

SOCIAL AWARENESS SOCIETY FOR YOUTHS (SASY)

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Gender Policy

*"I Measure the Progress of a community
by the degree of progress which women have achieved"*

-Revolutionary leader Dr.Br.R.Ambedkar

1. Preamble:

SASY is a human rights and social development non-governmental organization working to ensure that Dalit ,Adivasis, women and children have access to justice, basic social services, protection, and full recognition in development partnership. Moreover, SASY was found on the principle of working with Dalits, underserved, marginalized and deprived women and children.

SASY is a registered NGO under the Societies Act of India – Reg. No: 7/1983, Date of Registration: 25.02.1983

2. The Context

SASY is working towards the liberation of Dalit¹ community who constitute 160 million population in India and 240 Million in Asia. Dalits formerly treated as untouchable, un-seeable, considered as Inhuman by the Hindu Indian Society. The Indian history and various literature refers the caste system has been existing from several thousands years ago .Historically The Hindu Dharma defined the genies of Human Race by creating four tire hierarchical caste system based on the birth and assigned different roles and denied certain rights. The people who opposed and denied to accept the Hindu system are excluded and expelled from main society and denied all fundamental rights and physically segregated from the rest of the community and treated as untouchable; also imposed different values like upper caste lower caste; purity and impurity, pollution etc.. Dalits forced to do all kinds of menial Works and made to believe it is their fate.

Organizational Vision:

A just society where the human dignity, human rights of the Dalit and Adivasis are respected

Similarly the women are considered as inhuman, treated as untouchable and not allowed to touch any household things during menstruation, denied self-identify and all fundamental rights. Inter caste marriages are prohibited by the Dharma. The worst form of practice was **Sati**² system, it was a Hindu religious believes and practice that a recently widowed woman either voluntarily or by use of force and coercion would have immolated herself on her husband's funeral pyre.

The Dalit women are faced multiple form of oppressions by Caste, Class, and Gender in Indian context.Thus patriarchy value system can't be seen in isolation or it will not be appropriate to say that all Indian women are affected only by the patriarchy system because Dalits women are affected by Braminical patriarchy system. In the caste based slavery the women from so called upper caste too ill treat and dominate men who are from the lower caste; which is similar to the Racial Based Slavery where a white women power over the black men. Hence Dalits Movements in India dawning lesson from black freedom struggle, the concept of Dalit Ideology, Dalit Politics, Dalit Literature, and Dalit Music includes Dalit Feminism for the liberation of Dalits. The Trans Gender is another dimension Gender Relation, again they are excluded and ill treated by the family and Society and deprived all basic rights as citizens of the nation.

¹ Dalits-Broken People, casteless, outcaste who believes in equality.

² Sati-the practice is abolished

The Indian Constitution article 17 prohibited untouchability and provides various affirmative legal mechanism to safe guard the rights of Dalits but still the untouchability practiced illegally and various forms atrocities are rampant against Dalits. The inequality between Dalits and Non-Dalits and gender disparity between Women and men, Dalit women and Non-Dalits women still exists. ***Therefore, SASY is constantly focusing on Dalit's rights and their development.***

Gender Discrimination and Gender violence is a global issue which is internalised and institutionalised through socialisation process operating at various level. It defines, promotes and sustains different Roles for Men and Women in the society; it is also varying community to community. ***Hence, it was realized that SASY should have its Gender policy formally, so that it is not only gives direction for the organization in practice, but also holds the organization accountable.***

SASY's Mission:

Facilitating efforts towards establishing a just society replete with human dignity by protecting and promoting the human rights of Dalit and Adivasis and fostering empowerment process for the Dalit liberation

SASY's vision of a desirable world is where the Human relations across Individuals, Families, Communities and Nations are characterised by Equality, Fraternity and justice. SASY believes in gender justice as a cornerstone of such relations. SASY's mission directs it to work towards promotion of policies, institutions and capacities that strengthen the voice and participation of the oppressed and the marginalised in improving their socio-economic status through democratic governance in society. This is

achieved through three broad strategies viz., Attitude and Behavioural Changes; Analysis and Knowledge building; Policy and Law Reform which operate in an integrated and interlinked manner in Self, Family, Organisation, Community and Global level.

