations regarding quality and standards to the new employees.

In the context of mainstreaming gender within the organisation and reiterating the aspects of a gender conducive and sensitive environment, this is an important time to orient newcomers to other procedures regarding her/his behaviour. The code of conduct, whether formally stated or informally followed, should be clearly mentioned, as should the implications for violation of the same. Policies, including the Gender Policy, Policy against Sexual Harassment, Policies for Positive Affirmative Actions, should be shared and discussed. Thus, the processes of induction and orientation will not only give the new employee a clear definition of his/her roles and assignments but will also leave no ambiguity regarding the workplace culture and environment as well as non-negotiable elements in terms of behaviour and attitude.

Findings

The study shows that 61 per cent of the organisations have a systematic process of orientation and induction, where they usually share the code of conduct that is expected from their staff, including treating women with dignity and respect. The other 39 per cent had informal processes of orientation, whenever it was found necessary. All organisations had a strictly enforced policy of prohibiting the consump-

tion of alcohol as well as a ban on smoking within office premises and its field offices.

Whenever formal policies do not exist, the organisation shares issues of concern and norms of behaviour, especially those which are open to misinterpretation and could create problems, with the newcomers in an informal manner.

It was also noted that though organisations had a Gender Policy or a Policy against Sexual Harassment, these were not shared during the induction. Positive affirmative action and special benefits for women staff were also not shared except when a specific woman had reason to avail of the same.

Recommendations

- *A formal system of orientation and induction needs to be developed and followed, whether for individuals or for groups of newcomers.*
- *Induction processes should cover all policies, formal procedures and systems of the organisation, as well as informal benefits and facilities, which are not included in the service rules or other policies (policy of emergency leave, provision to work from home, flexible hours of work, etc.), including the Gender Policy, and Policy against Sexual Harassment, should also be shared and discussed.*
- *A checklist of issues should be prepared to be covered in the induction/orientation programme.*

Retention

Employee retention involves taking measures to encourage employees to remain in the organisation for the maximum possible period of time. Recruitment of the right persons for the job is as important as retaining competent staff. The higher the level of the person in an organisation, the more important it is to retain that individual.

The loss of key employees or staff turnover in large numbers can be costly to an organisation in terms of further recruiting and training as also for the negative impact and de-moralising effect it has on other employees.

The performance of employees is often linked directly to the quality of achievements, satisfaction of stakeholders, enhancement of programmatic outputs and even the public image of the organisation. This, in turn, can be indirectly linked to job satisfaction of peers

and colleagues, effective career planning and growth opportunities in the organisation, work culture and environment, benefits and facilities for employees.

Whatever be the reasons for employees leaving the organisation, it is important that these reasons be documented, analysed and a strategy developed to improve the circumstances, which lead to effective employee retention. Since retention is an issue that covers all employees, we need to look at this aspect of human resource management from an engendered perspective. There is a need to understand whether apart from other reasons attributed to retention of staff, there are special circumstances that are a cause of attrition of women staff.

The Reasons Why Women Leave Jobs

The socialisation processes of men and women, and the onus of reproductive roles resting with women has its impact in the retention of women in workplaces, irrespective of the position or status that they occupy. Women are forced to take career breaks due to several reasons. These include:

- in-laws not permitting the daughter-in-law to take up a job, as it affects their social image;
- women not being able to cope with roles that require extensive travel;
- stress on the job;
- long working hours;
- culture of overtime and giving extra hours and days;
- lack of flexibility in time to coordinate and manage personal commitments;
- parenting responsibilities;
- relocation of their husband to another city;
- other crisis situations within the family, where women are pressured to give up their careers; and
- sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination in the workplace.

Not only do these processes have a negative impact on working women but they also create biases that act against women at the time of recruitment. Organisations need to take into account these processes that increase the attrition rate of women and find solutions within their specific context to be able to retain women.

For example, if a majority of women employees in an organisation have shorter career spans because of parenting responsibilities, the issue to be addressed is the kind of supportive measures that could be offered to ease the situation. These can include child-care facilities, flexible hours, part time employment, provisions to work from home with supportive infrastruc-

ture of computers, telephones and internet connectivity. Such an approach will not only increase the morale of working women, it will also help retain and nurture committed employees, attract professionally qualified women and lower costs the organisation incurs in the processes of recruitment and training. The long-term benefits of such measures will also witness the workplace becoming an area that considers the different needs of both men and women, accepting their differences, valuing their contributions and capacities, and finally giving way to workplaces that create spaces for men to also being able to implement changes in balancing their work life.

Organisations need to ascertain and continuously update sex-disaggregated data of staff at different levels and have strategies that can counteract the imbalance in the sex ratio.

Simultaneously, an organisation must develop policies, which recognise and support that men too have a new set of responsibilities that can have a direct bearing on women entering the workforce. If such measures are not adopted, women will continue to bear the dual burden of responsibilities, within the home and the workplace, and the organisational culture will continue to promote men who dedicate more time to their professional lives rather than attempting to balance their work life pressures.

Findings

The study revealed that all organisations faced challenges in the retention of women, in their head offices as well as in their field locations. The reasons listed included:

- Marriage of women, relocation to husband's home;
- Traditional attitude of families towards working wives;
- Child rearing and other reproductive roles;
- Transfer of spouse to another location;
- Extensive travel to field areas;
- Expectations of putting in longer working hours;
- Lack of growth opportunities as compared to their more qualified male counterparts;
- Donor organisations laying down stringent norms on formal qualifications as opposed to field experience and knowledge; and
- Superficial changes at the level of the family where women are allowed to work out of the home but not released from the pressures of responsibilities within the home.

Organisations are now developing strategies to support the retention of women and thereby, counter the negative impact of not having gender balance in their workforce.

In one organisation, the staff were allowed the facility to avail of flexible working hours. However, there was no monitoring of whether this system was being actually followed effectively and that the employees were actually able to benefit from this facility.

If an employee came in early, there was no assurance that s/he would be able to leave on time. Besides this, Saturdays, Sundays and other holidays were all considered working days and the employees did not get a weekly off.

Therefore, the option of working early and leaving early was counterproductive to the purpose for which it had been introduced by the organisation.

Thus, it was seen that 23 per cent of organisations were beginning to explore the possibilities of recruiting promising women at the local level and training them to take over field-level responsibilities of a higher order. Such systems were being backed up by professional and technical staff.

Also, 23 per cent of the organisations studied were now open to professional staff coming in on short-term assignments, which include training and development of local level staff. This also helped them in reducing their wage budgets as they hired people only on project basis.

Again, 92 per cent of the organisations in the study had started promoting work life policies, which supported the cultural and social contexts of women, enabling them to contribute to the functioning of the organisation. However, these policies were targeting only a few aspects of institutional functioning and had not been developed in a systematic manner. There is a need to regularly review such policies for their efficacy, ensure that they suit the needs of the staff and are not counter productive to the objectives for which they were introduced.

It was seen that 54 per cent of the organisations had initiated processes like paternity leave, thereby recognising that men too had a responsibility towards parenting and reproductive roles, easing the pressure on women in their families. However, none of these organisations had created the corresponding culture that would enable and support men taking on such new roles and responsibilities with openness and pride.

It was noted that in these organisations, men did not avail of such facilities and neither were they encouraged to do so. In 15 per cent of the

organisations where the men did take such leave, there were some instances when they were recalled due to work pressures.

Such actions on the part of the organisation show that while there is an attempt to develop measures that recognise the changing roles and responsibilities of men, such changes appear to be politically correct initiatives only; good on paper but never really followed in spirit.

Besides, organisations had also initiated policies related to working hours, work culture and other facilities for women, which are covered in the following sections.

Recommendations

- *Organisations should think of strategies whereby local women can be recruited in remote areas that face high rate of attrition of female employees. The long-term implications of policies need to be reviewed to ensure that they are not promoting stereotypes and reiterating gender constructs of men and women.*

- *These persons can support and guide local level interventions whilst also training local women to take on responsibilities, with periodic guidance and support*

- *These policies may not necessarily have financial implications for organisations but they affect the work culture and working environment. They require rigorous and precise planning and monitoring to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability. Such policies can include flexible working arrangements, staggered working hours, compressed working hours (10 days in nine days), maternity leave, paternity leave, child-care facilities, breastfeeding policies, family leave for child care, adoption, family emergency, part time work, job sharing, spouse employment, etc. (UNDP, 2007).*

- *Unless matching policies are developed for male staff to enable them balance their work-life, women staff will continue to face pressures to perform in constrained circumstances. Organisations must encourage and recognise the fact that men too now play more reproductive roles, including parenting, caring for the old and sick, as well as performing household and domestic chores.*

Formal Systems/ Service Rules

Formal systems include the range of structures, processes, methods and procedures that are explicitly and formally developed to get individuals to perform tasks consistent with organisational strategy.

These arrangements cover roles, hierarchies, responsibilities, deputations, departmental divisions, transfers, etc.

Rules that formally define systems and procedures that guide behaviour and procedures including service rules, travel rules, working hours, code of conduct policies, etc., are also an essential component of formal systems in an organisation.

In this section, we have dealt with leave, travel rules and working hours as essential components of the formal system.

Leave

Leave is a facility provided by the employer so that employees can balance their personal lives with their professional responsibilities. There are various types of leaves that are given to employees in different organisations, these range from the extremely formal casual, earned and medical leave to the more informal short leave, emergency leave and discretionary leave.

Inadequate leave structures in organisations also take on gender hues, specially when it comes to compromising personal needs in order to fulfil professional obligations. In such situations, it had been found that the balance is tilted in the favour of men who take less leave than their female peers.

It is generally assumed that women are more conscious of their responsibilities on the home front and that is why they need to take leave to fulfil such responsibilities. More often than not, most women do not have any option, as these are the responsibilities bestowed on her by her family and society. Men too leave such responsibilities to their spouses, choosing instead to focus on their responsibilities within the workplace.

The picture that emerges is that men have a higher professional commitment than women, and hence are better workers. In the clinching analysis, it is thus found that employing women does not make good business sense for an organisation.

Lack of formal service rules and reliance on discretion of individuals to grant leave creates an environment that can be biased and unfair to certain categories, as well as specific indi-

viduals within an organisation. This creates negative working relationships, leading to low morale as well as sycophancy amongst the staff.

Moreover, organisations that do not have adequate provisions of leave also run the risk of creating a monotonous environment, leading to tensions and frustrations resulting in low productivity, even though the employees may be putting in additional hours of work.

General Findings

One of the most predominant findings was that most of the organisations did not have a clear understanding of the kinds of leaves which are formally provided like casual, earned, and medical leaves. Hence, these terms were all used interchangeably and their practical usage dependent upon the organisation's understanding of their context.

The second finding was that only 92 per cent of the organisations had formal policies related to leave and other service rules. Again, 8 per cent of the organisations allowed their staff to avail of leave on a need basis and it was seen that this system was effective as long as the number of employees remained low. With the increase in the workforce, even such organisations were thinking of establishing formal service rules, including norms for leave under different categories.

Also, 15 per cent of the organisation had different policies for leave entitlement for staff who were permanent and for those hired on a contract basis—the former got more leave than the latter. However, such policies created resentment in certain sections of the staff, which felt that they were being denied equal opportunities.

All organisations having formal policies for taking leave also follow informal policies relating to short or emergency leave, leave after working a long stretch in the field, discretionary leave, leave on compassionate grounds, a day off if one has worked on holidays and off days to meet deadlines or to conduct events, etc.

Specific Findings

In this section, we have focused on those categories of leave that are incorporated in government policies and service rules, and their use in the voluntary sector

Casual Leave: Casual leave may range from an entitlement of 10-20 days in different organisations. While 50 per cent of the organisations studied, considered casual leave as days off, which could be carried forward to the next year, 8 per cent allowed encashment of casual

leave apart from allowing such leave to be carried forward to next year (though typically causal leave should lapse). On the other side, there was an organisation, which treated all the 30 days leave it granted to employees as casual leave, lapsing at the end of the year if not utilised. So at any given time the employee can never accumulate more than 30 leaves.

Medical Leave: The study shows that 38 per cent of the organisations gave sick or medical leave based upon the needs of individual staff members. Again, 46 per cent the organisations had a formal policy on medical leave while the balance 54 per cent had no such formal policy regarding medical leave. In 15 per cent of the organisations which had a specified number of days of medical leave, the circumstances of the individual were taken into account when granting them an extension of such leave, with or without pay. In every organisation, the staff members were of the opinion that if an individual was seriously ill, the organisation would consider the case favourably and under no circumstances would the organisation allow the individual to bear the burden of any financial losses.

Earned Leave: It was seen that the number of days of earned leave averaged from 15 to 30 days. But, 8 per cent of the organisations gave 45 days of earned leave, though a clause combined this with the casual leave. Only 54 per cent of the organisations had some system of encashment of leave. Again, 15 per cent organisations had a stringent policy, restricting any staff member from taking more than three days leave at a time, with deviations from this norm needing the approval of the head of the organisation.

Maternity Leave: All organisations provided such leave, with the period ranging from three months to four-and-a-half months. Irrespective of formal or informal policies of the organisations, there was the explicit understanding that all women employees having completed the stipulated days of employment were eligible to such leave. Only 8 per cent organisations had a clause stating that a woman was entitled to avail of maternity benefits only after having completed three years of employment. This leave was applicable for the birth of up to two children only. It was only in one organisation where the staff largely belonged to the minority community that such leave was applicable for births of up to four children.

While 23 per cent of the organisations had a formal policy on maternity leave, the clauses of eligibility as well as the period of leave were very ambiguous. A similar number of organi-

sations had a formal policy on maternity leave, with specific clauses of eligibility and leave period.

Also, 61 per cent of the organisations gave additional leave if either the mother or the newborn child faced serious health problems. But whether such extensions were to be with or without pay was decided upon a case-to-case basis.

The study revealed that 8 per cent of the organisations were operating on the basis of projects and had gone out of their way to make arrangements whereby women could avail of their maternity benefits. Since such benefits had not been included in the project, the arrangements were mostly financial in nature and involved appointing other individuals, who could take over the roles and responsibilities of the woman till she returned. There were also some organisations (8 per cent) where women who had gone on maternity leave reported that they had to return to work whenever something important came up and also remain in touch with the office over phone and email throughout their leave period.

Also, some organisations, whose work was on a project basis, admitted that they were hard pressed to find resources for maternity leave. These are all very legitimate concerns and need to be addressed by the governance structure of the organisation.

Adoption Leave: Only 8 per cent of the organisations had a policy relating to the adoption of children and subsequent leave for the parents, including fathers.

Miscarriage Leave: Only 8 per cent of the organisations gave their female employees leave (15 days in all) in the event of them undergoing a miscarriage or involuntary abortion. However, there was no clarity on the number of times such leave could be availed of.

Other organisations had no formal policy on this issue and neither did any of the staff members, including women, raise this as an area of concern.

Paternity Leave: Such leave is a relatively new concept within organisations. But despite this, 53 per cent of the organisations admitted giving such facility to their male staff, while 47 per cent organisations felt that such leave was not really necessary. The period of paternity leave ranged from 7-15 days and was applicable for the births of up to two children.

Irrespective of the number of days of paternity leave that has been granted by organisations, what is important to note is the organisational culture and attitude that prevails towards the utilisation of such leave. In 86 per

cent of the organisations that have this facility, it was seen that neither the employer nor the employee were totally convinced of its efficacy and this has affected its proper utilisation. Only in 15 per cent of the organisations were men ready to come forward and use this facility. Also, it was seen that the leave facility had been introduced without a proper discussion amongst the staff as to its optimum utilisation, nor had there been a strategy to create a positive environment around this changing role of men and support to accept such changes in a forthright and open manner.

The study also highlighted the fact that that in nuclear urban families, where both the mother and father were working, families have realised the importance of the role of the father in nurturing and caring for children. This was in sharp contrast to smaller districts and towns where the relevance of such leave was not understood as other support systems were available in terms of joint families and also because the probability of men having working spouses was comparatively lower.

Other Forms of Leave Given by Different

The history of the institutionalisation of paternity leave of 15 days in one organisation makes for interesting reading. To ensure that fathers readily take on the responsibility of parenthood, it was decided to give new fathers the provision of paternity leave. Though there was initial reluctance towards this facility among new fathers themselves, the positive environment created around this issue motivated them to accept themselves in this new role. After a year, this policy was reviewed and based on the feedback from the fathers, changes were made to improve the efficacy of this policy.

The new fathers felt that immediately after the birth of a child, due to the support system of either their own parents or in-laws, they often felt redundant. What was significant was the help the fathers could give upon the withdrawal of support from the extended family, for instance, immunisations and minor ailments of the newborn. Hence, paternity leave was then allowed to be taken in slots of five days each from the date of the birth of the newborn up to six months. Today, male staff of the organisation have no hesitation in accepting paternity leave. Male staff are also willing to stay at home to take care of their children in case the need so arises.

Organisations: The study threw up a large range of the different kinds of leave an employee could avail of and staff members have appreciated the attempts of their specific organisations in this regard. Some of these leaves have been incorporated into the formal policies of the organisation, others remain need based or at the discretion of the head of the organisation. Such leaves include:

Extraordinary/Special/Discretionary Leave: Organisations have a provision of granting special leave to employees under extraordinary circumstances that may affect their physical or mental health. This leave may be for a short period of a few days or as in case of two organisations can even be extended up to one year. While one of the organisations granted leave without pay to an employee, in another instance, the circumstances of the individual and the family were such that s/he was given full pay for the entire period of leave on compassionate grounds. In another case, one organisation provided financial assistance to a woman living with HIV/AIDS for about two-and-a-half years, though she was not able to work.

Parent Leave: Organisations provide this leave to parents of children in the age group of zero to 12 months. This leave is in recognition of the fact that parents of infants might need additional leave during the first year of the child's birth for illness, immunisation or other child rearing issues. This leave may range from 5 days to a week

Compassionate Leave: A few organisations have facilities for leave to be availed of by the employees in the event of a member of their immediate family being seriously ill or due to a bereavement. This leave is, however, only granted if the employee has exhausted all other leave that s/he is entitled to.

Emergency or Short Leave: This leave is granted on an informal basis in some organisations. It was seen that while some had formalised this leave facility, others left it to the discretion of the supervisor or higher authorities. Usually for a couple of hours, or about half-a-working day, such leave was granted two-three times a month and it enabled employees to attend to small personal chores, including banking work, attending to utility services, parent teacher meetings and other odd jobs. The need for such leave was felt more by the office-based staff rather than the field-based staff who spent more time outside office premises.

Informal Leave after Tours/ Field Visits/ Official Events: Organisations have an infor-

mal policy that allows an individual time off if they have returned from a hectic travel schedule or at an odd hour. This leave, ranging from a couple of hours to a day off, gives the individual time to relax, attend to personal needs, spend time with their families and rejuvenate themselves.

An organisation had a special provision of giving employees, who lived in remote field locations and spent the entire month away from their families, two to three days off every month. It was expected that they could use this time to visit their families or attend to other personal chores or to relax.

Many organisations also provide a day off, if there has been some event in the organisation, which has been hectic and the staff need time to rest. This, however, is an on-the-spot decision, decided on an informal basis.

Study Leave/ Exam Leave: Most of the organisations covered were very open and liberal in giving their staff time off to study or sit for an examination. Improving ones knowledge base and gaining additional qualifications are valued and supported by such organisations. Employees appreciated the efforts made by their organisations in encouraging them in their initiatives to improve their professional qualifications.

Compensatory Leave: The concept behind compensatory leave is to provide an employee with a day off to compensate for the fact that they have spent personal time (weekly offs or holidays) in fulfilling official duties.

In the organisations covered, only 15 per cent of the staff had no issues regarding availing the compensatory off on a need basis, that is they only availed of the leave if they perceived the need to do so. However, in the remaining 85 per cent of the organisations, there was a lot of resentment and discontent, and employees had serious concerns about the policy of the organisation in not granting them compensatory leaves.

The top management in these organisations considers it to be an employee's responsibility to work towards fulfilling the goals of the organisation, even if it was at some personal cost. It was also felt that in the voluntary sector employees work for a social cause and hence were morally and ethically obliged to put in extra effort and time towards their professional commitments.

However, the employees had a very different view on this issue. They were of the opinion that the organisation did not recognise the fact that they too had personal commitments and obligations to fulfil and it was not always pos-

sible to give priority to the goals of the organisation. Further, it was their family that gave them sustenance and rejuvenated them, enabling them to put in long hours and follow hectic work schedules. Besides in organisations that had a six-day working week, working on the only off day provided no rest or relaxation to employees, affecting their productivity and negatively impacting the organisation.

Recommendations

- *Except for very small organisations, there is a need to develop a well-organised leave policy, which caters to the personal life and organisation's commitments.*
- *Using government norms as a benchmark, organisations should try and provide leave in accordance with government policy. These include casual leave, medical leave, earned leave, maternity leave, paternity leave, study leave, etc.*
- *Organisations may consider including leave for miscarriages in their rules.*
- *While one recognises that leave is a privilege and not a right, organisations need to be more flexible in their provisions and recognise that employees may need to take longer periods of leave to fulfil personal obligations. Allowing a maximum of three days can become rigid and de-motivating for an employee.*
- *Too much of discretion leads to a culture of dependency on one individual, higher probability of biases and favouritism, and an environment of sycophancy. This needs to be replaced with formal structures*
- *The issue of compensatory leave needs to be resolved as this is a topic of resentment and discontent. Organisations need to examine the aspects of work life balance, recognise that individuals have lives outside the organisation, personal goals and obligations, and strategise on how they can accommodate these different needs.*
- *The organisations must ensure that individuals get at least one day off in a week, as is also mandated by law. Individuals need to rest and recuperate in order to retain their productivity.*
- *Develop a corresponding environment which encourages men to avail of benefits like paternity leave in an open and forth-right manner.*

Travel Rules

Facilitating official travel is the responsibility of an organisation and suitable travel rules have to be formulated by it. These are dependent upon the financial capacity of the organisation, its location and the availability of public transport within the area of functioning. Jobs that entail frequent travels, including travel to remote locations, draw attention to the need for highlighting the implications of gender issues in the context of safety, security and the comfort level of the women staff. In the voluntary sector, where working with marginalised sections and in rural areas is the norm, travel is an important consideration for the field staff, who sometimes are in the field for more than 15 days in the month. Facilitating travel is not only limited to transport arrangements but also to safe, secure and hygienic accommodation.

Findings

Primary data reveals that 38 per cent of the organisations had formal travel rules, which take into account safety and security of women staff members. The other organisations had not integrated safety aspects into their travel rules, though supervisors and higher-level staff were allowed to use discretion in these matters, if approached by female staff who faced a problem.

On sharing rooms, it was found that only 8 per cent of the organisations had clear norms, formal and informal, prohibiting male and female colleagues from sharing an accommodation whether in the field or at other venues. The other organisations (92 per cent) had no explicit rule about this and it was found in 23 per cent of the organisations that sharing of rooms by men and women while travelling had taken place. Such incidents had resulted in causing acute embarrassment and trauma to the women employees.

Another finding was that 15 per cent of the organisations also followed the practice of mandating the staff to stay within the community, either at homes of volunteer staff, grassroots workers or other community members. This practice was considered to be an essential part of their role in understanding and working with the community. This initiative was started with the intention of developing cordial relations with community members and establishing links between the organisation and local community bodies and groups.

Both men and women staff members, however, found this discomfiting, with the women specially having additional concerns. Some of the reasons included:

- Women sometimes were not sure of their safety and security during such stays. While women of the host family were trustworthy, they were not too sure of the male members or other guests and visitors.
- Since staff of the organisations live with volunteers and community persons during their field stays, they have a sense of obligation towards them and this impacts their professional relationship.
- It must be noted here that no one reported any kind of incident where they had actually found themselves in an insecure situation.
- Women employees felt that they were at times asked to live with families having limited means and resources, putting undue pressure on their hosts. As they were not given a per diem, they were unable to reimburse the hosts, either in cash or kind, for the services they were making available to them.

About 23 per cent of the organisations were supportive of women taking their young children along during their travel. They also bore the costs of the travel and other related needs of the caretaker accompanying the women staff.

In 30 per cent of the organisations, women with very young children were given the option of not travelling for a certain period of time and if in particular situations they faced problems in taking care of their children, they were allowed to opt out of that specific event.

The findings across the organisations reveal that there existed an assumption that women were generally less inclined to travel than their male counterparts. While it was believed that men have no issues in travelling to distant locations and staying in the field for longer periods, women usually preferred closer locations, involving less travel time. and did not want to live in the field for longer periods. This makes it clear that it is the circumstances of the women that restricts them from being more open to travel. It was seen that when women were younger and unmarried, they were open to travel and being out longer in the field but their circumstances changed with marriage and children. Our discussions with the staff threw up some interesting aspects that influence travelling by women employees.

Family responsibility: The family and society perceive a woman's primary role as that of being the homemaker. Going on tour would imply that this responsibility would have to be taken over by other family members. But, even in joint families, such support is not easily given; traditional beliefs do not accept the fact that women can give priority to their work over their domestic responsibilities. Families expect

The male staff felt that their organisation must have a policy of separate lodging for men and women when touring, no matter what the circumstances. If due to any reason, separate lodgings are not available, then the organisation has to consciously take a decision whether to send more than one staff for such tours. This issue came up, as in one incident, a male and a female staff member were forced to stay together in one room due to lack of rooms, deeply impacting the woman staff in the process. Even men may be uncomfortable about sharing a room with a female employee and the fear of being accused of molestation may also be a source of the discomfort.

women working outside the home to fulfil her roles within the family. For a woman in a nuclear family, the burden of facing dual responsibilities is enhanced. Thus, very often a woman finds herself facing a backlog of domestic chores when she returns from her travel in the field. Living in a nuclear family calls for much more planning and careful detail as to how the home will function in her absence. These notions of perceived roles and responsibilities are so deeply ingrained in the women themselves that they feel it is indeed their primary responsibility to take care of home and family.

They feel guilty if they do not do so, and as a result end up seeking a non-travelling job, which minimises conflicts relating to roles and responsibilities, and balancing of professional and personal commitments. If they have no option but to travel, women prefer field areas where they have to cover shorter distances and is possible to return in a day or two, minimising her tension and strain.

Family restrictions: Given the cultural context of India, most of the time women need to take permission from their family members for travelling. This is applicable to married as well as unmarried women. If the family perceives that it is not an appropriate time for the woman to travel, they place restrictions, which she may have to counteract, causing tension and stress. Women can be asked not to travel if a family member is unwell, if there is a family function, if there is an impending festival, if there are other religious events, including fasts and other rituals, and where a woman's presence and participation is considered crucial, among others. Men are able to take decisions about their travel on their own and practically almost never have to seek permission and are able to exert the importance of their travel over

personal commitments.

Safety and security issues: Safety and security issues in public places are a subject that rarely comes into the minds of men even as it rarely leaves the minds of their female colleagues. Women are much more vulnerable towards sexual abuse, exploitation and threats to their physical safety than men. Though women shared that the travel had added to their confidence, the sense of insecurity remained an issue.

Lack of confidence or self worth: While several women had gained confidence from their travels, for others (and this is more applicable to women living in smaller towns or rural areas), travelling alone was still an issue that they had to grapple with.

For most Indian women, travelling alone is unheard of, as since their childhood they are usually accompanied by members of their families. This lack of exposure has led to a feeling of dependency, which is a major cause for unease among women when travelling alone. This feeling gets enhanced when they have to travel to unknown destinations and specially if they have to make arrangements for their local conveyance, hotel or accommodation, and for food. Thus, travel can become a daunting proposition for women if they are not prepared for it.

A lactating mother was asked by her organisation to attend a conference outside the city of her posting. She was unable to muster up the courage to refuse on the grounds that her four-month-old child was sick. The office environment around her was such that she felt apprehensive about discussing the problem, fearing she would be labelled as a person trying to make excuses. She, therefore, agreed to attend the conference.

However, after two days of being in the conference, she broke down, as she was unable to take the stress of being away from her child who was ill. A senior female officer on learning about the source of her tension immediately sent her back on the next available flight. The environment that had inhibited her from sharing her reasons to not attend the conference ultimately resulted in undue cost to the organisation, in terms of the cost of sending her to the conference and back, the working days lost when she had been in office, and most importantly, the stress and anxiety that reduced her participation and productivity at the conference.

Recommendations

An organisation must provide measures that protect the woman and safeguard her physical self during travel on official work. This will also lead to a sense of mental satisfaction for the woman employee. This implies providing additional benefits, those that are not a part of the general travel policy and which are applicable in certain situations. These can include:

- **Providing a higher/safer mode of travel:** This ensures that women can use modes of travel that are beyond their entitlements but are safer. In some cases, the reverse may also be true. For example 1st Class train options are considered more unsafe. Travel norms should allow women to travel by auto or taxis as opposed to public transport or buses when travelling alone at night or in the very early hours of the morning. When travelling out of the city, women may travel in a deluxe bus instead of an ordinary bus or in 11nd / 11lr AC in a train rather than a sleeper class.
- **Providing safe accommodation:** Another essential and important component is safe accommodation. Since the development sector is a non-profit making centre, the element of cost consciousness is a prime factor, but it must be ensured that this does not compromise with the safety of the woman, specially if she is staying alone. A useful tip is to identify a few safe places of stay in districts where staff usually travel and officially approve them. This ensures that women are aware of the place of their stay, and the knowledge of them having handled other guests from the same organisation.
- **Formal policy regarding sharing of accommodation:** The rules must be unambiguous about women not sharing accommodation with male colleagues while travelling together. Factors like economy, mutual agreement by the two parties concerned should not influence this norm and in no condition should sharing of rooms between different sexes be encouraged or allowed.
- **Facilities supportive to mothers of young children during travel:** The organisations should provide support to parents who may need to take their young children along when they travel. Costs of travel and other expenses of caretakers

have to be an integral part of this clause. This norm may also be extended to men if they need to take their child along with them. These will help in playing a crucial role in changing gender relations in society, giving men spaces where they can also take equal responsibility in parenting.

- **Environment building:** Develop a culture of being empathetic to reasons for women being unable to travel. An organisation must develop a culture where women are able to speak freely and share their discomfort in not being able to travel for specific events. Women should not be made to feel that they make unnecessary excuses when it comes to travel as compared to men, who rarely ever refuse. But as a word of caution, it may be mentioned that if a woman employee has undertaken responsibilities that require her to travel as a regular feature of her work and at any point of time she feels that she can no longer play this role, then she must communicate this to the organisation. The organisation may then take a decision on how the matter can be resolved given the exigencies of the task.. An environment should also be built up in the organisation where there is an openness and understanding to the special benefits being given to women who travel alone. This will help avoid antagonism in the workplace. There must be a formal policy taking into account factors linked to women's safety so that it becomes a matter of right for her to avail of the special benefits and not at someone's discretion.

- **Developing women's abilities to travel alone:** Organisations can encourage, support and build the capacities of women to travel alone. Steps can include:
 - Other colleagues, male or female, can initially accompany the woman till such time that she develops the confidence to travel on her own.
 - For women who travel alone, arrangements should be made for them to be picked up if it is a new destination or the arrival is at odd hours.
 - Maps, important contact numbers, details of local transport to be used, etc., must be made available to staff.
 - Allowing use of a higher mode of local travel and transport for women travelling.
 - Provision of mobile phones or reimbursement of any related costs for communication for a woman travelling alone.

Working hours

Working hours refers to the period of time that an individual spends in paid occupational labour. Many countries regulate such working hours by law, such as stipulating minimum daily rest periods, annual holidays and a maximum number of working hours per week. The structure of the work week varies considerably for different professions and cultures.

In India, most organisations work roughly 40-48 hours in a week based on their experiences and requirements. As per the Shop and Establishment Act, no employee should work for more than 9 hours a day or 48 hours a week. Therefore, organisations must review whether they are crossing the maximum legal limit.

Historically speaking, office timings (9 am-5 pm) were framed when the workforce only comprised of males, who always had adequate support systems back at home. Even if these timings extended beyond the stipulated hours, men were able to cope with such pressure, as they had no pending responsibilities awaiting them at home, in terms of domestic chores and other responsibilities. However, in the changing context of women joining the workforce, holding responsible positions and playing leadership roles, the need to change the face of the workplace is imminent. The workspace must now take into consideration the fact that since the number of working couples are increasing day by day, alternatives that sustain both women and men, and support them in the fulfilment of their personal and professional goals are in demand.

Findings

The study revealed that 30 per cent of the organisations had a culture of working late. However, in some cases, the women staff were exempted from working late, with the male colleagues taking on their responsibilities in such cases. It was seen that 38 per cent of the organisations provided some kind of relaxation for women staff in terms of staying on late. These included leaving early, coming in late in case of having worked late the previous day and even allowing them to leave workshops and meetings in the event that they did not finish at the stipulated hour.

While one can say that these are supportive measures directed at women, one has to consider the holistic impact of such measures on the organisation as well as the individual. Such policies reiterate the gender stereotype of the household being the primary responsibility of the woman. It frees men from such responsi-

Over the years, Luthra's Delhi office had earned the reputation of being a firm of highly motivated and toiling lawyers. Late hours in office had become so endemic that it was quite common for most lawyers to have dinner in office. The downside was that it bred a culture of arriving late, and creating what seemed an inefficient vicious cycle.

The management tried hard to shed this negative image. Responding to an intense internal debate, the management announced a new policy with respect to the working hours. The new policy does away with flexible working hours, and insists on lawyers arriving in office at 10 am and leaving by 7:30 pm. The new move that has almost everyone smiling as lawyers can now have weekends off. Lawyers were earlier permitted grace in case they had to stay back late to complete work, and could arrive late the morning after. The new policy does away with such grace, though it may still be availed at the discretion of the partners. Sceptics, however, point out several factors that go against such a policy, including the needs of the clients, the lack of a grace period squeezing out longer hours, the added risk that a junior lawyer's working hours would be determined by the hours kept by his seniors, etc. One associate preferred to see the bright side, describing it as "rigid hours within a flexible system".

bilities and reiterates that the workplace is primarily his domain, will be organised to suit his needs and finally, it is men who alone can be the ideal workers.

Further, this practice often goes against the sincerity of the women employees. There is a basic assumption that working long hours is a way of showing sincerity and dedication to the organisation. However, for women who have a dual role to play, furthered by concern for their safety and security, working late is not always an easy option and as a result, their commitment and sincerity to the job is often undervalued.

Working late also has implications of employees being responsible for the safety and security of their women colleagues, towards which there is a high level of reluctance. It is preferable to maintain the status quo and let women leave early and men work overtime.

Organisations need to break out of these mindsets and conventional attitudes, by reflecting them in their policies and systems. In reality, working late by both men and

women affects their families, leads to stress and tension, and lowers productivity. In order to have an effective work balance strategy, organisations need to reflect on the necessity of any employee working beyond the stipulated hours and whether such practices are counter productive to the goals of the organisation.

Recommendations

- *Organisations need to re-examine their culture of working overtime and analyse the impact it has on the staff, both male and female.*
- *There is a need to review whether the reasons for staying late are due to overload of responsibilities, inadequate staffing or inefficiency.*
- *Organisations should develop a culture where completion of a task in the stipulated time is rewarded and recognised as a virtue.*
- *Having regular working hours will help both men and women to take up family responsibilities and recognise that individuals have lives beyond the organisation.*
- *Meetings and other events should be held at timings conducive to women, ensuring their safety and security in returning home.*
- *Organisations may have to consider the options of flexible working hours, part time jobs and even the options of working from home, so that women are not tied down by rigid working systems.*

Career Planning

Career planning is a life-long process that an individual undertakes to learn about herself/himself (her/his purpose, personality, interests, skills and talents), develop a self-concept, learn about careers and work situations, and then make a career choice. It also includes skills a person employs in finding and keeping the right job.

From an organisation's point of view, it means helping the employee plan his career in terms of her/his capabilities within the context of organisational needs. Career planning is closely linked with personpower planning and potential appraisal components of the human resource systems.

Findings

Most organisations promoted the career growth of their employees. In fact, one organisation had also taken account of the fact that

Recommendations

- *Organisations should look into the needs for upgrading capacities of their own staff. This will include capacity building workshops/trainings for staff at regular intervals, targeting specific work areas, enhancing the capacity of the employee and the effectiveness of the organisation as a whole. Capacity building to handle various other aspects of the functioning of an organisation will enhance the capacity of the employee to multi-tasking, enabling their growth and progress in the organisation. These enhanced capacities and multi-responsibilities will increase the motivation of employees to perceive themselves as an integral part of the organisation, reducing the attrition rate.*
- *Organisations should encourage employees to go for higher education to improve their own specific set of learning skills and abilities. It is often seen that due to constraints in their personal lives, employees, specially women, are not able to complete their formal education. Higher educational plans, if developed along with the employee concerned, will also be of value to achieving the goals of the organisation while enabling personal growth and learning.*
- *To make this a reality, the organisation should provide special leaves, and sponsor educational programmes and other facilities for employees, giving them the time, space and opportunity to improve.*
- *Managements should also work towards increasing the skills of the staff to carry on their designated responsibilities in the most effective way. To reach this end, on-job training can be provided and wherever necessary, special time should be allotted to staff members to enhance their capacities. Generic training can be held by organisations on a range of themes related to the upgrading of an individual's skills and competencies.*

women get married at an early age and are not able to plan for a career. Moreover, parenting and familial responsibilities also do not allow women to pursue a career. Hence, they ensure that women are taught till at least Class 10.

Positive Affirmative Action

Positive affirmative action towards women is the equity approach to achieving gender equality. Since women have suffered systematic discrimination over the years, positive affirmative action is in the current context directed

towards women. This will continue as long as there are inequalities based on gender in the workplace and in the larger society.

Findings

The primary data shows that although most organisations have understood the need for and promoted positive affirmative action towards women, they have not encouraged such initiatives. Positive affirmative action is an attempt to address the systemic discrimination that women have faced over the centuries. The next section deals with sexual harassment, which is perhaps one of the most important issues of gender discrimination and violation of women's human rights.

Recommendations

- *Before recruitment, an organisation should ensure that recruitments are based on equal opportunity for women and men. Job descriptions should be framed removing gender biases. Jobs should not be gender specific; rather application forms should be universal without the possibility of in-built gender discrimination. Interview panels should be gender sensitive enough not to ask insensitive questions from candidates, specially women candidates. Special efforts should be made to encourage women to apply for jobs. Positive affirmative action also includes highlighting of facilities and terms of employment that encourage women to take up the job. During the interview process, if women and men gain equal score, preference should be given to women. This will ensure positive affirmative action towards women.*
- *Women in the workplace could be promoted to higher posts on the basis of their capabilities. This will give a greater gender perspective to the work of the organisation. It is generally observed that more women are recruited at the grassroots level rather than at managerial levels, but organisations should make efforts to have an equal balance of women and men at all levels.*
- *Within the workplace, both men and women should be given equal opportunities to enhance their working capacities by attending seminars and workshops. In many cases, organisations may have to put in an additional effort to ensure that opportunities are given to women, who more often than not get left behind in such processes. For this, organisations may have to make extra efforts.*

Addressing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Background

Sexual harassment is a relatively new term but the concept itself goes back to time immemorial—wherever there have been men and women in society, there has been sexual harassment. Constance Jones, in her book *Sexual Harassment*, has identified incidents of sexual harassment back to the 1830s when increased numbers of women began working in the textile mills in New England. She noted that printers in Boston conducted a campaign of intimidation to force women out of their jobs in that industry in 1835. Of course, at that time there was no term to describe this course of action; the term "sexual harassment" was coined by feminists only in the 1960s.

At the international level, most histories of sexual harassment begin in 1964 when in the US, the Congress passed Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The first use of the term sexual harassment in the context of the workplace can be traced back to 1975, when *The New York Times* published an article, 'Women begin to speak out against sexual harassment at' (Thomas AM and Kitzinger C, 1997). This was the first instance of the media highlighting the issue and since then, it has been widely accepted that sexual harassment affects the dignity and self-respect of women and the fact that every woman in different aspects and facets of her life, including the workplace, is vulnerable to this phenomenon. In the current context, it is the responsibility of the employer to protect women and prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.

In the Indian context, sexual harassment at the workplace (SHW) has been one of the central concerns of the women's movement since the 1980s, when militant action was taken by the Forum Against Oppression of Women (Mumbai) against the sexual harassment of nurses in public and private hospitals by patients and their male relatives, ward-boys and other hospital staff; of air-hostesses by their colleagues and passengers; of teachers by their colleagues, principals and management representatives; of PhD students by their guides; the list is endless. However, this received a lukewarm response from the trade unions and adverse publicity in the media (Patel 2005). Women's rights activists were not to be deterred and continued to motivate more

and more working women to take systematic action against SHW. From then till date, things have moved rapidly, from the Supreme Court's guidelines to deal with sexual harassment to women's groups lobbying to get the Bill on Sexual Harassment at the Workplace, 2005, passed by Parliament.

Studies reveal that sexual harassment is still endemic, often hidden and present in different forms within organisations. Very often, these forms of sexual harassment are so subtle and covert that women do not speak out about them, leading employers and others to believe that the issue is trivial, does not have a deep negative impact on women and therefore does not have to be addressed in a systematic manner.