SASY is committed to level the playing field for girls and women by ensuring that all children have equal opportunity to develop their talents. We work to ensure that all babies receive the best start to life through gender-sensitive, integrated early childhood care. We work so that all children are afforded quality education, one that prepares them for a productive life.

By recognizing and addressing discrimination against girls and women, success in the fight against all forms of discrimination [class, race, ethnicity and age] will become more likely, and more lasting. We have learned that entire societies develop when girls and women are enabled to be fully contributing community members. Equality between women and men is a fundamental right, a common value of every citizen, the achievement of growth, employment and social cohesion. Although inequalities still exist, SASY has made significant progress over the last decade in achieving equality between women and men. This is mainly through appreciating equal treatment legislation, gender mainstreaming and specific measures for the advancement of women.

SASY's analysis of the existing situation of discrimination in society provides the basis for identifying the poor and marginalised, especially women. It believes that gender discrimination necessitates focusing upon changing women's roles and status, as agents and leaders of change. One of SASY's core values is therefore to mainstream gender justice and equality through analysis of and action on the surrounding social realities. This core value is integral to SASY's vision and informs the organisation's interventions, into its own policies, systems, structures, programme priorities and plans.

3. Objectives of SASY's Gender Policy:

The gender policy of SASY aims to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are central both to programmes as well as organizational culture and behaviors by ensuring the below said objectives.

- To explicitly state the organizational commitment towards discrimination and gender

- To provide a direction towards building gender related agenda
- To provide a framework for effectively integrating gender concerns into the organizational agenda and policy domain
- To create equal opportunities and a conducive environment for women and men at work place
- To promote equal representation and participation of women in decision making at the professional/ programmatic and administrative levels.

4. **Basics of SASY's Gender Policy:**

SASY understands that gender refers to the attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the socio-cultural relationships between women and men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context specific and changeable. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in activities undertaken, access to and control over resources as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context, which also takes into consideration factors such as class, economic status, ethnic group and age.

SASY adopts gender perspective, which means focusing on both women and men and their relationships with each other and resources. In addition, it means working with a global perspective that allows for and appreciates diversity. The organization aims at mainstreaming gender by creating an enabling working environment that in turn attracts and helps to retain gender sensitive staff.

Since SASY is working to secure livelihoods of deprived communities it means achieving a better analysis of patterns of use, knowledge and skills regarding conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. Only with a gender perspective can a complete picture of human relationships and ecosystems be built up.

The gender policy is an integral part of all its organizational policies, programmes and projects and involves building a culture that understands the issues and policies, which respect diversity and gender, related concerns. A mere statement of policy and objectives does not ensure the concerns relating to addressing the gender. Towards achieving the above objectives, clear indicators need to be defined to evaluate and assess the organizations commitment towards gender equity on a periodic basis.

For this following systems would be put in place and necessary strategies would be tried out internally and externally:

5. **Strategies**

5.1. **At Organizational level:**

A) **Governance**

SASY Board is constituted with minimum one third women who believe in Gender justice with the Dalit perspectives. Similarly, minimum one person must women among three office bearers.

B) **Staff composition/representation**

Staff policies, service rules and regulations of SASY would be gender sensitive. Periodic reviews of the same would be done through a gender lens to ensure that gender sensitivity is maintained. Besides, these policies are framed in line with the government provisions.

- Recruiting adequate women staff and ensuring the balance also at senior levels; with an objective of achieving a numerical gender balance in all posts at all levels.
- Ensuring equal opportunities among male and female staff for personal growth, in promotion benefits, training and working conditions.
- Ensuring equitable representation and participation of men and women in the core group, Board Members and in various functional committees of the organization.
- Fostering an environment where non-discriminatory working relationships and respect for diversity in work and management styles is encouraged.