Combating sexual harassment and prevalent attitudes towards the issue involves developing a comprehensive understanding of sexual harassment; what constitutes sexual harassment; the various forms it takes, both within and outside the workplace; developing policies that address the issue systematically; creating spaces for women to raise their concerns and register complaints; finding mechanisms to develop awareness and a sensitivity to issues of SHW amongst both men and women, and to review the patriarchal values and attitudes that are the greatest challenge to prevent and deal with sexual harassment.

Understanding Sexual Harassment at the Workplace

What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment has been recognised as the most intimidating, degrading and violating form of violence against women. Within the workplace, it creates a hostile work environment and reinforces the perception of subjugation and suppression of women by men in all areas of their lives. In the context of the workplace, the rejection of attempts at sexual harassment may affect a decision concerning the employment status, conditions of work, compensation and other terms and conditions of employment.

(Refer to Annexure III for the different forms of sexual harassment and Annexure IV on sexual harassment as defined by the Supreme Court of India.)

What is a workplace?

There has been much debate about the definition of the workplace in the context of sexual harassment. There are arguments put forth about it just being the boundary of the premises where employees sit and work while others

include public places that are frequented by employees in the context of their work. However, it is now commonly accepted that a workplace is any place where working relationships between employer and employee(s) exist, and thus prevention of sexual harassment should ideally go beyond the physical premises of the office.

In fact, Bhanwari Devi who was raped outside the premises of her office was considered to have been sexually assaulted in her workplace, as she was a field worker and the community areas were where she fulfilled the objectives of her organisation. This concept of workplace extending beyond the premises of the office building is applicable if a woman is conducting her duties in the premises of another organisation. If she were sexually harassed in external premises, her organisation is obliged to register and deal with her case, as per procedures laid down by the committee that deals with sexual harassment in the workplace.

Why is it important to address the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace?

Organisations frequently are of the opinion that there is no need to set up committees to deal with cases of sexual harassment, as there are no reported cases within their organisation. However, not having data on reported cases should in no way make one assume that there have been no incidents. Organisations should reflect on the fact that while there is a rise in the number of incidents of sexual harassment in the workplace as well as an increase in the national statistics of violence against women and further analyse why these are not reflected in their organisation. If we say that organisations are the microcosms of society and reflect what actually happens in society, the absence of reported cases of sexual harassment goes against this analysis and logic, and points to the fact that there is something amiss in the organisation's data on this phenomenon.

What organisations need to consider is that if there is an absence of a mechanism to redress cases of sexual harassment, women are at a loss as to whom they should speak to in case they face a problem. Therefore, it is important to have a committee in place that gives clear directions about whom to approach in case of sexual harassment, the procedures that will be adopted, the length of time for investigation, etc. It is now well recognised that in the absence of formal structures, women often hold back from sharing incidents about sexual harassment.

IMPACT ON WOMEN

Impact on Career

- *Quitting one's job*
- *Reduced productivity*
- *Decreased concentration*
- *Absenteeism*
- *Decreased interest in work or study*
- *Interruption of career*

Financial Impact

- *Threatened or actual loss of income and/or benefits*
- *Threatened or actual loss of promotions or merit increases*
- *Threatened or actual loss of opportunities*
- *Threatened or actual loss of recommendations*
- *Decrease in professional reputation or status*
- *Threatened or actual loss of job*

Emotional Impact

- *Self-blame and guilt*
- *Distress*
- *Denial*
- *Mood swings*
- *Depression*
- *Fear*
- *Anxiety*
- *Self-doubt*
- *Irritability*
- *Feelings of isolation*
- *Feelings of intimidation*
- *Anger*
- *Restlessness*
- *Uncertainty over the future*
- *Loss of ambition*
- *Re-living of incident(s) in one's head*

Physical Impact

- *Insomnia or other sleep disturbances*
- *Change in appetite*
- *Headaches*
- *Stress-related ailments*
- *Stomach ailments*
- *Decreased energy*
- *Skin and hair problem*
- *Work or study unit disrupted by gossip, frustration and choosing sides*
- *Higher employee turnover*
- *Absenteeism*
- *Retraining*
- *Low morale*
- *Decreased productivity*
- *Litigation – loss of time and money*
- *Increased cost of benefits*
- *Tarnished public image*

Social Impact

- *Physical or emotional withdrawal from friends, family and co-workers*
- *Difficulty interacting with others*
- *Dependency on another person(s) for support*
- *Limiting of social interactions or self-isolation because one feels unsafe leaving the home or entering work, study or other space in which the sexual harassment occurred*
- *Generalised fears of people or things that remind one of the harassment*
- *Others may distance themselves from a complainant because they don't want to get involved or don't understand what she/he is experiencing*
- *Alcohol or drug use/abuse*

Besides the above, there are several other reasons for women not reporting sexual harassment:

- They are embarrassed and humiliated by the incident.
- They fear the matter will be trivialised and disregarded.
- There is a sense of insecurity that they will not be believed, as very often there is no proof of the incident.
- They feel that no action will be taken and the perpetrator will be allowed to go free.
- There is a fear from gossip and further humiliation.
- They also fear negative repercussions and

retaliation from the harasser or even the principal employer.

- They fear being asked to leave or taking a transfer even if the harasser is found guilty.

In short, women fear being made victims twice over if they raise their voices about sexual harassment, first by complaining and secondly when they are victimised for having complained.

Many organisations tend to ignore the issue of sexual harassment, claiming that it is not wise to blow up such cases. They perceive that these are small parts of everyday life and should be dealt with directly by the two individuals involved. However, this is easier said

A general response to the issue of sexual harassment is that it does not exist in the concerned organisation. Sexual harassment exists and is not often reported or not perceived to be sexual harassment. An example of this is narrated below. Two male colleagues were talking among themselves within the office premises, passing sexually coloured and derogatory remarks about a female colleague. They were so engrossed in their conversation that they did not realise that their conversation was audible to other staff. The concerned female staff was coincidentally passing through and overheard the remarks. She felt very harassed by this episode and brought the issue to the notice of her supervisor. Her supervisor then reprimanded the two male colleagues. There are a few points worth noting in this incident. Although not directly communicated to the concerned person, the abuse was committed within official premises by colleagues. Ultimately, it affected the concerned staff, resulting in low morale and dignity. In addition, she also faces the contempt of her two male colleagues because she complained about them. Since the organisation has no policy regarding sexual harassment, the male staff were let off with a simple reprimand. This episode brings to light the need for a policy and a committee to address issues of sexual harassment.

than done. It is not only the act of sexual harassment that needs to be considered, but also the other dimensions, including that of power, intimidation, and suppression that make the situation complex and difficult to confront.

It is the small and subtle issues that grow out of proportion, that paralyse women, that debase, degrade and disempower them in such ways that they are unable to speak about it to their families and even their husbands. Employers should recognise that sexual harassment in the workplace takes away from the woman her right to live and work with dignity. Often, these small and mundane instances take on accumulative and enhanced patterns, permeating the entire lives of the affected women.

It is therefore of crucial importance to define and label these behaviours as sexual harassment, thereby recognising that they do exist and have a negative impact on the environment of the workplace. It is only by doing so will organisations/ individuals recognise that

they are important and common, rather than trite and confined to 'just a particular woman' and her 'peculiarities' (Wise and Stanely in Thomas and Kitzinger 1997:114).

The impact of sexual harassment on the person being harassed is often much greater than one may think. It can impact a person physically, emotionally, economically and socially and affect one's career and academic performance or potential. Besides, the impact on the woman, the impact on the organisation can also be devastating with long-term negative consequences.

Commitment From the Top

Commitment is shown through enforcement and action by the responsible authorities. Even the most comprehensive sexual harassment policies and procedures are bound to fail if a company does not enforce them quickly, consistently and aggressively. To be effective, organisations must take sexual harassment seriously. They need to make certain that personnel responsible for enforcement conduct prompt, thorough and documented investigations of all complaints, even those that appear trivial. Organisations should take action that is reasonably calculated to end such harassment. Such action must be directed toward the harasser and may include verbal and written warnings, job transfers, suspension, and, if necessary, termination.

Employers should also keep tabs on their supervisors. This can be accomplished by means of monthly meetings with the higher management, unscheduled spot checks, or periodic sexual harassment training sessions with the implementing authorities. Organisations must place just as much emphasis on reporting responsibilities and mechanisms, as on the policy itself. Even setting precedence becomes important. Irrespective of the fact that the accused may be a senior in the organisation, or someone who is an asset to the organisation, or someone who brings in a lot of business, it is essential that he be punished according to the laws of the organisation if guilty. This will send out a strong and clear message to the entire staff that the organisation views sexual harassment as a serious offence and a non-negotiable term of employment.

Committee Against Sexual Harassment

In order to maximise the potential of the Policy Against Sexual Harassment as well as the committee constituted to deal with cases of sexual harassment, organisations must take steps to ensure their effective functioning.

One of the first steps towards this is to have the committee mandated by the Governing Board of the organisation. This is a crucial factor in primarily protecting the committee to ensure that it cannot be disbanded by any other authority, in the event of any controversy, change in leadership or structure. The committee can also fall back on the support of the board in the event that there are difficulties in its functioning, which arise from within the organisation, including the leadership or the management. This includes taking to the board controversial issues, including litigations and other legal recourse that cannot be resolved within the committee or the organisation. Other issues which can be taken to the board, through the leadership of the institution, include ratification of the TOR, selection of chairwoman, third-party member and other aspects, which usually need to be considered in the initial phase of setting up the committee.

The committee should also secure from the leadership, commitment to earmark resources for the proper implementation of policy, including capacity building of the entire staff on gender awareness and sensitisation, informational and educational material. Of these resources, a separate budget should be allocated for capacity building of committee members and others who will be playing key roles in the implementation of this policy. Awareness raising and dissemination of this policy to the entire staff, its implication as well as the consequences for its violation should be included in the agenda of the Committee.

At times, the size of an organisation can be too small to set up a separate committee. Yet, it is still important to have a committee as threats can come from outside the organisation as well. In such an instance, the organisation may take a decision to constitute a joint committee in collaboration with another organisation that they are closely associated with.

The following may be kept in mind, when constituting a committee to address sexual harassment in the workplace:

- It is mandatory that the chairperson is a woman.
- Half of the committee members should be women
- The committee should depute a third party representative, either from an NGO and/ or someone who is familiar with issues of sexual harassment, as one of the members
- A detailed TOR of the committee must be drawn up, stating:
 - The objectives of the committee
 - The scope of its authority and what issues

it can deal with in the workplace

- Process of registration and redressal of complaints
- Time frame for investigation and fact-finding in the event that a complaint is registered
- Forums where issues of common concern may be raised by both men and women employees

(See Annexure V for the Terms of Reference for Committee Against Sexual Harassment)

Capacity Building on Sexual Harassment

The establishment of the committee is a first step towards recognising and addressing the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace. However, these efforts can be futile if they are not supported by other initiatives of environment building as well as developing capacities and sensitivities of the staff towards gender issues, including sexual harassment. All these together help in creating a workplace that is free from sexual harassment and discriminations. The issues that are raised in training programmes will address sexual harassment and its various dimensions and ramifications. They will also include other forms of discrimination and violence against women, socialisation patterns, stereotyping of gender roles, the role of the media in gender issues, etc., which all go into creating a holistic perspective of how gender affects our lives.

More important than the issues themselves is the way in which they are presented to the staff members. The learning and sharing programmes should be so designed that employees are able to discuss the issue, and understand and accept the definition of appropriate behaviour within the workplace. All of these training programmes and other forums should

- be conducted in a non-threatening atmosphere of mutual trust and respect for each other;
- reassure staff that all complaints of sexual harassment will be addressed, irrespective of the stature of the persons concerned;
- reinforce the fact that all cases will be dealt with following principles of natural justice and each party will get a chance to speak and put forth their point of view;
- assure women that they will not suffer any negative consequences if they register a complaint of sexual harassment;
- assure male staff that strict action will be taken against any individual who has registered a false complaint; and
- ensure that an atmosphere of comfort and ease is maintained amongst colleagues, even

though they are more aware of following appropriate patterns of behaviour.

Apart from being an integral part of the training programmes with the staff, committee members should receive additional training for playing their specific roles. Their training should include a component of gender sensitisation, along with the procedures for registering complaints, and for inquiry, etc. The training should address, in addition to these, the procedures of investigation, skills necessary for inquiries, documenting the procedures (ibid.).

The Policy against Sexual Harassment, like all other policies, is not a static document. Within the changing context of gender relations, the policy needs to be reviewed and revised through a consultative and participatory process. Conducting periodic surveys is useful in identifying and preventing factors leading to incidence of sexual harassment. These anonymous surveys should be very simple and merely ask the employees (male and female) if they have experienced any form of sexual harassment during the past year. This gives data on what is happening within the organisation as well as reinforces the fact that the organisation is actively engaged in preventing and correcting sexual harassment (ibid.).

Capacity Building Towards Gender Sensitisation

Capacity building in the form of training is the systematic development of individual knowledge, skills and attitudes required. The purpose of training is to reduce the learning time while developing best practices within people. Gender sensitisation among individuals does not come about automatically and to expect this would be incorrect. A method of inculcating gender sensitivities among individuals is through capacity building activities.

Findings

During the study, it was seen that 38 per cent of the organisations had undertaken the capacity building of their staff towards the need for gender sensitisation and the practical implications of gender in everyday and professional life situations.

For mainstreaming gender, it is extremely important that capacities of all staff are built on gender issues. Since building a gender sensitive work culture needs change in the attitudes of people, this is a challenge that only policy formulation will not be able to fulfil. It is developing in individuals the ability to ques-

tion age-old and accepted norms of behaviour in a context, which is entirely different from the time these concepts were developed.

Gender training provides a common understanding of gender issues as well as a platform for people to discuss issues of institutional relevance through a gender lens. It enables them to open up and be aware of the pressures that the other sex faces.

It has been found that gender awareness has led to increased sensitivity, resulting in increased productivity, as coordination between male and female colleagues increases due to the healthy relations they develop after such training. It also helps them to understand the issues of sexual harassment at the workplace.

Sharing of experiences at such workshops also enable the staff to reflect gender sensitive practices in their work. It has been observed that even if the participants thought that they are aware of gender and women empowerment issues, the training usually increases awareness on various day-to-day issues about which they had never thought about earlier. It helps in developing individual personality, based on one's own individual thought process rather than a handed over thought process of our society.

Recommendations

- *Gender orientation should be an aspect of in-house training, which is received by each and every staff member, irrespective of their level in the organisational hierarchy. Most gender awareness trainings are rarely extended to all staff as an integral part of their induction and orientation. It should be made mandatory for all members of the organisation from the Chief Executing Officer (CEO) to the bottom of the ladder, from volunteers, to interns and members of the Governing Board to undergo this process of gender sensitivity.*
- *Gender sensitisation programmes should be developed in a phased manner, starting from awareness of basic concepts to a more analytical understanding of gender dimensions to societal issues.*
- *Apart from the formal orientation programme, there should be some forums where staff can openly discuss and raise issues that affect them in the workplace. This forum could be the regular staff meeting or small team meetings held once a quarter.*

Discussions around gender issues help in a deeper understanding of the causes for sociological differences between sexes, and also help organisations and individuals in analysing the way these differences can be minimised.

Other Policies

Communication Policy

Communication takes place when a message or idea is transmitted by one person and received and understood by another, without loss of integrity. It is something that at a superficial level may seem simple, but the fact of the matter is that it is hard to achieve proper and correct communication with a high level of consistency.

When to give gender trainings?

Usually, the first exposure to the gender orientation of staff should be given soon after anyone joins the organisation as part of their induction programme. Not only does it raise their levels of awareness, but it gives them a clear message of acceptable norms and behaviour within the organisation.

Refresher courses or advanced inputs can be planned at regular intervals during the year. These can take the form of creative activities in half-day workshops, debates, screenings of movies, etc.

An organisation has both formal as well as informal channels of communication that operate within its structures and systems. External communication with outside agencies is equally important for the right image, credibility of the organisation and for influencing other stakeholders. Therefore, it is essential that the right message and image of the organisation are portrayed with a high level of uniformity and consistency.

Communication and publication policies and activities need to have a component of gender to ensure that sensitivity to the image and reputation of women, their perspective and views are represented and maintained in all forms of communication, both internal and external. This would be a concrete indicator of an organisation's commitment to achieving gender sensitivity within the workplace and also outside of it. Once again, it is important to ensure that women are represented as figures of authority and competence, and not as support systems

Recommendations

● **Gender sensitivity in IEC/publication and other general communications:** *All communication, presentations, and mediums of internal and external communications (like website, journals, magazines, posters, advertisements, etc.) need to reflect the organisation's commitment to gender equality. All communication should encourage the use of gender inclusive and sensitive language. For example, the use of 'mankind' and 'manpower', 'man days' need not necessarily portray the inclusion of women. Such terms can be replaced with words like humankind, person power and person days. Similarly, the use of pronouns also needs to be inclusive. For instance, the use of 'he' is often denoted to include 'she' as well. This particular problem can be resolved by using 's/he' to ensure inclusion.*

● **Public Image of an organisation:** *It is also essential for organisations to promote a public image that projects its gender sensitivity. It is essential that organisations ensure that both men and women get opportunities to represent the organisation in press briefings and in other public relation activities.*

● **Gender analysis in advertising and marketing activities:** *Gender analysis should be central to development of all marketing, fundraising, sponsorship and campaign work and extra effort should be made to incorporate the organisation's gender concerns in all possible fora and arenas. Organisations that need advertising for their activities in various media should also be careful in not perpetuating gender stereotypes through advertisements.*

● **Strategies to communicate gender policies:** *The communication policy should ensure strategies to convey an organisation's policy relating to issues of equality, equity, non-discrimination and zero tolerance to sexual harassment are known to all its staff, partners, vendors, guests and stakeholders.*

and structures in the public eye.

Forms of communication in the workplace cut across every level and every division of the organisation. These are reflected in different facets of the structure of the organisation including emails, office memos, publications, newsletters and other IEC material, human resource policies and notice and bulletin boards

Findings

Many organisations actively incorporate gender sensitivities in their programmatic component. The focus is clearly on the inclusion and participation of women and the evaluation indicators focus on assessing the participation, growth and development of women within these thematic areas. These facts are reflected in reports and documentation, whether for internal consumption or public information.

However, communications relating to internal policies of the organisation lack sensitivity in their use of language. Human resource policies use gender insensitive terms denoting the dominance of men but not recognising the inclusion of women. The terms "he", "him" "his" are used for both men and women. People are used as a generic term to denote both the sexes.

In respect of information dissemination, it has been found that though organisations have gender policies and policies related to the prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace, these are not communicated to the staff as a body. The image of organisations as being committed to gender mainstreaming and the inclusion of women is not reflected in their activities. In public forums, the presence of men as speakers, facilitators, chairpersons is dominant, with women at times remaining unrepresented at important institutional events. Their token representation can sometimes be seen as lighting the lamp, handing over bouquets to guests and other dignitaries, and backstage organisation.

Spouse Employment

Many employers, in both public and private sectors, have policies prohibiting the employment of relatives. These policies are usually referred to as "anti-nepotism" policies. The scope of these policies vary along several lines.

Some apply only to members of the same household, while others apply to any blood relative or "in-law." Some prohibit working in the same department or in a supervisor-subordinate relationship, while others prohibit relatives being employed throughout the entire organisation. Some apply to all classes of employees, while others may apply to only certain groups. One characteristic that is shared by most, if not all, of these policies is that spousal relationships will be among those affected (Massengill, 1997).

In today's context, dual-career marriages are changing career mobility patterns, thus making it more difficult for employers to recruit and retain qualified professionals, without also considering the employment prospects for their spouses.

The influx of women in the workplace has increased the possibilities of spouses working together. This is specially so in the development sector, where like-minded people doing similar work get married and begin exploring the possibilities of working in the same organisation, with the view to be able to coordinate their professional commitments and thus maintain a balance in their personal lives.

This factor becomes even more crucial when the family starts expanding and activities like child-care and child-rearing become realities that they have to face in practical everyday situations.

The culture of working late, however, often goes against the sincerity of women employees. This is further highlighted when their male colleagues help them to complete impending tasks. There is a basic assumption that working long hours is a way of showing an employee's sincerity and dedication to the organisation.

However, for women, who have a dual role to play, furthered by concern for their safety

Recommendations

● *Employers need to consider the possibilities of spouses working together in the same organisation. This is an important factor in a) the retention of individuals; b) increased productivity as stress and tensions of coordination between individuals decreases; c) enhanced commitment towards the organisation; d) keeps families intact; and e) improves and strengthens relationships between spouses.*

● *There is a need to develop a formal policy on employment of the spouse, which recognises the organisation's sensitivity towards the importance of personal relationships. The policy should also include norms related to professional relationships between spouses in a supervisor-supervisory relationship, and to minimise the conflicts in professional and personal relationships, resulting in a negative impact on their productivity. The policy should also include strategies that allow flexibility and support of the spouses to each other with regard to work, which will help them in balancing their commitments to the organisation and to the family.*

and security, working late is not always an easy option and as a result, their commitment and sincerity to the job is often undervalued in comparison to their male colleagues. This also reinforces the stereotype that it is women's responsibility to take care of the family front.

Findings

In today's context, organisations are being forced to recognise the fact that married couples are seeking employment together as a strategy to arrive at a work-life balance. There are several advantages to working in the same organisation. These include coordination in timings and travel, an understanding of the workload of each individual, ability to negotiate presence and absence of one or the other individual, possibilities of being transferred together, sharing of domestic roles and responsibilities, etc.

The earlier rigid stance of organisations in not recruiting relatives, including blood relatives, in-laws and spouses, has been relaxed and there is a more liberal attitude to spouses working together. The study reveals that 46 per cent of employers allow spouses to work together in the same organisation. However, none of these organisations had any formal policy in this regard.

Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers

Two women in the same NGO shared their experiences while they were pregnant. None of the men in the organisation had the least inclination about their needs nor were they interested to even find out about the same. This disinterest shown by their male colleagues made the women feel guilty about their pregnancy and hesitant to ask for certain facilities. Though they were not openly denied, their request for facilities/relaxation was perceived as subtle hints that they were overburdened. One woman shared that she overheard someone making a negative comment about the period of rest that she had availed of, and this was something which left her feeling bitter.

The pregnancy period of an employed woman always carries more stress, tension and compromises. This is a special phase in a woman's life and if in her workplace she is made to feel the limitations of her biological state, it is bound to have a negative impact on both her

Recommendations

- **Rest during the day for pregnant woman:**

It is medically advised that during pregnancy, women take a short break of approximately one hour during the day to rest and lie down. Therefore, organisations must be open in not only allowing pregnant women to take a break but also a private space where they can lie down comfortably. In case, there is no space for women to lie down, an alternative option of giving her a comfortable chair may be explored.

- **Relaxation from travel:** Capacities to travel are different for pregnant women and therefore they must be given relaxation from the travel that is demanded by their job. Only travel related to high priority work must be selected, depending upon the condition of pregnant women. It should be ensured that no such travel is encouraged where the women employees face the risk of a miscarriage. Therefore, the mode of transport as well as the place of accommodation must be carefully chosen to take care of the condition of the woman.

- **Special care if attending meetings outside of the office:** If the woman is attending a workshop or residential training programme, the organisers must be informed of her condition as well as her special dietary needs.

- **Warm & caring environment:** Disregard of her condition and unwillingness to give her certain facilities can have a negative impact on a pregnant woman and lower her morale and self esteem. Organisations need to provide a positive and warm environment to pregnant women. Her decision to have a child should not be translated into being a burden on the organisation, nor her reduced productivity be viewed negatively.

- **Breast-feeding breaks:** Organisations need to think of providing adequate facilities so that women can breastfeed their child. This could be in the form of breaks in case the mother brings the infant to the office or the option of going home to breast-feed the child. Several organisations have a breast-feeding policy, which is designed to promote exclusive breast-feeding for the first six months. This has resulted in the period of maternity leave being extended for six months.

- **Flexible hours:** The options of flexible timings, part time or even the facility to work from home can be of great help to a new mother.

A woman in another organisation shared her experience of the treatment she received when she was pregnant. Her work desk, which was on the first floor, was shifted to the ground floor, so that she did not have to climb the stairs on a daily basis. She was not given any physically intensive work. In fact, even if she dropped something on the floor, other colleagues immediately picked it up for her so that she did not even have to bend. Thus, there was consideration shown to her by all staff, leaving her with very pleasant memories of her period of pregnancy in the organisation.

and the child. In fact, bitter experiences during this period tend to live on in the woman's mind and dis-empower her to appreciate her motherhood and ability to create life.

Findings

The data shows that more than 50 per cent of the organisations had facilities for pregnant women/lactating mothers in the form of short periods of rest during the day, relaxation from field-based activities and accommodation in desk-based activities, facilities to have a caretaker for the infant, and breaks to promote and facilitate breastfeeding.

However, some individuals in organisations perceive pregnant women to be burdens, who create an unnecessary fuss about what is termed as a "natural happening". Such perceptions can cause feelings of insecurity and unease in the woman colleague about her condition. This is due to the fact that historically workplaces have been male-dominated, who do not experience this phase of life. As a result, the existing culture finds it difficult to accept pregnant women and working women as two sides of the same coin. Therefore, most organisations had no provisions for support to pregnant women, consider her special needs, and ensure her physical and mental well-being.

Facilities for Parents of Young Children

With the entry of women into the workforce, changing of gender relations, and the metamorphosis in the structure of families from joint to nuclear has created new needs for parents of young children. There may arise occasions or emergencies that necessitate the staff members to spend time with their young children who are in the age group of two to eight years.

These occasions can conflict with working hours and commitments at the staff member's workplace. School-going children also have

the annual summer, autumn and winter breaks, where they stay at home and hence arrangements have to be made that are related to their care. The organisation can play a vital role in providing childcare facilities and support to young parents, specially those belonging to nuclear families.

Findings

The present trend shows that 46 per cent of the organisations are open to their staff bringing their young children (from the age of two to eight years) to the office in case of any emergency or even during school holidays that do not coincide with those of the organisation. Rather than take leave, which may not be possible due to the exigencies of work, parents therefore prefer to bring their child in with them to work. A caretaker often accompanies younger children, with parents checking in on them at regular intervals. This facility is availed by both women and men.

One organisation also provided crèches for the young children. In another organisation, male staff were so sensitive to the needs of their women colleagues that they had taken on the onus of looking after their children when their women colleagues were involved in workshops or field-based programmes.

The facility of bringing young children into the workplace is of immense importance to parents. This benefit reiterates an organisation's

Recommendations

- *Organisations must make institutional arrangements to cater to the needs of staff with young children, so that they can effectively balance their professional and personal commitments. There can be flexible working hours, work from home, part time occupations, etc*
- *Creches, day care centres or even a room designated to child care to provide support to parents of young children*
- *Organisations must promote the message that childcare and domestic responsibilities rest on both parents.*
- *Coordinate with other organisations in the vicinity to set up a crèche, which caters to the children of staff staying in that area.*
- *Make arrangements with nearest day care centre where parents can leave their children.*
- *If the organisation does not have space to support day care centre, it can get in touch with nearest day care centre where on its behalf, employees can send their children.*

commitment to take into account the personal lives of their staff and it also recognises that there will be overlaps and compromises between the home, the family and the workplace. Just as families support and accommodate the needs of working individuals, so must organisations support individuals in their personal capacities as wives/husbands, mothers/fathers, daughters/sons and responsible members of the family.

Policy Against Sexual Harassment

We have already discussed the importance of dealing with sexual harassment at the workplace (SHW). The VISHAKHA guidelines and the upcoming Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace Bill 2007 have made it explicit that it is mandatory on the part of an employer to ensure an environment free from the threat of any kind of sexual harassment and exploitation.

The Supreme Court has mandated every organisation to have a committee to address incidents of sexual harassment in the workplace. However, a committee alone will not solve the issue in its entirety as its presence does not address the issue from the roots. Organisations need to think of a series of steps to address this phenomenon in its varied dimensions. In this context, having a policy will be useful in developing a strategy to deal with sexual harassment in the workplace.

Basically, the policy will consist of a set of coherent decisions with a common long-term purpose to address SHW. These decisions should be based on a definite course of action that is decided upon in the context of the situation, actions and determine not only the present but also how the issue will be dealt with in the future. The decision to address SHW is supported by the action of setting up a committee. The decision to increase awareness on the issue of SWH is translated into a capacity-

building/training plan for the staff. However, more important than policies or committees is the commitment of the organisation, the management and its staff to recognise the importance of this issue in the workplace and pledge to counter it at every step.

While drafting a Policy Against Sexual Harassment, it is essential to keep the following components in mind:

- a commitment to prevent and address sexual harassment;
- a definition of sexual harassment, including both quid pro quo, hostile work environment and human rights violation, citing examples to ensure clarity of the issue;
- an explanation of penalties (including termination) the employer will impose for substantiated sexual harassment conduct;
- a detailed outline of the grievance procedure employees should use;
- a clear statement that anyone found guilty of harassment after investigation will be subject to immediate and appropriate disciplinary action, including dismissal
- a clear understanding and strict rules regarding harassment of or by third parties like clients, customers, etc.
- additional resource or contact persons available for support and consultation;
- an express commitment to keep all sexual harassment complaints and procedures confidential and time bound;
- adequate provisions for training of employees at all levels; and
- an anti-retaliation policy providing protection against retaliation to complainants, witnesses, committee members and other employees involved in prevention and complaints resolution (Raymonds, 2003).

Note: For samples of Policy Against Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, refer to Annexures VI & VII

¹ See Gender Manual: For Civil Society Organisations, PACS Series, Development Alternatives, 2007; Gender Manual: a Practical Guide for Development Policy Makers & Practitioners, DFID 2002, www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/gendermanual.pdf; Incorporating Gender into your NGO- Nicolien Wassenaar, 2006, www.networklearning.org/download/gender.pdf

² www.rcvo.org/questions/faqroles (accessed February 5, 2008)

³ The concept of the critical mass at 30 to 33 per cent or higher is based on the ground breaking research done by Drude Dahlerup of the Aarhus Institute of Political Science in Denmark in 1988. Since then 33 per cent representation is believed to be a minimum critical mass that is required to make any significant influence over the rest of the group.

⁴ <http://humanresources.about.com/od/organizationalculture/a/culture.htm> (accessed February 5, 2008).



SECTION 3

**OPERATIONALISATION
OF A GENDER POLICY**

Operationalising of a Gender Policy

This section of the manual is aimed at helping organisations develop their own Gender Policy, based on their specific context and needs. It also includes illustrative examples for framing various aspects of the policy in the context of the organisational structure. Implementation of the policy is a crucial factor that will take the document beyond an expression on paper to its practice in the spirit in which it was developed. The policy needs to become a guiding resource through which people in the organisation are inspired to make changes in the structure and environment of their workplace. Effective implementation will assure the staff that all change and reform towards building a gender conducive workplace are sensitive to the needs of both men and women. This will ensure that each employee actively works to make the policy a success as it is in their own interest to do so.

Findings

The study shows that 62 per cent of the organisations studied did not have a Gender Policy and neither had they ever felt the need for one.

While 38 per cent of the organisations had a Gender Policy for addressing and promoting gender concerns within the organisations and their programmes, 23 per cent of them organisations reported that they had developed a Gender Policy in compliance with the requirements of their donor agencies and, therefore, the policy was more an exercise on paper, rather than an effort to seriously review the processes and structures of the organisation through a gender lens.

In this context, a Gender Policy has no relevance to any kind of systematic change within the organisation.

It also implies that while the framing of a Policy is important, what is more important is implementation, both within the structure of the organisation and within its programmatic interventions. The formulation of a Policy alone is not sufficient to reflect the actual needs of the organisation and hold no value in bringing about any kind of change.

Prelude to a Gender Policy

There are a few steps that an organisation needs to take as a prelude to the actual framing of a Gender Policy.

Creating the need: An organisation must create the need for a Gender Policy, which addresses such concerns in the organisation, within the Governing Board, the management

and staff at all levels. Very often, the need for such a policy is raised either by the leadership or persons working on gender issues within an organisation, including a gender focal point.

To build up this need, there have to be discussions around the issue of creating a gender sensitive workplace, something that can only be achieved through the development of a Gender Policy. In many cases, there may be several aspects in the functioning of an organisation that are gender sensitive, but these may not have been developed in a systematic manner, taking a holistic view of the structure and functioning of the organisation.

Based on these discussions, a list of issues, concerns and ideas may be developed and prioritised, both in terms of their importance and the ease with which they may be implemented. For example, it may be easier to ensure that women are dropped home safely if they have worked late, as opposed to recruiting more women to create a gender balance in the organisation. Therefore, while both are issues of concern, it is definitely easier to implement the first. Also, a checklist can be prepared for assessing the present status of gender sensitivity in an organisation. This will provide clarity on the issues that need to be focused upon, reflecting the context and needs of an organisation.

Setting up of a task force: Once the need for the policy has been generated and there is an interest in its development, a group of people must be put to the job of actually doing so. This task force should comprise of people from the organisation who can best represent the needs of every section. These could be senior persons, including women, gender persons, representatives of the management, administrative staff, and programme staff. An external resource person, who is familiar with the structure and the functioning of the organisation, can also be invited to provide inputs and advice.

Inviting inputs: The task force must ensure that all processes in the developing of the policy are participatory in nature, instilling a sense of ownership in all proceedings as well as in the final output – the Gender Policy. Small group discussions, focused group discussions, separately with men and women, questionnaires, small surveys, brainstorming at different levels are some ways of achieving this. This will encourage the participation of all staff, lead to valuable insights and information, as well as maintain an atmosphere of interest in the process. Apart from inviting suggestions and ideas, the task force must also share the draft document with the staff,

Principles of a Gender Policy

Recognition: *This principle acknowledges the fact that gender relations are unequal in the larger society and this inequality may also be evident in the systems within an organisation. Recognising this fact can be the starting point for tackling systemic barriers to gender equality.*

Diversity: *This principle recognises that the needs of women and men may not be the same. Hence, policies and programmes may affect men and women differently. Moreover, women and men are not homogenous entities within themselves and may experience different outcomes of various policies and programmes. This diversity needs to be integrated into an organisation's systems and functioning.*

Equality: *Equality implies that for women and men employees to grow and express themselves within an organisation, the organisation must ensure equal opportunities to both.*

Equity: *Specific measures may be required to address systemic disparities between the sexes, including stereotypes and discrimination within the organisation. Equity compensates for unequal opportunities in the present structure with the long-term view of gaining equality.*

Participation and partnership: *Empowering women employees does not mean excluding male staff. Equal participation of men and women as agents of change within organisational processes is essential to achieving gender equality. Hence, the need to establish an active partnership between both women and men that empower both sexes.*

demonstrating the value of their participation.

There are four main steps to putting the Gender Policy into operation. These include:

- Framing of a Gender Policy
- Implementing the Gender Policy
- Monitoring of the Gender Policy
- Reviewing and revising the Gender Policy

A Gender Policy has four main components:

- Policy statement
- Organisational component
- Programme component
- Concluding statement

Framing of a Gender Policy

Policy Statement

The opening statement of a Gender Policy document usually comprises of a few paragraphs, including an introductory statement that puts forth the rationale and the purpose of the Gender Policy. This statement can also be presented in the form of a problem statement. The policy statement also needs to explicitly express the main goals, both at an organisational level as well as the programmatic level. At this point, an organisation may link their vision/ mission statement to the rationale for having a Gender Policy.

Illustrative example of opening statement

The organisation recognises that the unequal gender relations in larger society have an impact on the fulfilment of its objectives. It also recognises that principles of equality and equity are core to its existence and functioning, and these are also reflected in its goals and objectives.

Organisational Component

This section of the policy must reflect the goals that the organisation intends to achieve within its structural components, through the engendering process. The Gender Policy will indicate inequalities in the organisation that it intends to address and the steps towards changing the equation.

Illustrative examples of different components addressed in the policy

Vision/Mission Statements: The organisation's vision/mission statements should be gender specific and not gender-neutral.

Building a Gender Sensitive Work Environment: The organisation is committed to promoting and supporting a gender-sensitive work environment within its head office and its various branch/field offices. Towards achieving this goal, the organisation will organise workshops/seminars, educational events as well as encourage exposure to a variety of other inputs that lead to a gender conducive work environment.

Institutional Leadership: The organisation is committed to ensuring gender equality within its workforce at all levels of the organisation, including the Governing Board. This representation includes a balance not only in numbers but also in positions that reflect the status and authority that an individual holds within society.

Human Resources Policy: All processes of recruitment, induction and retention will be gender sensitive in the following manner:

All advertisements and public notices will explicitly state that the organisation gives preference to women candidates. All interviews panels for staff recruitment in the organisation will be gender balanced. If not, there will be at least one woman on the panel.

Gender Sensitive Service Rules: The systems, policies, norms and other structures, both formal and informal, will be examined and amended from a gender perspective.

The organisation will be committed to developing and/or reviewing its existing policies, systems and procedures to ensure gender sensitivity. At the time of developing and/or reviewing its policies, work-life components will be an integral element. The organisation is also committed to integrating gender indicators into its performance evaluation systems.

Affirmative Action: The organisation commits to taking positive affirmative action towards women in all employment decisions, including recruitment, promotions and capacity building. This will ensure a gender balance in the workplace as well as the inclusion of women in decision-making and other positions of authority and leadership. The Affirmative Action Policy will also integrate components of work life balance, based on the realities of the social context and the vision for an engendered society.

Capacity Building Towards Gender Sensitisation: The organisation is committed towards integrating gender issues into every capacity building programme, both for its own staff as well as for external bodies.

The organisation is committed to building the capacities of its staff in developing a sensitivity towards gender, both within the organisation as well as in their own personal lives. Such events will also include a sharing of various policies, including the Gender Policy, Communications Policy, Sexual Harassment Policy, and Policy for Affirmative Action, to ensure that there is a dissemination of information on the same as well as a reaffirmation of the organisation's concern towards gender issues.

Communication and Publication: The organisation will also ensure that the documentation of the organisation, whether internally driven or for external and public consumption, pays attention to a sensitive addressal and portrayal of gender related issues.

Towards achieving this goal, the organisation will develop a Communication and

Publication Policy, that details related processes of publication in the print media, as well as expected norms of behaviour in other forms of media, including audio-visual and electronic media.

Environment Building: All events/programmes by the organisation, both internal and external, will be examined through a gender lens and address gender specific needs of the participants.

While promoting a gender sensitive work culture, components of a work life balance will also be incorporated, as an essential step in recognising the requirements of both men and women in the redefining of gender roles in their lives.

Gender audits and gender analysis will form a regular and intrinsic part of all mainstreaming efforts.

Policy Against Sexual Harassment: The organisation recognises that the issue of sexual harassment within the workforce has a profound effect on an individual and hinders her/his active participation and contribution. Through the committee, mandated by law, the organisation will also address complaints relating to sexual harassment made by staff members, guests and participants in workshops, etc. The organisation will be responsible to set up structures, where staff members may feel free to seek redressal of their complaints.

All new staff members shall be oriented to the Policy against Sexual Harassment, the definitions of sexual harassment, the roles and functions of the committee that has been set up to address complaints of sexual harassment within the organisation.

Programme Component

This component of the policy must state that gender elements will be integrated into all stages of a programme cycle.

Illustrative example

The organisation will set up systems to ensure that gender equity forms an essential element of all project planning, implementation and monitoring, with specific indicators to measure the progress that has taken place. All reports and evaluations will also include a specific focus on the gender component. Similar interventions will be ensured with partners so that all collaborative programmatic interventions are gender just and equitable.

The identification of issues and problems within the organisation will focus on the gender differences and disparities wherever they exist.

Concluding Statement

The concluding statement of this document usually has a reference to implementing, monitoring, allocating resources and the reviewing mechanism of the policy itself.

Illustrative example: Monitoring the Gender Policy

The organisation is committed to establishing adequate accountability mechanisms for monitoring of progress within the structure of the organisation and in its programmatic interventions.

The leadership and senior management will be responsible for ensuring the monitoring of the implementation of the Gender Policy through a series of well-defined steps that are integrated into the overall system.

Resource allocation: The organisation will ensure the allocation of resources for achieving gender equality in programmatic interventions through its organisational processes.

Reviewing and revising the Gender Policy: The organisation will be committed to reviewing and revising its Gender Policy. Towards this end, there will be an annual internal review while an external review will be held every three years.

Implementation of Gender Policy

Once the organisation has framed the Gender Policy and it has been mandated by the Board, its implementation will involve a series of actions that not only enforce its purpose but reinforce the spirit behind the objectives of the policy.

Given below are some illustrative steps that need to be followed to enforce a Gender Policy. Many of the steps follow a sequence, but some of them will have to be undertaken simultaneously to maximise its positive impact within other systems of the organisation.

Dissemination of Information on the Gender Policy

Once the policy has been accepted as an integral part of the system, the first step is wide circulation of the document. All staff must read and discuss the policy, so that there is a collective understanding of its contents and the implications it has on their workplace. Questions should be answered and clarifications sought on any area of the policy over which there may be specific concerns. It is

essential that the staff have a thorough understanding of the policy if they are expected to act upon it in their daily lives in the organisation.

The policy should also be shared with all partners, donors, government officials and other stakeholders with whom the organisation has collaborations and links. It can be disseminated through e-mail, or put on the website (if any), or published in the annual report/other publications.

Expand and revise other relevant policies and rules

While the process of dissemination of the policy is underway, there is a need to simultaneously create new policies and norms as well as review and revise existing ones to make them more gender sensitive.

Some of the following points should be kept in mind while executing change:

Revising Vision/Mission statements: The vision/mission statements of an organisation communicate the goals for itself and larger society. Organisations need to re-examine such statements for gender specificity and inclusion.

Revising HR Policies: A gender sensitive HR policy in an organisation is essential to furthering the cause of gender equality within the workplace. The processes of recruitment, induction/orientation and retention need to be reviewed from a gender lens to ensure that they are effective in achieving adequate gender balance.

Service Rules: Revisions should be formulated in such a way that there is a focus on following a legal framework as well as developing an equitable work life balance for both men and women in the organisation.

- Adequate provisions for **leave** must be provided following the laws of the land, including maternity and paternity leave. The organisation may further include additional benefits, which enhance their efficacy apart from including areas of specific relevance. For example, maternity benefits under the service rules may incorporate policies/facilities related to leave during miscarriage, facilities and amenities for pregnant women, breast-feeding norms, extra leave for parents of very young children, etc.

- **Travel rules** should adequately cover the safety and security of women during travel as well as their accommodation and other stay arrangements.

- **Working hours** may formalise aspects like flexible hours, part-time and full-time employ-

ment, work from home, etc. These norms may be introduced in phases, based on the context and needs of the organisation. It is possible that all norms may not be relevant to all staff, e.g., field workers may already have flexible hours and therefore a system may be developed where staff in the main office may avail of flexible hours. However, the case of the former can also be formalised, if not already so.

- Provision of **basic amenities**, including clean drinking water, hygienic work spaces, separate and clean toilets for both men and women. All these go towards making the working hours comfortable and convenient for all staff members

- Most organisations have a **code of conduct**, either formal or informal, which stipulates acceptable as well as unacceptable norms of behaviour. This needs to be reviewed and gender sensitive clauses need to be incorporated. For example the code of conduct might ban smoking and consumption of alcohol in the workplace, which may be appropriate and relevant given the context of the organisation. Yet, it may also be useful to add a clause that states that misbehaviour with women, use of gender discriminatory language and behaviour are all liable to strict action and penalties. The code of conduct needs to be formalised, so that it ensures that all staff is aware of the expected standards of behaviour.

- The **work culture and environment** needs to encourage a deeper interaction and team building between the female and male staff towards building gender sensitive working relationships. To support such conditions, organisations can also promote informal get-togethers, including celebrating festivals, national events picnics, retreats, birthdays, etc.

- Introducing **mechanisms to address issues of sexual harassment**. The law has mandated that organisations appoint a committee to take preventive measures and also function as a redressal mechanism in incidents related to sexual harassment. Administration and human resource divisions need to collaborate with this committee and coordinate all efforts in bringing about a gender sensitive work culture and environment. This can be in terms of gender balance within the workplace, providing basic amenities as well as a safe working environment, with a strictly enforced code of conduct.

- **Other major policies** that can be developed/improved upon from a gender perspective include the Communications and Publication Policy, Policy Against Sexual Harassment, etc.

Appoint gender focal person

Recruiting a gender expert or alternatively designating this role to an existing staff person will help in maintaining the focus of gender in all contexts of the organisation and avoiding the dilemma regarding the commitment of time. The designated person can be given support in building a small team from amongst the staff to identify gender issues, as well strategies to address them.

Alternatively, the Committee Against Sexual Harassment can also be asked to perform this function.

Develop a capacity building plan for gender sensitisation

The HR in coordination with the gender focal point/gender team/committee should develop a year-long plan for the capacity building for all staff, committee member/gender focal persons, etc. Capacity building with a specific focus on gender sensitivity is a vital element in helping the organisation reach its goals of mainstreaming gender.

Such interventions will not only create a positive environment for individuals to view gender issues as a collective, but provide an opportunity to examine their own personal views and behaviour from a more gendered perspective.

The year-long programme may not be a very elaborate or exhaustive plan of action. It can comprise three or four workshops in the entire year for the whole staff; it can additionally plan to send Committee members, gender focal points, key administrative staff to specific training programmes to increase their awareness on gender issues as well as learn from the experiences of other organisations.

Allocating resources

By allocating resources in terms of financial, human and time, the organisation's commitment towards gender equity, equality and sensitive practice will be ensured. Resources should be utilised for in-house training for staff, hiring of specialised resource persons and for practical implementation of a gender sensitive Human Resource policy. Apart from these, an organisation can utilise its resources in developing and implementing engendered financial guidelines, service rules, instructions and policies. Tools and methods should also be developed for accessing gender-related investments at all levels. The organisation must set aside resources to track all qualitative and quantitative information on gender related expenditure.

Support of top level

Towards the effective implementation of the policy, it would be crucial to enlist the support of the top level, viz. Board Members, senior management and other key personnel who have a standing or say in the organisation. This support could be elicited in terms of getting advice and feedback on findings, suggestions and recommendations from staff, experts and other resource persons. The advice of these senior and key persons would be useful in the context of obtaining a holistic perspective of the culture and environment, the public image of the organisation as well as current organisational framework.

Well developed time line

It is important that all the stages and processes of change be reflected in a well developed time line. The time line would include not only dates for initiating and completion of tasks but designating responsibilities for the same to different persons. The process of change is time consuming and slow, and if results are not clearly visible, the momentum created loses its impact. However, if the staff can clearly visualise and are periodically reminded of the impending changes, it keeps up the interest. For example, staff should be aware of when the gender committee will be established, when the travel rules are going to get revised, when it is predicted that the organisation will reach its goal of having a gender balance within the organisation.

Monitoring the Gender Policy

Monitoring and accountability at all levels, especially at senior level, would ensure sustainability of gender mainstreaming within the organisation. Steps taken to ensure this are:

Sex disaggregated data: For strategic planning, updated sex disaggregated data should be available which is able to identify specific areas with the organisation as well as factors responsible for an imbalance within the staff.

Assigning responsibility: Responsibility for effective implementation of Gender Policy needs to adopt a top-down approach. Different persons should be deputed to implement different aspects of gender mainstreaming within the organisation.

Leadership and senior management: For gender sensitive changes in the work culture, commitment and support from the leadership and senior management is crucial with well-defined responsibilities and expected results for gender parity at all levels.

Gender related issues are heard and taken up on a priority basis in organisations that have appointed gender focal persons. The gender focal person can be a full time appointed staff for the specific job or a gender sensitive person within the organisation. At times, the committee formed to address sexual harassment at workplace can also take up other issues related to gender. Relevant investment should be made by organisations in terms of developing their skills.

Supervisors: Supervisors who are aware of the components of Gender Policy and strive to promote them will have a positive effect on the employment conditions of the staff. Sensitive supervisors would play a major role in creating a gender sensitive work culture.

Annual performance appraisals: One of the indicators for the annual performance appraisal should be gender sensitivity of staff, whereby the organisation can ascertain the need for further capacity building of specific persons and teams within the organisation as a whole.

Annual reporting: The reporting system of the organisation must have well developed internal review systems, including pre-determined indicators, to assess engendering of the organisation as well as its programmes.

Reviewing and Revising the Gender Policy

The framing of a Gender Policy and setting the mechanisms for its implementation is not a one-time process. To ensure improved and relevant gender sensitive practices, in-house workshops should be conducted to understand organisational concerns from the perspective of the staff. Gender audits must be conducted to build up gender sensitive indicators for further development. Building upon areas of concerns as recommended by external consultant and internal staff, strategic collaborated efforts should be made at all levels.

Organisations need to express a commitment to have periodic gender audits to review the implementation and success of gender concerns within the organisation. Along with periodic gender audits of the organisation, it is essential to have frequent reviews of the Gender Policy.

Changes in society should be reflected in the norms of the workplace and hence a review of the Gender Policy would reveal the need for changes to correlate with the changes in socie-

ty. Paternity leave is a very good example of the need to review the Gender Policy and incorporate necessary changes.

In conclusion, it can be said that the Gender Policy is not a mere document by which change can be incorporated within the organisation. It is a powerful tool, which if used effectively, can demonstrate positive changes in not only the structures of the organisation but in the very thinking, attitudes, behaviour and working culture of people that are the core of any organisation. The Gender Policy is an embodiment of the commitment of the organisation to include the needs and concerns of men and women within their workplace and also to effect changes that contribute in posi-

A Gender Audit of an organisation follows similar procedures as a financial or physical audit. In simple terms, a gender audit would examine the existing reality of different aspects of the organisation from a gender perspective. The process would assess the ways and means by which the organisation has created conditions which are conducive to gender equality in different dimensions of its structure, operations, as well as its culture and environment. The audit would then point out the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation, as well give recommendations for further improvement (PRIA, 2005).

tive measures to their personal lives and fulfilment of their own goals and objectives. The Gender Policy in a workplace has far reaching consequences of impacting and bringing about a change in the very fabric of society, moving towards a gender equitable and gender just way of life.

Checklist for Assessing an Organisation's Gender Sensitivity

Vision/Mission Statements

- Does the organisation have a gender specific mission arising out of its vision?
- Does the organisation have gender specific objectives in relation to its overall mission?
- Does the vision and mission recognise the power inequalities between men and women? If yes, what are those inequalities?

Organisational Leadership

Governing Board

- What is the percentage of women on the Governing Board?
 - 33% of the total membership

- 50% or above?
- below 33%

- Are the women represented in the Governing Board of independent stature and repute? Is the Chairperson/ Secretary a woman?
- Do women on the Board hold executive positions?

Leadership

- Is the leadership of the organisation male or female? Is there a strategy to identify and recruit a competent woman to the post of the Chief Executive Officer as and when the post falls vacant?
- Are women within the organisation being groomed to take up the second line of leadership?

Top Management

- What is the percentage of women in the top management of the organisation?

Informal Culture

- Is the informal culture sensitive to the presence of women?

Code of Conduct

- Is the written or informal code of conduct communicated to all staff?
- What are the main aspects of the code of conduct?

Basic Amenities

- Toilets: Common/separate
- Hygienic environment
- Comfortable seating arrangements
- Clean drinking water

Informal Spaces for Staff

- Does the organisation encourage and promote informal space for the staff to interact with each other? List these

Human Resources

Recruitment

- What is the percentage of men and women in the organisation?
- Is this balance evenly distributed across the organisation?
- Do recruitment and selection policies facilitate women's recruitment? How?
- Does the organisation have specific staff with gender expertise?

Induction and Orientation

- Has the organisation communicated its commitment, systems and culture regarding gender to the new staff?

- Is the staff aware of specific policies with regard to sexual harassment, misconduct and the penalties involved for violation of the same?

Retention

- Does the organisation have specific strategies to retain women staff?
- What are these?

Formal Systems/Service Rules

Leave

- Does the organisation provide leave as per the law of the land?
- Does the leave provided have a relation to work-life balance?

Travel

- Does the organisation have a gender sensitive policy towards travel arrangements for women staff? Does the organisation ensure the safety and security of women in different contexts and situations, while representing the organisation?

Working Hours

- Is there a culture of working overtime in the office? Do more men or more women stay back late to work?

Career Planning

- Does the organisation have a specific strategy on building the skills of women?
- Is there a projected plan for person power for the future of the organisation – annual plan or five-year plan?

Other Policies

Capacity building on sexual harassment

- Has the organisation undertaken the building of gender sensitivities of the committee members?
- Has the organisation undertaken the building of gender sensitivities of the entire staff on sexual harassment?

Capacity building on gender

- Does the organisation structure institutional learning on gender?
- What are the procedures and mechanisms in the organisation to facilitate discussions on gender issues?
- Are there mechanisms to reflect on and learn from achievements in relation to gender issues?
- Do staff receive training on gender issues as part of the learning to change attitude, behaviour and enhance skill?

Communication

- How do communication channels flow in the organisation? Does it promote, exchange, dialogue, and criticise gender issues both within and outside of the organisation? ?
- Is the organisation's internal and external communication gender sensitive?

Pregnant women/lactating mothers

- Do the working arrangements of the organisation take into account women's reproductive roles?
- Do the working arrangements of the organisation enable combination of work with reproduction/caring responsibilities outside the workplace (part time employment, flexible working hours)?
- Are there special facilities made available to pregnant women?
- Does the organisation have a breast-feeding policy?

Parents of young children

- Do the working arrangements of the organisation take into account women and men's caring responsibilities outside the workplace (part time work, childcare while at work, etc)?

Spouse employment

- Does the organisation have any strategy for spouses working together?

Policy Against Sexual Harassment

- Does the organisation have commitment to address the issue of sexual harassment at the workplace?
- Is there a committee to deal with sexual harassment?
- Does the organisation demonstrate gender sensitive behaviour in terms of language used, materials displayed, and procedures on sexual harassment?

Framing a Gender Policy

- Does the organisation have any Gender Policy?
- Is the organisation well informed about gender issues in the context of the external world?

Implementing a Gender Policy

- Is there commitment throughout the organisation to implement a Gender Policy?
- Does the organisation have mechanisms of coordinating a Gender Policy within the organisation? Are there resources (financial and human) allocated to carry out gender programmes?

Monitoring the Gender Policy

- Do the terms of reference for any assessment address the impact of gender issues on men and women at the organisational level?
- Does the organisation document its learning in relation to gender practices and make this information available to other institutions?
- Does the organisation reward or value gender sensitive behaviour?

Reviewing and Revising the Gender Policy

- Does the organisation have mechanisms to sense the environment and change the situation wherever necessary? Does the organisation have a system, and does its staff have skills for identifying problems, analysing options and taking relevant decisions concerning gender issues?

Programmes

- Do the organisation's strategies of intervention emphasise upon women-specific, men specific or mixed activities?
- How are the programmes planned? Are women and men consulted? Have women in the communities influenced the choices made?

Quick Checklist for Gender Mainstreaming

- *Responsibility for implementing a gender perspective, developing a gender strategy and achieving gender equality and equity rests within the top management and permeates the entire system;*
- *Integrating a gender perspective into all programme planning cycles, including the analysis development, appraisal, implementation, monitoring and evaluation policies, programmes and projects;*
- *Using sex-disaggregated data in statistical analysis to reveal how policies impact differently on women and men;*
- *Increasing the numbers of women in decision-making positions within the organisation;*
- *Providing tools and training in gender awareness, gender analysis and gender planning to decision-makers, senior managers and other key personnel;*
- *Adequate accountability mechanisms for monitoring progress need to be established; and*
- *Allocation of adequate resources for mainstreaming, including additional financial and human resources for translation of the concept into practice.*

- How are the programmes and projects delivered by the organisation affecting women and men?

- Do women value the programmes and interventions? Are they involved in monitoring and impact assessment processes to assess any change the development intervention intends or is intending on their lives?

Conclusion

Organisations exist in the real world and as such mirror all of the dominant ideologies that exist there especially in regard to gender roles and relations. Within most organisations, there exist a sexual division of labour, which reflect what exists in the society beyond the organisation. The unequal gender relations and dynamics that are present in society are bound to find a place within the structure of organisations.

More often than not the structures, systems and policies of organisations focus on the needs of men rather than those of women. The workplace has been the male bastion and it is not open to the inclusion of women in these spaces, and more so those which are positions of power. This situation reflected in all sectors and the voluntary sector is not exempt. Though the voluntary sector takes a keen interest in the development and empowerment of women in their programmatic interventions, these issues have not been addressed closer home, within the organisation itself.

Many of the changes introduced by organisations are not sustainable as they do not take into account the multiple roles that women play and the efforts they make in balancing their personal as well as professional lives. Therefore, gender equations remain at a status quo and organisations find themselves grappling with issues of women's inclusion and retention in the workplace. While organisations have included women as a part of their workforce, they largely remain lower down in the ranks. Organisations have not been able to develop strategies that are powerful enough to retain women, give them leadership and decision making roles, or even break the barriers that have a negative impact on their work life balance. The workplace in the voluntary sector still remains dominated by men, the culture, norms and policies focus more on the contexts of men. Very often so called supportive measures and benefits given to women in reality reinforce stereotyped images and roles of both the sexes.

Organisations have a policy, which supports women leaving the office on time and do not insist that they stay back late even to complete important tasks. They recognise that women need to go home to domestic chores. What however they fail to understand is that when men stay on late to complete the tasks of women colleagues, it reinforces the image of women being primarily responsible for roles within the home, while men are responsible for roles that are in the public domain and related to earning of income. Therefore even when this male colleague has a working wife who needs to work late, he is unable to give her the support and once again it is the woman who is responsible for the home.

This same image is reinforced when some organisations give women an additional Saturday off in the month, which is to catch up with their domestic chores, tend to children, attend parent teacher meetings and other roles specific to women in our social context. Organisations take a pride in their "positive action" to support women, never analysing the long term consequences of such a policy. Men in the organisation leading projects related to women's empowerment would still continue to perceive of them in the same framework as they do their own colleagues and women within their families. The image does not change, the attitude does not change and virtually nothing changes.

Organisations find themselves grappling with issues of recruitment and retention of women. They are not able to comprehend that in spite of all the facilities being offered to women, they are unable to motivate them to stay on. Organisations now need to address the more difficult issues of how systems can be improved which supports both men and women and not address only needs of specific women. The question that organisations frequently ask is from where should change begin? Where does gender need to be integrated into the organisation?

Gender is a cross-cutting issue and its integration the implementation will require the commitment, participation and contribution of every staff member, starting right from the top. Gender perspectives will need to be reflected in work plans and budgeting, as well as in the programmatic activities of the organisation. Gender will need to be reflected in the formal structures as well as the informal work environment of the organisation, the habits of its

staff, the facilities that it provides its staff.

Development of a Gender Policy is one of the ways to begin. This will clearly outline the intentions of the management to promote gender mainstreaming efforts in different facets of the organisational structure. These intentions will then translate into practical realities of norms, policies, practices and activities, both formal and informal, within the workplace and give way to the engendered workplace.

However, a policy which focuses only on the structure within the organisation will in itself not lead to the vision of the ultimate workplace, a space for men and women to realise their potential and fulfill their dreams. To reach this ideal situation, organisations need to consider the lives that men and women have outside their workspaces and understand the impact that these spaces have on the individual and affect their functioning. Work-life balance is an important concept for any organisation and more so in the voluntary sector. If organisations recognise and support the fact that men too need to take an active part in reproductive roles including caring and sharing, the structure of the organisation will not allow men to stay on late in the office. If organisations promote the image of men having responsibilities as fathers, they will not recall them to work on paternity leave, nor will men feel the pressure to conform to stereotypical images of their roles.

For us in this sector, we too must accept the fact that women have joined the workforce and are here to stay. As we all value the work and contributions of women in the process of development and their importance in our organisations, we must make efforts to sustain their presence and maximise their potential. At the same time, we also need to include men as partners and not competitors, in these processes of change and adaptation.

Very often the question that organisations ask is "For how long must we make these changes and for how long should we accommodate the needs of women?"

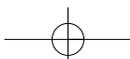
The answer is very simple. For as long as it takes for women to get equal rights, for as long as it takes for men to fully share the roles of women both in the home, in society and the workplace, for as long as it takes for women to be safe in her different environments – this is for how long we will have to take measures to ensure the participation and inclusion of women in all spheres of life.

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ANNEXURES



Annexure I

List of organisations that participated in the study

- 1 People's Action for National Integration (PANI), Faizabad, Uttar Pradesh
- 2 Uttar Pradesh, Voluntary Action Network (UPVAN), Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh
- 3 Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti (GRAVIS), Jodhpur, Rajasthan
- 4 Uttar Rajasthan Milk Union Limited. Trust (URMUL) Rural Health Research and Development Trust, Bikaner, Rajasthan
- 5 National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha's of India, Delhi
- 6 National Foundation for India (NFI), Delhi
- 7 Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA), Nagpur, Maharashtra
- 8 Chetana Vikas, Wardha, Maharashtra
- 9 Centre for Community Economics and Development Consultants Society (CECODECON), Jaipur, Rajasthan
- 10 Disha Social Organization, Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh
- 11 SAMBANDH, Bhubaneshwar, Orissa
- 12 Utkal Sewa Samaj (USS), Cuttack, Orissa
- 13 National Youth Service Action & Social Development Research Institute (NYSASDRI), Dhenkanal, Orissa

Annexure II

Milestones in the Advancement of Women since International Women's Year

Year	Achievement
1975	Establishment of International Women's Year by the General Assembly (Goals: Equality, Development and Peace) The World Conference of the International Women's Year (Mexico City) Adoption of the Plan of Action Committee on the Status of Women in India
1976	Proclamation of the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985) by the General Assembly
1979	The 34th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations Adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women supported gender mainstreaming and promoted equality between women and men which was adopted by UN General Assembly in 1979 as international bill of rights for women.
1980	World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women (Copenhagen) Adoption of the Program of Action for the second half of the United Nations Decade for Women
1981	Regional Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting for Asia and the Pacific for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women (Tokyo)
1985	World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women (Goals: Equality, Development and Peace)(Nairobi)
1990	The 34th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women Adoption of the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
1994	Second Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Women in Development (Jakarta) Adoption of the Jakarta Declaration for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific
1995	The Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing) Adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Over 30,000 women's rights advocates attended the Conference and made a substantial difference in conference outcomes. This platform focused on effective implementation of Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and on removing all obstacles in women's active participation in all spheres of life.

Annexure III

What Constitutes Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexually determined behaviour such as physical advances, requests for sexual favours and other visual, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Whether or not a particular action or behaviour constitutes sexual harassment is determined by the effect on the recipient, independent of the intention of the perpetrator.

Verbal	Non-verbal	Visual	Physical Contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ derogatory comments of a sexual nature or based on gender ■ sexual or gender-based jokes or teasing ■ comments about clothing, personal behaviour, or a person's body ■ requesting sexual favours ■ pressure for dates ■ graphic descriptions of pornography ■ obscene phone calls ■ telling lies or spreading rumours about a person's personal or sex life ■ turning work discussions to sexual topics (using "puns") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ staring ■ sizing up a person's body (looking up and down) ■ derogatory gestures of a sexual nature ■ sexually suggestive looks ■ facial expressions of a sexual nature; winking, licking lips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ presence of sexual visual material, such as posters, cartoons, drawings, calendars, pinups, pictures, computer programmes of a sexual nature ■ written material that is sexual in nature, such as notes or e-mail containing sexual comments ■ knick-knacks and other objects of a sexual nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ sexual touching or kissing ■ standing too close to or brushing up against another person, leaning over, invading a person's space ■ patting, stroking, grabbing or pinching ■ blocking someone's path with the purpose of making a sexual advance ■ stalking ■ rape or attempted rape ■ actual or attempted sexual assault, or forced fondling

Form of sexual harassment

Quid pro Quo is seeking sexual favours or advances in exchange for work benefits and it occurs when consent to sexually explicit behaviour or speech is made a condition for employment or refusal to comply with a 'request' is met with retaliatory action such as dismissal, demotion, difficult work conditions.

Hostile work environment is more pervasive form of sexual harassment involving work conditions or behaviour that make the work environment 'hostile' for the woman to be in. Certain sexist remarks, display of pornography or sexist/obscene graffiti, physical contact/brushing against female employees are some examples of hostile work environment, which are not made conditions for employment.

Annexure IV

Supreme Court Guidelides On Sexual Harassment, 14 August 1997

These Supreme Court Guidelines are legally binding and must be enforced.

What Is Sexual Harassment?

The Supreme Court Judgement of 14 August 1997 contains Guidelines prohibiting sexual harassment. As defined in the Guidelines: "Sexual Harassment includes such unwelcome sexually determined behaviour such as:

- a) Physical contact
- b) A demand or request for sexual favours
- c) Sexually coloured remarks
- d) Showing pornography

Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature."

Who Do These Guidelines Apply To?

It is the duty of the employer or other responsible persons in s or other institutions to prevent sexual harassment and to provide procedures for resolution of complaints. Women who either draw a regular salary, receive an honorarium, or work in a voluntary capacity in the government; private sector or unorganised sector come under the purview of these guidelines.

Preventive Steps

Must be undertaken by employers or other responsible authorities in public or private sectors as follows:

- a) Express prohibition of sexual harassment should be notified and circulated.
- b) Prohibition of sexual harassment should be included in the rules and regulations of government and public sector bodies.
- c) Private employers should include prohibition of sexual harassment in the standing orders under the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946.
- d) Appropriate work conditions should be provide for 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.

Complaints Procedure

- a) Must provide a Complaints Committee headed by a woman and not less than half of its members should be women.
- b) Complaints Committee should include an NGO or other organisation that is familiar with the issue of sexual harassment.
- c) Complaints procedure must be time bound.
- d) Confidentiality of the complaint procedure has to be maintained.
- e) Complaints or witnesses should not be victimised or discriminated against while dealing with complaints.
- f) The committee should make an annual report to the government department concerned of the complaints and the action taken by them.

Disciplinary Action

- a) When the offence amounts to misconduct under service rules, appropriate disciplinary action should be initiated.
- b) When such conduct amounts to an offence under the Indian Penal Code, the employer shall initiate action by making a complaint with the appropriate authority.
- c) The victims of sexual harassment should have the option to seek transfer of the perpetrator or their own transfer.

Other Provisions Of The Guidelines

- a) Sexual harassment should be affirmatively discussed at worker's meetings, employer-employees meetings and other appropriate forums.
- b) Guidelines should be prominently notified to create awareness of the right of female employers.
- c) The employers should assist persons affected in cases of sexual harassment by outsiders or third parties.

Central and State governments are required to adopt measures including legislation to ensure that private employers also observe guidelines.

Annexure V

Terms of Reference for Committee Against Sexual Harassment

I. The Structure of Committee

(a) **Constitution:** A total of six persons representing the different levels and centres of the organisation would constitute the Committee. A gender balance should be ensured when constituting the Committee. The Chairperson of the Committee should be a woman. While the Core group of the Committee should be small, in order to ensure better functioning and coordination, an option would be left open for the Committee to establish/ appoint/ invite other members from organisation to form Referral Groups as and when required.

(b) **Core Group:**

- Institutional Core Group – 1 person
- Management Support Staff - 2 persons
- Programme Staff - 2 persons
- External Advisor – 1 person

(Note: There should be representation from every category listed above, though the numbers in each may change depending upon the availability of persons in the organisation, who meet the selection criteria.)

Membership Criteria: Members of the Core Group should have been in the organisation for a minimum of two years. The members selected to join the Committee should be mature, should have a clear understanding of gender issues, and should be able to work in a collective and inclusive manner.

Tenure of Committee: The Core Group of the Committee will have a tenure of two years. After this two-year period a review will be undertaken to assess the work of the Committee with a view to move it ahead to a new scope of work. The next Committee can then build on this assessment exercise.

Of the six members of the Committee only one-third of them should be replaced to lend continuity to the efforts of the group. Only in exceptional circumstances should more members be replaced.

II. Functions for Committee

The functions of the Committee have broadly been divided into three categories:

- Institutional,
- Internal, and
- External.

Institutional Functions:

- **Staff Polices** to ensure that all staff policies, service rules and regulations of the organisation are gender sensitive. Periodic reviews of the same would be done through a gender lens to ensure gender sensitivity. The Committee would also ensure that these policies are in line with updated government provisions, which the organisation follows (Shops and Establishment Act).
- **Recruitment & Induction:** All interviews for staff recruitment in the organisation will have women equal represented on the interview panel interviewers. The organisation would have a gender sensitive recruitment policy where preference would be given to women candidates in appointments.
- All new staff members joining the organisation shall be oriented to the organisations Gender Policy and the role and functions of the Committee within the organisation.
- **Performance Reviews:** All performance review forms of individuals by self or supervisors/peers/subordinates will have indicators to assess gender sensitivity in the overall performance.
- The organisation would be committed to creating and promoting a gender sensitive work environment within the organisation and its various branch/field offices. Towards achieving this goal, it would organise regular workshops/seminars and exposure to a variety of other inputs regularly. All organised events/programmes, both internal and external, of the organisation will have a gender component and address gender specific needs of the participants.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Through the Committee, the organisation would also act as a CASH and address complaints relating to sexual harassment made by staff members, guests, and participants to workshops etc. The organisation shall be responsible to set up structures where staff members may feel free to seek redressal of their complaints.
- **Documentation of Processes and Dissemination:** The organisation would also ensure a detailed documentation

of all the processes related to the activities on the issues of gender within the organisation. These would be accessible to all those who wish to use the same to promote and strengthen gender equality within their work spheres. These would also be reported in the organisation's Newsletter and Website regularly.

● **Programmatic Intervention:** The Committee would set up systems to ensure that all project proposals have a specific gender component within them, as well as specific indicators to measure the progress that has taken place with respect to the same. All reports and evaluations must also include the focus on the gender component. Similar interventions will be ensured with partners in order that they include a gender component in all their programmatic intervention in collaboration with the organisation. Budgets and quarterly and annual reports all address the gender component in their projects. A checklist could be devised by the Committee for the same, which will act as guidelines for the different programmes of the organisation to keep a track of their activities vis-à-vis gender component. The organisation would also develop some indicators based on gender for the projects and programmes.

Internal Functions:

The Committee will work with the organisation staff (Head office and field/branch offices) to create a gender sensitive environment and approach towards personal and professional life.

● **Workshops/Seminars:** The Committee will ensure that internal training programmes and exposure to a variety of other inputs for entire staff takes place regularly and at least once a quarter with assistance from an external facilitator, if necessary. The Committee will also be responsible for setting up teams/referral groups within the organisation, which will coordinate and facilitate these processes. The Committee shall also ensure that a similar process is initiated in the Branch as well as field Offices. These workshops could be of two kinds:

- Experiential workshops relating to the issue of understanding gender in the context of our personal lives and our professional roles in the organisation.
- Knowledge Building Workshops/meetings to understand and learn about the range of work being done on gender either through studies or other activities, by other organisations as well as by different programme centers of the organisation.

● **CASH:** The Committee will also address complaints relating to sexual harassment made by staff members. The Committee shall be responsible to set up structures where staff members may feel free to seek redressal of their complaints. The staff members can speak to Committee members (either individually / collectively), write to the committee and/or use the complaint box/suggestion box which can be put in an area, which is private yet accessible to all.

● **Research/Studies:** The Committee once a year would take up a gender related issue, which is of concern or importance within the organisation or the sector, and undertake a study/research project, which may then be shared at a larger level. The issues to be taken up may vary ranging from organisation's/sector requirement, concerns, needs of staff from a gender perspective. The Committee, in collaboration with programme centres/ partners would initiate the study.

● **Documentation of Processes and Dissemination:** The Committee will ensure that a detailed documentation of all the processes related to the activities on issues of gender within the organisation is maintained. This would be accessible to all the members of the organisation and all others who may wish to use the same to promote gender equality within their work spheres.

A monthly update of the activities of the Committee, including minutes of CASH meetings held would be made available in a file, which shall be kept in the Library.

It will also ensure that the activities of the Committee are reported in the organisation's Newsletter and Website regularly.

External Functions:

Initiating Similar Processes with other Organisations: The Committee will help initiate a programme with partners to facilitate a similar process within their own organisations. The Committee will play a catalytic role in initiating such a Committee with partner organisations, though not necessarily be engaged in the process itself.

The Committee would also be a key focal point for Gender and represent the organisation at different fora to share the experience of the Committee.

III. Mechanism for the Committee

- The Committee will meet at least once in a month. These meetings will be a forum to discuss programmes to be conducted, review of progress on the plans made, linkages with inter Centres, linkages with the organisation's partners and other areas and issues that may emerge.
 - Emergency meetings shall be called whenever necessary but a minimum of four members of the Committee should be present to take any decision.
 - The Committee should liaise with the President on the activities on a regular basis and discuss the direction that the Committee is taking.
 - If necessary the Committee shall meet with the Board once a year and/or prepare a detailed report on the activities of the programme, highlighting the strategies and focus of the annual plans.
- In order to enable the members to undertake the functions of the Committee properly, a minimum of two days will be allotted for the Committee work in a month. Those who work on programmes developed by the Committee, will book their time on those programmes separately.

Annexure VI

ActionAid International- India's Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy¹

I. Introduction

It is a core goal principle of ActionAid International-India (hereinafter referred to as "AAI-India") to ensure gender equality and gender justice through all of AAI-India interventions and practices. In keeping with this principle, it is important to ensure an organisational climate free from discrimination and harassment with a particular focus on sexual harassment. Sexual harassment of employees occurring in the workplace or in other settings in which employees may find themselves in connection with their employment is unlawful and will not be tolerated by this organisation[@]. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is similarly unacceptable and will not be tolerated. To achieve this goal, the conduct that is described as "Sexual Harassment" in this policy will not be tolerated and we have provided a procedure by which inappropriate conduct will be dealt with, if encountered among employees.

AAI-India will also take all the appropriate steps necessary to protect staff from retaliation. Such Ateps include:

- Action to stop retaliatory behaviour
- Providing required security measures
- Counselling help to Complainant and Accused

AAI-India takes allegations of sexual harassment seriously, and will respond promptly to complaints of sexual harassment and where it is determined that such inappropriate conduct has occurred, prompt and appropriate corrective action as is necessary, including disciplinary action, will be taken.

While this policy sets forth our goals of promoting a workplace that is free of sexual harassment, the policy is not designed or intended to limit the authority of AAI-India to discipline or take remedial action for workplace conduct which we deem unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of sexual harassment.

II Scope of the Policy

This policy shall extend to all Staff of AAI-India and project partners and includes external incidents involving such staff.

III. Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy:

"Staff" shall mean any person employed by AAI-India including AAI-India associates whether full-time, part-time, temporary, voluntary, seconded, contracted or casual and also researchers, trainees, consultants and employees of project partners.

"NGOs" for the purposes of this policy means any non-governmental organisation operating on a secular non-profit basis and involved in work concerning gender justice.

"Sexual harassment" includes any unwelcome sexually determined behaviour (whether direct or by implication) such as physical contact and advances, either physical or non-physical:

- (i) a demand or request for sexual favours;
- (ii) sexually coloured remarks
- (iii) showing pornography
- (iv) creating a hostile work environment
- (v) any other unwelcome "sexually determined behaviour" be it physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature
- (vi) creating a "hostile work environment"

Explanation 1: Unwelcome "sexually determined behaviour" shall include but not be limited to the following instances:

- (a) where submission to or rejection of sexual advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or as a basis for employment decisions; or,
- (b) such advances, requests or conduct (whether direct or implied) have the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive work environment.

¹ actionaidindia.org/download/ASH_POLICY_of_AAI_FINAL.doc

[@] The law of the land also expects us to do so. On 13.08.97, the Supreme Court of India in *Vishaka vs. Sate. of Rajasthan* (hereafter "Vishaka") issued guidelines pertaining to sexual harassment for strict observance at all workplaces. These directions are deemed to be "binding and enforceable in law."

Explanation 2: Creating a “hostile work environment” means

(a) Creating a workplace where Sexual Harassment may go unheeded, where despite complaints no action is taken, where there is nexus between accused/aggressor & higher management, and where complainant is placed under fear, disadvantage or threat of victimisation.

(b) It will also mean Retaliation which includes :

- marginalising someone in the workplace with regard to his / her roles and responsibilities

socially ostracising

- intimidating someone physically, psychologically, emotionally or someone close to or related to the victim

- spreading canard

(c) And any other behaviour that may commonly be construed as retaliatory

Explanation 3: “ Sexual Harassment ” in AA and its associates shall also mean :-

(a) Direct or implied requests by any staff for sexual favours in exchange for actual or promised job benefits such as favorable reviews, salary increases, promotions, increased benefits, or continued employment constitutes sexual harassment.

(b) Other sexually oriented conduct, whether it is intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating a environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to staff may also constitute sexual harassment.

Explanation 4: In addition the following are some examples of conduct which if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment depending upon the totality of the circumstances including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness:

(a) Unwelcome sexual advances -- whether they involve physical touching or not;

(b) Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life; comment on an individual's body, comment about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;

(c) Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons, displaying body parts;

(d) Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments;

(e) Inquiries into one's sexual experiences; and,

(f) Discussion of one's sexual activities.

(g) Abuse of authority (Quid Pro Quo) - demand by a person in authority, for sexual favours in exchange for work related benefits (e.g. a wage increase, a promotion, training opportunity, a transfer or the job itself).

(h) The behaviour that creates an environment that is intimidating, hostile, or offensive for members of one sex, and thus interferes with a person's ability to work.

IV. Preventive Action

Consistent with the existing law under Vishaka, AAI-India shall take all reasonable steps to ensure prevention of sexual harassment at work. Such steps shall include:

1. Circulation of AAI-India's policy in English/Hindi/vernacular in regional offices on sexual harassment to all persons employed by or in any way acting in connection with the work and/or functioning of AAI-India;

2. Ensuring that sexual harassment as an issue is raised and discussed at AAI-India meetings from time to time

3. Conduct or cause to carry out in-house gender training on sexual harassment and addressing complaints to staff FIPS as well as members of the ASH Cell.

4. Widely publicise that the SH is a crime & will not be tolerated. [Incase when they get appointed by other employer(s)].

V. Anti-Sexual Harassment Cell

1. There will be an Anti-Sexual Harassment Cell (hereinafter referred to as “ASH Cell”). The Director HR/OD of AAI-India shall assume primary responsibility for effective constitution and functioning of the ASH Cell. It shall be the primary responsibility of the Director HR/OD to constitute the ASH Cell in consultation with the Country Director and renew its composition on the expiry of its term and to fill up vacancies as and when they may occur.

2. The ASH Cell shall comprise the following members:

i. Five persons of whom three shall be women including a Chairperson who shall also be a woman; Chairperson should be at least a senior Manager of AAI-India staff.

ii. One person selected from AAI-India grades 1,2, or 3;

- iii. One person selected from AAI-India grades 4,5 or 6;
 - iv. One member shall be a clinical psychologist; It is advisable that the clinical psychologist is external to AAI-India.
 - v. One third party/NGO representative/lawyer familiar with the issue of sexual harassment;
 - vi. In addition to the five persons, ASH Cell may also include an advisor or invitee who should preferably be female.
3. Membership to the ASH cell shall generally be for a period of two years. Thereafter, new appointments shall be made. At least 2 members and not more than 3 should be retained for continuity. Tenure of a particular member may exceed two years to the extent necessary in order to ensure continuity as mentioned above.
4. ASH Cell will play a strong preventive role. In case of any complaint, the ASH Cell will have to appoint a Committee (henceforth referred to as Enquiry Committee) to conduct an enquiry. The Enquiry Committee (EQC) shall consist of three persons which may include no more than 2 members from the ASH Cell.
5. A member of the ASH Cell shall cease to hold membership should any one of the following conditions arise:
- i. Upon s/he ceasing to be a staff of AAI-India, in case the member is an AAI-India employee
 - ii. Any member of the ASH Cell remains absent without permission of the ASH Cell from three consecutive meetings
 - iii. Any member of the ASH Cell against whom a complaint of sexual harassment, violation of AAI-India conduct of code or criminal charges are made and prima facie established
- In the event of any vacancy on the ASH Cell due to resignation, termination, death or for any other reason whatsoever the same shall (within a period of three months of such vacancy) be filled in accordance with the procedures prescribed by this policy.
6. Each complaint will merit the formation of a new EQC. In other words, EQCs may be constituted on a case to case basis.
7. The Chairperson of the ASH Cell will be required to present a quarterly report on the activities of the ASH Cell to the Director HR/ OD [and the FIPs]. Care must be taken not to breach confidentiality in these reports.
8. All meetings of the ASH Cell shall be fixed by the chairperson through mutual consultation among the members.
9. The ASH Cell shall be required to present a yearly Plan & Budget for preventive activities. This will form part of the HR / OD budget.
10. The travel expenses and board and lodging of external members / advisors will be borne by AAI-India/ASH Cell. In addition such members/advisors may be paid an appropriate honorarium.
- VI. The First Instance Persons (FIPs)**
- 1. FIPs will be nominated by the concerned Unit/Region, after an appropriate process of consultation within Regions/Units.
 - 2. FIPs need to have a strong commitment to women's rights and gender equality. They should also understand that complaints of SH are of a sensitive nature and confidentiality of all parties concerned, especially the complainant and accused has to be respected.
 - 3. FIPs will need to co-ordinate preventive activities within their Unit / Region to create a Sexual Harassment free atmosphere. The responsibility for ensuring that such activities take place lies with the Management of AAI-India.
 - 4. FIPs will be responsible for taking steps to ensure that cases of Sexual Harassment in AAI-India are brought to the notice of ASH Cell.
 - 5. FIPs are empowered to deal with informal complaints of Sexual Harassment.
 - 6. The Sr. manager OD of AAI-India will in coordination with the chairperson of the ASH Cell, ensure that at least 2 workshops are held every year to enable FIPs to upgrade their knowledge and skills.
 - 7. FIP has to inform all new staff of ASH Policy.
 - 8. The names and contact details of all members of the ASH Cell as well as First Instance Persons (FIPs described below) shall be prominently displayed on the main notice board of all AAI-India offices.
 - 9. First Instance Persons ("FIP"s) at the various levels of AAI-India (as it shall deem fit) shall be appointed by the management. They may provide first instance intervention in case of any complaint of sexual harassment. The ASH Cell shall undertake to impart training to such FIPs

to equip them to respond effectively to first instance reports of sexual harassment. Details of the role of FIPs are given in the section below.

VII. Procedure of Dealing with Complaints of Sexual Harassment

1. If any staff at AAI-India believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment, such person (or FIP who may have assisted the complainant or those who have otherwise observed sexual harassment at AAI-India) shall have the option to file a complaint with ASH Cell. This may be done in writing or orally. Even if it is done verbally initially, it is always preferable to have the complaint in writing.
2. A complaint may be filed by contacting any one of the members of the ASH Cell. The ASH Cell as well as FIPs will also be available to discuss any concerns staff may have and to provide information about AAI-India's policy on sexual harassment and the complaint process.
3. Informal complaints of SH may be made to the FIP within the Unit / Region or directly to the ASH Cell or any of its members as stated above.
4. Informal Way of dealing with complaints of Sexual Harassment:
 - (i) An informal approach to resolve a complaint of sexual harassment can be through mediation between the parties involved and by providing advice and counselling on a strictly confidential basis. The procedures though less stringent than formal procedures will be conducted in the full spirit of this policy document.
 - (ii) The case will be taken up for investigation at an informal level by the FIP or a member of the Enquiry Committee in a confidential manner. The matter will be reviewed and the alleged offender will be approached with the intention of resolving the matter in a confidential manner.
 - (iii) If the incident or the case reported does constitute sexual harassment of higher degree the member will suggest taking it up for disciplinary action or with the agreement of the complainant, the case can be taken as a formal complaint.
 - (iv) Once such complaints are dealt with, the FIP must inform ASH Cell and Unit / Region head.
 - (v) The choice whether to deal with the complaint in the informal way or through the formal mechanism (whether the case constitutes sexual harassment of a higher or lower degree) should depend entirely on the complainant.
5. All formal complaints of SH have to be referred to the ASH Cell by the FIP. Regional Managers/ Unit Heads, in consultation with FIPs or any other staff, are not empowered to penalise AAI – India staff.
6. The investigation into a complaint will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances. The Enquiry Committee (EQ) has to be set up within 2 weeks of receiving the complaint. The ASH Cell is responsible for setting up the EQC with support from the AAI-India Management.
7. The EQC has to investigate and submit report to ASH Cell within 6 weeks. The ASH Cell will have to decide on recommendations and forward it to CD and Director, HR / OD within 2 weeks of receiving report from EQC.
8. In case of exceptional circumstances, the time limit for investigation may be extended by the ASH Cell. The ASH Cell has to inform the Director, HR/ OD, who will then inform both the complainant and accused.

VIII. Process of Inquiry:

1. Upon receiving a formal complaint, the Committee shall ask the complainant to prepare a detailed statement of incidents if written complaint is sketchy. A statement of allegations will be drawn up by the Committee and sent to the accused.
2. The accused will be asked to prepare a response to the statement of allegations and submit to the Committee within the given time.
3. The statements and other evidence obtained in the inquiry process will be considered confidential materials.
4. An officer in the organisation could be designated to provide advice and assistance to each party if requested by either of them. Similarly, the complainant and the accused, will have the right to be represented or accompanied by a member of staff of AAI-India, a friend or a colleague.
5. The Committee will organise verbal hearings with the complainant and the accused.
6. Statement of Complainant will be recorded first in the presence of the accused. The accused may cross-question the complaint if there is a need to do so in the presence of the Enquiry Committee.
7. The Committee will take testimonies of other relevant persons and review the evidence whenever necessary. Care should be taken to avoid any retaliation against witnesses by giving

necessary protection.

8. The Committee will take its decision after carefully reviewing the circumstances, evidence and relevant statements in all fairness.

9. If the accused, being provided fair opportunity to participate in the inquiry and defend him/herself fails to participate in the inquiry, the Committee may conduct the inquiry *ex parte*.

10. The Committee will ensure confidentiality during the inquiry process.

11. In the course of investigating any complaint of sexual harassment, the ASH Cell shall ensure that the principles of natural justice are adhered to namely:

(i) Both parties shall be given reasonable opportunity to be heard along with witnesses and to produce any other relevant documents before the ASH Cell;

(ii) Upon completion of the investigation, both parties, will be informed of the results of that investigation.

(iii) Documents which form part of official record shall also be given to the complainant if need be.

(iv) The ASH Cell shall be empowered to do all things necessary to ensure a fair hearing of the complaint including all things necessary to ensure that victims or witnesses are neither victimised or discriminated against while dealing with a complaint of sexual harassment. In this regard the ASH Cell shall also have discretion to make appropriate interim recommendations vis-à-vis an accused person pending the outcome of a complaint including suspension, transfer, leave, change of office etc. The complainants should have the option to seek transfer of the perpetrator or seek his/her own transfer.

12. In the event, the ASH Cell determines that sexual harassment has occurred, it will make appropriate recommendations as to necessary action to be instituted to remove the offensive conduct and, where appropriate, to institute disciplinary action. The complainant's views may be taken into consideration for this purpose.

13. Given that AAI-India views any finding of sexual harassment a serious violation of human rights, if it is determined that inappropriate conduct has been committed by a staff, appropriate action will follow under the circumstances. Such action may range from counseling to termination from employment, and may include such other forms of disciplinary action the ASH Cell deems appropriate under the circumstances. The ASH Cell will be guided by HR / OD procedures for disciplinary action within AAI-India. If the aggressor is guilty of serious sexual harassment or has repeatedly (second time) committed acts of SH then he /she must be dismissed. In appropriate cases he/she may also be required to pay monetary compensation.

14. Sexual harassment by line managers or by colleague senior to the victim, then such acts will be considered to be very serious and will attract higher penalties.

IX. Sexual Harassment and AAI-India Partners

AAI-India is responsible for ensuring that its partners have a commitment to an SH free working atmosphere within their organisations i.e. the partner organisations. While respecting the autonomy of the partner organisation, AAI-India will have to play a facilitating role within the partner organisation, by

Creating an Sexual Harassment free climate

Helping in the formation of the ASH Cell

Ensuring that complaints of SH are heard and investigated

It is necessary when complainant and accused are from 2 or more different organisations there should be an EQC with atleast representatives from at least one such other organisation.

X. Third Party Harassment

Where SH occurs as a result of an act or omission by any third party or outsider, AAI-India will take all steps necessary and reasonable to assist the affected person in terms of support and preventive action.

XI. Management Obligations

1. Management of AAI-India shall provide all necessary assistance for the purpose of ensuring full, effective and prompt implementation of this policy. It shall further be bound by the decisions of the ASH Cell and shall implement the same expeditiously.

2. The support to be provided to ASH Cell includes :

(i) Secretarial and administrative support for training and other preventive actions.

(ii) Helping to set up EQCs

(iii) Secretarial support during SH enquiries

(iv) Adequate financial resources for all activities

(v) Time planning for members of ASH Cell, especially AAI-India staff

3. The responsibility for preventive activities (regarding SH) rests with the Management of AAI-India.

4. The responsibility of taking prompt action on ASH Cell recommendations lies with the Country Director of AAI-India. Recommendations of the ASH Cell shall be binding on the Country Director. However, if the CD has a difference of opinion he/she may ask the ASH Cell to review its decision. The final decision will, however, be that of the ASH Cell. Action on ASH Cell recommendations should be taken within 2 weeks of the recommendation being made.
5. AAI-India is expected to provide adequate protection to ASH Cell and Enquiry Committee members in case of threats and any retaliation. Support and protection must also be provided (by Management) if matters go to Court. Management should in all cases defend the ASH cell & the complainant.
6. In the event the conduct complained of amounts to a specific offence under the Indian Penal Code or under any other law in existence, the ASH Cell, subject to the wishes of the complainant, shall take appropriate action in making a complaint with the appropriate authority. The AAI-India management will have to provide all manner of support required in such instances.
7. The AAI-India Management will actively assist and do all that is necessary to ensure the safety of a complainant in the office premises or otherwise in respect to any duties/activities performed in connection with her work, which take place outside office premises.
8. The AAI-India Management has to ensure that the ASH Cell and Enquiry Committee retain their autonomy and may work unhindered.
9. The proceedings under this policy shall not be stalled or postponed merely because the complainant is proceeding against the accused under any other provision of law.
10. The provisions of this policy shall not restrict the powers of the Management or the complainant to proceed against the alleged offender for any other misconduct or other legal remedies.

Sexual Harassment Policy of Jawaharlal Nehru University

Jawaharlal Nehru University is committed to providing a place of work and study free of sexual harassment, intimidation or exploitation. It is expected that all students, faculty, staff, karamcharis and officials will treat one another and visitors to the University with respect. All members of the University community, including those who are in temporary or short term positions are subject to this policy. Anyone violating this policy is subject to disciplinary action.

Reports of sexual harassment are taken seriously and will be dealt with promptly. The specific action taken in any particular case depends upon the nature and gravity of the conduct reported. The University recognises that confidentiality is important. The University will respect the confidentiality and privacy of individuals reporting or accused of sexual harassment to the extent reasonably possible. Reprisals against an individual who in good faith reports, or provides information in an investigation, about behaviour that may violate this policy, are against the law and will not be tolerated. Intentionally providing false information, however, is grounds for disciplinary action.

JNU is committed to the principles of free inquiry and free expression. Vigorous discussion and debate are fundamental to the pursuit of knowledge, and this policy is not intended to stifle teaching methods or freedom of expression. Sexual Harassment, however, is not the proper exercise of academic freedom, nor can it be protected as freedom of expression. It comprises the integrity of the University and its traditions of intellectual freedom, and it also violates the principle of the equality and dignity of all its members.

What is Sexual Harassment?

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other visual, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

It is implicitly or explicitly suggested that submission to or rejection of the conduct will be a factor in academic or employment decisions or evaluations, or permission to participate in a University activity, or when the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic or work performance or creating an intimidating or hostile academic work or living environment.

Determining what constitutes sexual harassment depends upon the specific facts and the context in which the conduct occurs. Sexual harassment may take many forms – subtle and indirect, or blatant and overt. For example,

- It may be conduct towards an individual of the opposite sex or the same sex.
- It may occur between peers or between individuals in a hierarchical relationship.
- It may be aimed at coercing an individual to participate in an unwanted sexual relationship or it may have the effect of causing an individual to change behaviour or work performance.
- It may consist of repeated actions or may even arise from a single incident.

What to do if you feel you are being sexually harassed

Know your rights – Sexual harassment is illegal, both the law of the land and JNU prohibit sexual harassment.

Speak up – If you can, tell the person to stop. State clearly and firmly that you want a particular behaviour to cease.

Get information and support – If you feel you cannot speak up, ask your friends to help you and bring it to the notice of the University. Keep records that might be useful for pursuing the case.

What not to do

Do not blame yourself. Sexual harassment is not something one brings on oneself. It is not a consequence of certain ways of dressing or acting. It is a violation of an individual's right to work and live with dignity.

Do not ignore it. Ignoring sexual harassment does not make it go away. The harasser may misinterpret a lack of response as approval of the behaviour.

Do not delay. Delay in action increases the probability that unwanted behaviour will continue or escalate.

Do not hesitate to ask for help. Speaking up may prevent others from being harmed as well.

1. <http://www.jnu.ac.in/main.asp?sendval=GSCash#Policy>

Annexure VII

URMUL Trust's Policy On Gender Equality

The URMUL Trust recognises that gender relations and inequalities are fundamental causes of poverty. Women and girls do not enjoy the same status, power or access to and control over resources as men and boys.

Women often have less recourse than men to legal recognition and protection, as well as lower access to public knowledge and information, and less decision-making power both within and outside the home. They have little control over fertility, sexuality and marital choices. The society of this Thar region is characterised by a male-dominated, patriarchal order where women have a secondary and subjugated status. Traditional conservative practices and the persistence of the feudal ethos continually keep the women in the arid zone silenced, exhausted, and confined to interiors, veiled and secluded from birth to death. This systematic discrimination reduces women's public participation, often increases their vulnerability to poverty, violence and HIV.

This situation is unacceptable. It is explicitly mentioned in the The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted by UN General Assembly) as well as in the Constitution of India that principles of equity and social justice require us to work to ensure that everyone has equal opportunity for expressing and using their potential, irrespective of sex, age, race, colour, class, caste, religion, ethnic background, sexual orientation, HIV status of disability. URMUL Trust is fully committed to channeling energy, effort and resources into processes that create a society that values women, men, girls and boys equally.

URMUL Trust has increasingly worked with a gender perspective over the last two decades. This experience has led the organisation to acknowledge that women's empowerment and the recognition of women's rights as human rights are essential for sustainable development and can be empowering for everyone. It has also taught UT that working with a gender perspective means involving and engaging men and boys in order to improve the status of women and girls.

Gender equality gives women and men the same entitlements to all aspects of human development, including economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights: the same level of respect; the same opportunities to make choices; and the same level of power to shape the outcomes of these choices.

This policy represents our organisational commitment to gender equality. It has been written to help staff and volunteers ensure that our work improves the lives of both women and men and promotes gender equality.

Principles and Goals

Principles

The achievement of gender equality requires that:

- gender equality and equity are central to URMUL Trust's being and doing;
- the empowerment of women and girls is recognised as fundamental to our mission;
- every individual understands and demonstrates attitudes and behaviour that promote

gender equality and equity;

- adequate resources are allocated to gender work;
- all work is continuously monitored against gender indicators;
- our own internal practices, and ways of working, will reflect our commitment to

gender equality goals

The Gender Policy aims to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment are central to URMUL Trust's:

- programmes at all levels;
- organisational culture and behaviours and
- public image

Programmes

Objective

All programmes empower women and promote women's rights as human rights

Strategies

- Apply gender analysis at all stages of policy and programme work, including planning, implementation, impact assessment.
- Develop capacity of programme staff to carry out gender analysis.
- Develop gender-sensitive approaches and methods of work which are empowering, building on lessons learnt and other participatory methodologies.

- Ensure programme staff take responsibility for promoting gender equality.
- Promote the creation of structures and opportunities for women's participation in decision-making at all levels - both within the organisation as well as outside of it
 - Ensure that women's and girls' voices are heard in mainstream development processes.
 - Support women and girls to secure their economic, social, political (The 73rd Amendment of the Constitution gave women a blanket reservation of 33% in local governing bodies.
 - Promote women's and girls' independent access to their ability to exercise rights over their own bodies and find protection against violence.
 - Develop, promote and use creative ways of engaging men and boys (and not only women and girls) as agents of change in the pursuit of gender equality.
 - Partnerships and alliances will be assessed on the basis of their commitment to gender equality

Organisation Development

Objective

Gender equality and equity are central to URMUL Trust's being and doing.

Strategies

- Recognise knowledge related to gender concerns and gender-related analysis as one of the core areas of capacity for staff and build capabilities throughout the agency.
 - Build a common understanding around gender through induction and training.
 - Ensure that all training across the agency is gender-sensitive.
 - Make all HR systems and policies gender-sensitive and responsive.
 - Determine the nature, structure and causes of gender imbalances in staff throughout the agency and set targets for recruitment, retention and promotion of staff accordingly, particularly women .
 - Ensure that staff access to and use of information technology is gender equitable.

Public Image

Objective

The external presentation of URMUL Trust should promote a balanced view of the issues surrounding gender equality and equity.

Strategies

- Gender awareness and understanding will be used as a criterion for recruitment and development of staff and volunteers
 - All materials and general communications will be formulated to reflect equality and equity.
 - Gender sensitive language will be used in all internal and external communications
 - Within the organisation we will pursue family friendly work practices that enable both men and women to participate fully in work and family life
 - Whenever possible, women's and girls' voices will be heard in the first place.
 - Ensure that women and men are proportionately represented during workshops, meetings, seminars, etc.

Finance and Resource Allocation

Objective

Adequate resources are allocated to gender work across the organisation.

Strategies

- Commit support and resources to gender work and functions.
 - Maintain qualitative and quantitative information on causes of gender imbalances in staff throughout the agency and set targets for recruitment, retention and promotion of staff accordingly, particularly women in senior positions.

Implementation and Accountability

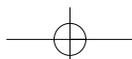
This section outlines the framework for the implementation of the Gender Policy. It provides guidelines on the responsibility of different parts of the organisation for the achievement of gender equality.

- Once the policy is approved by Board of Trustees, the Secretary of the organisation will be accountable



for its implementation.

- All staff will be expected to show a gender perspective in their work.
- The organisational mechanisms and gender posts necessary for implementation of the Gender Policy will be put in place and resourced.



Gender Policy of CECOEDECON

The present Gender Policy of CECOEDECON is a revised version of the Gender Policy adopted in April 2000. The purpose of undertaking the revision of Gender Policy was to assess whether the gender needs and priorities were reflected in the programme initiatives, whether opportunities exist to reduce or prevent gender gaps and the extent of policy incorporation into the programme initiatives. The goals and objectives outlined in the adopted Gender Policy 2000 remain the same in principle. The main changes are the adoption of the "gender approach" in 2003 as a cross cutting strategy in all working areas of CECOEDECON. The revision in Gender Policy was done through a series of consultations at various levels within the organisation and reflects the will and commitment of the management and programme teams of CECOEDECON, including both men and women.

Gender Policy as a Process:

"Gender" is a cross cutting theme at CECOEDECON, within the organisation as well as in its programme interventions. The accomplishment of stated goals and objectives of the Gender Policy requires participation and positive contribution of each staff member. This policy should be seen as a basis to address inequalities of "gender" within CECOEDECON and the society. Therefore, it is important to develop a clear and balanced approach while dealing with gender issues. The real challenge is to integrate this approach carefully and systematically. Therefore, the Gender Policy is also seen as an opportunity for evolving a consensus on gender concerns and an increased understanding on gender issues by staff and community members to strengthen and improve this process continuously. Thus, evolved through a participatory process, strategies on how to increase participation of women and the development of new strategies within the context of the programmes are included in this policy.

Situational analysis – Identification of problems

Women lives in contemporary Rajasthan have been influenced by historical legacy of feudalism and patriarchal values. Various social customs reinforce patriarchy like Sati, Purdah, restrictions on widow, child marriage and female foeticide etc. The stronghold of patriarchy within the institutions of family and community are so powerful that it resists change when it comes to the status of women. Unfortunately, even today in the state there exist gender biases in the society that is seriously harming the concerns of women.

By all commonly accepted indicators of human development, the status of women in Rajasthan ranks as one of the lowest in the country and consider as disadvantaged section of the society. Figures for female literacy and enrolment of girls in schools reveal that there is an increase in number of literate women and enrolment of girls but still men outnumber the female. As per the census 2001, the male literacy is 76.5 per cent while female literacy is 44.0 per cent, which is lowest in India. Female mortality and infant and child mortality is 677 and 80 respectively, also very high among the Indian states. According to the 2001 census, sex ratio in Rajasthan is 922 females to 1000 males, but the situation is alarming in juvenile sex ratio i.e. 908. Couple Protection Rate is only 40.30 with only 36.20 per cent births are being attended by health professionals, 47.60 per cent women receive no medical attention during child birth, total fertility rate is 3.78 and only 47.1 per cent mothers receive antenatal checkups. These data speak about the low health status of women in Rajasthan. This shows the vulnerable status of women in the state. Moreover the women population spares the significant labour contribution in the urban as well as in the rural area especially in the farming sector. During 1999 –2001 rural female labour force was 50.20 per cent. Although the labour participation of women is high as there is only 0.2 per cent unemployment among rural female (2000) but 63.03 per cent daily wages differentiation in agriculture and there is 9.40 per cent wage differentials for unskilled non agricultural rural female labourers.

In case of women representation in State and local governance, the number of women in State legislative is 12, though 118 contested for elections. Percentage of Women Panchayat Members to total members is 34.61 that are not equal to men but satisfactory to some extent. But in practice the role and contribution of women in Panchayats are the issues of debate for a long time.

In a men dominated society like Rajasthan, women face gender based violence and it has been reported that Rajasthan is ranked fourth in violence cases against women. The World Human Rights Conference for the first time recognised the gender-based violence as a human rights violation in 1993. Violence against women is partially the result of gender relations that assume men to be superior to women and it takes place in family, state and society and mostly the cases remain unreported due to social stigma, especially in the cases of rape and kidnapping. Rajasthan has been reporting the maximum number of crime against women i.e. 8.1 per cent of total crime (2001). All these factors result into (and are a result of) women's low status in the society.

Like most other Indian states, Rajasthan too is a patriarchal society where men have more power and easier access than women to what is valued in the society, while women are subjected to a number of seriously debilitating social

restrictions. A number of these stem from the cultural practices associated with purdah (veil) system, which requires women to stay veiled and restricts their freedom of movement and speech. When it comes to work, there are no concessions, and veiling adds to their problems.

Further, adding to women's burden is the migration of men to urban centres in search of employment. It has increased women's workload at home, and unfortunately, only a very small proportion of the men's earnings ever actually reach the family. And despite all of the work that women perform, they have little access to information and no control over decisions related to productive activities. Early and child marriage is another practice that is widespread throughout rural Rajasthan, despite many efforts to stop it by various public and non-governmental organisations. The consequences of this are a high rate of population growth in the state, poorly educated girls and women, high rates of infant and maternal mortality and morbidity, and an overall chronically unhealthy female population.

CECOEDECON: A Brief Introduction

CECOEDECON is a voluntary organisation whose mission is to facilitate the processes of empowerment of partner communities scheduled castes and tribes, indigenous people, the landless, small and marginal farmers, dalits, deprived women and children - through both direct and indirect interventions, so that they are able to take action independently and effectively to secure their rights for long term well being.

Starting with Jaipur district in 1982 as a relief organisation, it has changed into a progressive development organisation using multiple strategies to achieve its mission. Since its inception, the organisation has tried and tested various approaches for development, emphasising different strategies, while working at the local, state, national and international level. The organisation shifted from a project approach to programme approach in rural development initiatives in the year 2000. It is believed that this more holistic approach to rural development will serve to integrate various components of rural development and further builds the community empowerment. The shift represents a significant step towards incorporating the Rights Based Approach into the organisation's programmes. The activities that CECOEDECON is engaged in, centres around the issues of people's livelihood, water management, land care, child development, health and education with a focus on women's and gender concerns.

Gender

Gender refers to the different norms and values placed on men and women. While 'sex' refers to the biologically determined differences between men and women, 'gender' refers to the socially determined characteristics. These are expressed, for example, in behaviour and the division of tasks between men and women. Norms for female and male behaviour are guidelines for how the society expects a person to be or how it expects them to act.

Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming implies that attention to equality between women and men should pervade all development policies, strategies and interventions. Mainstreaming does not simply mean ensuring that women participate in a development agenda that has already been decided upon. It aims to ensure that women as well as men are involved in setting goals and in planning, so that development meets the priorities and needs of both men and women. For example, a mainstreaming strategy involves more than an initiative to increase the number of girls attending primary school. It involves efforts to ensure that the education authorities are equipped to develop and implement initiatives that support equality of educational opportunities that they are equipped with analytical skills and a research base for appropriate policy and programme development, including the ability to develop initiatives to address existing disparities in access to education and to develop curricula that reflect and promote gender equality objectives.

Principles of Gender Mainstreaming

- Gender mainstreaming strives to ensure that gender equality is not just women's issue, but also a societal issue.
- It is not a numbers game. A mere process of equal representations will not result in equity. "Affirmative Action" is an important gender strategy. There is need to level the playing field for both women and men.
- Gender strategies should not replace women specific initiatives and programmes. There needs to be an appreciation of "separate spaces" for women so that they build their solidarity and perspectives.
- In integrating the experiences of women into the entire fabric of an organisation, one begins to weave in processes for greater appropriate support systems, enhancing women's leadership and skills and addressing women's strategic needs. There is need to make the and structures women friendly.
- Mainstreaming is not a mere technical process; it requires a gender audit of all structures and systems.

CECOEDECON and Gender

Since its inception, CECOEDECON has been working on women's issues by mainly addressing their basic needs. Its focus on women was and is based on the assumption that in real terms women are the main actors in social affairs so addressing their basic needs and enhancing their economic condition would help them to improve not only their status in the family and community, but also the overall status of the family and the community they live in. CECOEDECON has already started paying attention to long-term strategic needs of women.

Furthermore, since the organisational structure of CECOEDECON has changed considerably over the years – as recently the change from need based to rights based approach – its emphasis has shifted from women empowerment to the integration of a gender approach. This approach is based on CECOEDECON's understanding of the concept of sustainable development and its experience through intensive work at the community level. The goal of every intervention and action must lead to a positive change in power relations. Therefore, planned interventions must be supported and preceded by a thorough understanding of gender relations of uneven distribution of power and privileges between women and men, and examine how it came into being. It is important to focus on gender differences and on gender discrimination and will facilitates us to reduce gender discrimination if these issues are addressed.

The three essential elements for a successful gender intervention in CECOEDECON are:

- **Environment building**

Environment building is seen as a crucial aspect for preparing the ground for gender issues at both community and organisational level. The focus is on addressing the different needs of poor women and men, capacity building through village level meetings, equal opportunity to women and male staff for training purpose in the organisation etc.

- **Capacity building**

Capacity building forms a core gender strategy in CECOEDECON and consists of:

Gender sensitisation training of male and female staff: As a part of the organisation's gender development programme and to build a clear understanding of the gender concept among its staff and beneficiaries, gender sensitisation trainings are conducted in different batches on regular basis to bring about an attitudinal and behavioural change among the staff and beneficiaries regarding gender perspectives.

To promote women development and empowerment: Right from the beginning, CECOEDECON has given great importance to women's development and their participation in community development initiatives. It includes organising awareness generation camps, training in transfer of technology, organising women entrepreneurship groups, networking and advocacy on women issues etc.

- **Establishment and strengthening of Women Institutions**

Establishment of women's institutions such as Mahila Mandal, Action Committees at the village level are important strategies. These are constituted to implement the gender development activities and essentially act as a sustained human and material support for women beneficiaries in CECOEDECON's working areas as well as for the women staff members in the organisation for ensuring gender equity.

Goal and Objectives of Gender Policy

The goal of CECOEDECON's Gender Policy is to facilitate and support the achievement of equality between women and men and to ensure participatory sustainable development in a democratic and just society.

Objectives of Gender Policy

- To integrate gender and development approach in all the programmes and policies of CECOEDECON and ensure gender equitable outcome; and
- To create an enabling environment within CECOEDECON for women and men to work on equal terms, keeping in view the special needs of women.

Guiding Principles

Awareness, organisation, participation, empowerment and partnership are central for CECOEDECON to reach its goal of gender equality. Achieving gender equality will require specific measures designed to eliminate gender inequalities; thus interventions need to be planned on the basis of practical and strategic gender needs.

Women are not seen as a homogenous group, in relation to their class, caste and position. Furthermore, women and men need to be addressed differently in each programme and department.

Policy Components

Following from the twin objectives, there are two separate but interrelated components of its Gender Policy, as

given below:

- The first component relates to programmatic intervention of the organisation to ensure full recognition of women's contributions, identification of gender specific problems and participation of women members and their female children at par with their male counterparts at all stages from initiating development activities to the outcomes of development. There are three specific measures under this component - gender sensitive planning, capacity building of women groups, and networking and advocacy around gender relevant issues.
- The second component is more internal to the organisation and relates to organisational changes by creating an enabling environment within CECOEDECON for women and men staff to work on equal terms in order to meet programme demands as well as improve programme quality.

The two components have been elaborated further in the following paragraphs.

Programmatic Measure

CECOEDECON's approach is to integrate gender concerns in all its policies and programmes. In some cases, to begin with, targeted gender programmes are necessary, but more commonly gender sensitive planning and implementation is the key to ensuring that the concerns of both women and men are considered and that gender differences are fully understood. The efforts are made to ensure that all the programmes provide equal opportunity to women in terms of decision-making. The main objective is to change the attitude and sensitise both men and women regarding women's contribution to the society as equal partners of development.

There are many competing perspectives on how best to empower women, CECOEDECON has experienced that the best way to do it is to empower women within their own context. The focus should be on their livelihood systems and wherever intervention is made, to begin with, it should concentrate on their daily life and felt needs.

Planning: CECOEDECON remains committed to incorporate gender perspective in strategic planning of all programmes and projects in consultation with stakeholders and screen all project proposals through "gender lens". CECOEDECON's programmes and activities will have a clearer consideration and integration of gender relations and roles. As already said in the beginning of this section, that while planning development interventions, women's basic and immediate needs (Practical Gender Needs) would be addressed, but at the same time, attention will also be given to their long term strategic interests (Strategic Gender Need) such as legal and political rights property rights, protection from domestic violence, decision making power, and control over resources and benefits.

Additionally the organisation will develop the ways to identify areas of concern and work with the women on issues of importance to them through participatory methods, design projects and programmes which include introduction of appropriate technologies that benefit women and minimise their work burden and adopt women and environment friendly projects and minimise hazardous activities that affect health, particularly of women.

In this context, gender analysis is used as an important tool for both understanding the local context, and promoting gender equality. It identifies the varied roles played by women and men, girls and boys in the household, community, workplace, political processes and economy.

In addition, a gender audit may be a good way to test whether the planned interventions are gender sensitive.

Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Development: The second area in programmatic interventions is capacity building and institutional strengthening of Village Level Institutions. In order to ensure that women are able to fully and meaningfully participate in the development process, CECOEDECON seeks to build and strengthen the organisational and technical capacities of the women in its beneficiaries groups. The specific activities include the following;

Mobilisation & Organisation: The idea to organise women at grassroots level into Mahila Mandals is that it will provide women an opportunity to come together and share experiences. Also they are expected to share the responsibility in implementing projects. Though these Mandals envisaged activities and programmes, which facilitate the development of women, the objective is also to see the members of the women's forum becoming active in Village Development Committees (VDCs), with men. Over the years these Mandals have become an important part of the strategy for participatory sustainable development.

Upgrading Information and skill base of Women: The saying Information is power is relevant in context of women empowerment and achieving gender equity. The women needs to know her rights vis-à-vis the spouse, family and property and also with respect to the local bodies like Panchayats and Government agencies. Thus, a large portion of efforts will be devoted to this aspect and establishment of gender resource center proposed in the new phase will support towards this endeavor.

Acquisition of literacy: The lack of education has proved to be a major roadblock for women in fulfilling their aspirations and having a confident positive self-image. Increased efforts will be devoted to increase girls' access to primary and secondary education by creating an enabling environment and opportunities and develop gender sensitive education curricula content.

Networking and Advocacy: As we enter into a new cycle of programme development, and CECOEDECON shifts from need based approach to rights based approach, a comprehensive assessment of its development strategies has been carried out by the organisation. It is increasingly being realised that world has become too complex and the solution to the plethora of problems do not lie in single strategies however, honest and well intentioned these may be. So, linking micro initiatives to meso and macro realities with a use of multiple strategies is imperative. Thus, networking with other key players and alliance building with other movements is one of the important tasks. CECOEDECON have build allies for women rights in the community, support women organisation activities working to stop violence against women and protest any anti-women declarations and actions.

In addition, CECOEDECON has initiated and strengthened human rights and legal education on issues like domestic violence, marital disputes, violation of rights etc. This has motivated women to establish their right over property ownership. The efforts will also be made to impart education on democracy and encourage women to participate in local elections.

CECOEDECON'S Gender Policy Into Practice

According to the findings of the analysis, Gender plays an important role in all the activities of Natural Resource Management, Child Development, Health and Institutional Development Programmes. According to the perception of programme and field coordinators there are no gaps between planning and implementation and they have successfully implemented the "gender guidelines" in their field areas.

Gender in CECOEDECON'S Programmes

Natural Resource Management: In NRM programme gender considerations are incorporated in all its activities mainly in two ways:

- Pro-actively encouraging women to participate in both the design and implementation of NRM activities; and
- Encouraging its partner community to undertake interventions that are specially geared to benefit women.

The programme is addressing both the practical gender needs and strategic gender interests. The practical gender needs have been addressed through reducing women's workload by creating community assets like anicut and activities like pond deepening, well deepening and water tank construction, etc. Increased water level has reduced fluoride content in water, as fluoride is a serious health problem in the working areas.

The strategic gender interests have been addressed by evolving their leadership qualities by making them supervisors in construction works and providing them training in transfer of technology.

Child Development Programme sees gender as extending equal opportunity of development to all children. However, mostly the children in rural areas are set aside from the mainstream of development but being a patriarchal society, girls, especially the rural girls are placed at the lowest rung. Child Development Programme emphasizes on reaching to the mass of rural girls who face discrimination in twin fold. On one hand they are denied of development opportunities due to traditional and cultural taboos and on the other hand the system is not designed to accommodate their needs. For instance the major lacuna in our education system is that it sets the target of education to all but has very limited approach to bridge the gender gap.

In order to enhance children's understanding the concept of gender is discussed with them during camps. Specifically life skill and education programme is designed to provide information to adolescent girls and boys, so that they can work towards establishing a balanced society.

Health Programme: Women health is still a low priority issue among the rural community. CECOEDECON is extending its efforts to improve the women's health situation in the working areas. Participation of women is ensured during various activities i.e. health awareness and education campaign, women reproductive health awareness and checkup camps, training of traditional health practitioners, training of community health workers and other advocacy related activities.

As it can be seen from its title, women reproductive health awareness camps are designed specifically for women but women development efforts should not be seen in isolation, so participation of men in solving their reproductive health problems is also ensured. Women are trained on first-aid and primary health care and working as para health worker in Shahbad block of Baran district. Some of them are selected as SWATCHKARMI under the SWATCH programme running in different areas of Shahbad block.

Organisational Measures

Any organisation that is going to successfully facilitate women empowerment must have an organisational culture that complements this type of work. That is, its policies, underlying values, priorities, and staff attitudes must reflect its commitment to this ideal. Given this, CECOEDECON remains committed to taking action to ensure that its own internal organisational culture is suited to the ambitious tasks of promoting women empowerment in its working areas and an enabling environment is created for women staff to work on an equal footing along with their male counterparts. Specifically, the following measures are undertaken.

Recruitment: As the gender composition of its working team is not optimally balanced, CECOEDECON will make conscious efforts to encourage, develop, and retain women staff for both field and management positions. For this it will:

- Provide facilities, terms and conditions in a flexible way so as to encourage women to secure employment and to return to employment without detriment when they make long breaks for e.g. maternity leaves, etc.
- Give preference to female candidate over male candidate when both are equally qualified.

Examine interview practices to ensure that interviewers encourage rather than discourage women candidates and closely monitor anti-women bias during interviews.

Efforts should be made to create a balanced representation of each caste, when men and women are recruited, especially at the higher positions in the management. This balance needs to be created especially for backward and marginalised castes.

Staff Development: Provide specific training to encourage women to develop their career in supervisory and management posts; such trainings will include management, communication skills, computer skills and assertiveness.

- Training for women staff in driving, to encourage them to visit field independently and increase their English skills by providing English-speaking classes in the organisation.
- Create a core group of gender specialists from within the staff whose role is to ensure that gender considerations are appropriately reflected in all of CECOEDECON's policies, programmes and activities.
- Make efforts to further sensitise all staff members with regard to gender issues by organising relevant workshops, training sessions, and exposure tours on relevant themes/subjects. Gender Resource Centre will further provide gender related information and resource material to staff.
- Increase men's knowledge about women health and encourage their positive participation in family planning and marriage practices.
- After adoption of the Gender Policy 2000, paternity leave has been introduced to encourage shared childcare responsibilities.
- If husband and wife both are working in the organisation they should be posted at the same place.
- Create awareness among staff members about various international commitments, conventions that have a direct relationship with gender issues such as Beijing Platform for Action, International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and Child Rights Convention (CRC) through existing training programmes.

Personal Safety

- Ensure fulfilment of special concerns of women staff in work especially during night travel and evening work.
- Ensure a permissive working environment by adopting strict measures of dealing with cases of sexual harassment, if there are any.
- Ensure suitable lodging and board arrangements for women staff during their field visits.

Committee Against Sexual Harassment (CASH): The objective of CASH is to formulate effective action plan and implementation for preventing incidences of sexual harassment at workplace and to provide conducive and healthy working atmosphere for the staff.

To implement the Gender Policy effectively, CECOEDECON will follow this policy in ensuring the gender role in all the activities of the organisation and a regular internal gender audit of all programmes considering gender as a cross cutting strategy will be performed. The PME unit along with the gender unit will look after the implementation and evaluate the effectiveness of the policy.

Definitions of Important Terms

Practical and Strategic Needs

Practical needs can be defined as immediate necessities such as water, shelter, food, income and health care within a specific context.

Strategic needs on the other hand refer to the relative status of women and men within society. These needs vary in each context and are related to roles and expectations, as well as to gender divisions of labour, resources and power. These may include legal rights, equal wage, protection from domestic violence, and increased decision-making.

Gender Equity and Gender Equality

Gender equity refers to fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men. Equity leads to Equality.

Gender Equality means that women and men enjoy equal conditions for realising their full human rights and potential to contribute to national, political economic, social and cultural development, and to benefit from results.

Gender Sensitive Planning

It means that planning has a "specific perspective" towards gender and involves both women and men equally in all planning procedures at all levels to build a "gender sensitive" environment in the organisation and in community to reduce discrimination between women and men.

Gender sensitive planning is used to assist "mainstreaming gender" and reflected in the implementation of each programme.

Gender Analysis

A description of men and women's strategic space - in other words, the access to and control over strategic resources by individuals and group of people.

Annexure VIII

The Delhi Shops & Establishment Act, 1954

The Shops and Establishments Act talks of

- Cleanliness (The premises of every establishment shall be kept clean and free from effluvia arising from any drain or privy or other nuisance and shall be cleaned at such times and by such methods as may be prescribed. These methods may include lime washing, colour washing, painting and disinfecting.);
- Lighting and ventilation (The premises of every establishment shall be kept sufficiently lighted and ventilated during all working hours; Suitable arrangements shall be made for supply of drinking water to the employees);
- Power to enforce cleanliness, etc. (If it appears to an Inspector that the premises of any establishment within his jurisdiction are not sufficiently lighted, cleaned or ventilated, he may serve on the employer an order in writing specifying the measures which in his opinion should be adopted and requiring them to be carried out before a date specified in the order. The Government may prescribe standards in respect of any of these matters); and
- Precautions against fire (In every establishment, except such establishments or class of establishments as may be prescribed, such precautions against fire shall be taken as may be prescribed.

Leave

1. Every person employed in an establishment shall be entitled :
 - (a) after every twelve months' continuous employment, to privilege leave for a total period of not less than fifteen days;
 - (b) in every year, to sickness or casual leave for a total period of not less than twelve days;
 Provided that
 - (i) an employee who has completed a period of four months in continuous employment, shall be entitled to not less than five days privilege leave for every such completed period; and
 - (ii) an employee who has completed a period of one month in continuous employment, shall be entitled to not less than one day's casual leave for every month

Provided further that a watchman or caretaker who has completed a period of twelve months in continuous employment and to whom the provisions of Section 8, 10, 11, 13 and 17 do not apply by virtue of an exemption granted under Section 4, shall be entitled to not less than thirty days' privilege leave.

(1A) (i) Privilege leave to which an employee is entitled under clause (a) of sub-section (1) or under any such law, contract, custom or usage, award, settlement or agreement as is referred to in section 3, or any part of such leave, if not availed of by such employee, shall be added to the privilege leave in respect of any succeeding period to which he is so entitled, so however, the total period of such privilege leave which may be accumulated by such employee shall not at anyone time exceed three times the period of privilege leave to which he is entitled after every twelve months' employment under that clause or under such law, contract, custom or usage, award, settlement or agreement.

(ii) Leave admissible under clause (b) of sub-section (1) shall not be accumulated].

(2) If an employee entitled to leave under clause (a) of sub-section (1) of this section is discharged by his employer before he has been allowed the leave, or if, having applied for and having been refused the leave, he quits his employment before he has been allowed the leave, the employer shall pay him full wages for the period of leave due to him.

Wages during leave

Every employee shall be paid for the period of his leave at a rate equivalent to the daily average of his wages for the days on which he actually worked during the preceding three months, exclusive of any earnings in respect of overtime but inclusive of dearness allowance.

Employment of adults, hours of work

No adult shall be employed or allowed to work about the business of an establishment for more than nine hours on any day or 48 hours in any week and the occupier shall fix the daily periods of work accordingly:

Provided that during any period of stock taking or making of accounts or any other purpose as may be prescribed, any adult employee may be allowed or required to work for more than the hours fixed in this section, but not exceeding 54 hours in any week subject to the conditions that the aggregate hours so worked shall not exceed 150 hours in a year:

Provided further that advance intimation of at least three days in this respect has been given in the prescribed manner to the Chief Inspector and that any person employed on overtime shall be entitled to remuneration for such overtime work at twice the rate of his normal remuneration calculated by the hour.

Explanation- For purpose of calculating normal hourly wage, the day shall be reckoned as consisting of 8 hours.