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES:

Equity: *Being sensitive and committed to reduce all forms of discrimination against women particularly Dalit and Adivasis women, girl Children and other vulnerable groups.*

Participatory processes: *Having faith in peoples capacities and their institutions*

Accountability: *Accountability with transparency*

Collaboration: *Developing synergies through networking and advocacy*

Team work: *Striving for quality, innovation and diversity*

Besides, SASY proposed to develop 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 SASY's gender policy and the role and functions within the organisation.

C) Performance Review plan:

All performance review forms of individuals by self or supervisors/peers/subordinates will have indicators to assess gender sensitivity in the overall performance.

D) Workplace

SASY is committed to create and promote gender sensitive work environment within the organisation and its branches / field offices. Towards achieving the goal, it would organise regular workshops / seminars and exposure to a variety of other inputs. Moreover, all the events / programmes organised by SASY both internal and external, will have a gender component and address gender specific needs of the participants. As well, SASY is thriving the below said gender needs in the work place.

- Providing a safe and secure workplace for women staff, free from sexual harassment with a Gender Complaints committee to look into specific concerns.
- Providing an enabling and friendly work environment where both men and women enjoy and actively participate in work. This includes providing flexible working hours and allowing working from home, wherever possible
- Extending work related concessions and relaxations for women staff depending upon the situations and requirements; e.g. providing secure transport facilities when they work late hours; giving relaxation over travel time for the next day for those in the field; ensuring security measures along with minimum basic facilities for women staff traveling in the field.

- Reviewing the organizational structure, functioning, problems in relation to gender imbalances among staff and the work environment time to time and taking definite steps to address the same
- Strategic orientation to staff in the field based programs and advocacy initiatives towards increasing women's access, control and ownership over the natural resources.
- Providing Maternity Leave on full pay and under probation, she will be eligible for leave without pay for the same length of period.
- Making efforts to develop infrastructure for childcare facilities in the office premises in order to ensure that the parents can bring their children in circumstances in which the child cannot be taken.

E) Staff capacity building

- Facilitating staff capacity building processes and trainings to enhance perspectives and conceptual clarity on Gender issues (*for all the staff members*). It will be an important component of the induction programme.
- Ensuring that all trainings (internal and external) facilitated by the organization are gender-sensitive.- a) training content/methodology/mode of facilitation b) logistics part -time/location of venue/crèche facilities/other logistics/first-aid kit.
- Conducting Gender trainings for both men and women; and ensuring participation of women in all the field level meetings and trainings.

F) Organizational policies and systems

- Making all HR systems and policies gender-sensitive and responsive, and integrating gender indicators into staff performance appraisal systems.
- Incorporating and explicitly mentioning gender sensitivity as an essential element in the tasks / job profiles in all terms of reference, including TORs for external consultants.
- Ensuring that the conceptual clarity and sensitivity on gender issues will be one of the important selection criteria in recruitment processes and capacity building efforts of staff
- Initiating and building the advocacy around gender balance and making efforts to integrate gender concerns into the scaling up and mainstream developmental programs

G) Staff benefits

- Following all statutory requirements related to maternity and paternity leaves.
- Ensuring that staff access to and use of information technology is gender equitable

5.2. Programmatic level:

SASY aims apt project activities towards appropriate participants, balancing consideration of gender roles and responsibilities with a commitment to advance strategic gender interests. In this regard, SASY created 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 with respect to the same. SASY monitors and evaluates all projects that measure the

relative impact on women and men, and on the relations between them. All reports and evaluations will also include a specific focus on the gender component.

A) In the field

- Furthering deliberate and intense efforts to promote participation of women and their collectives in various aspects of development and management.
- Facilitating participation and even representation of women in various institutional structures created for addressing human rights violation, enhancing social and economic empowerment and accelerating livelihood and natural resource management systems, etc.
- Analysis of gender disaggregated roles and work patterns, and make special efforts to reduce the work load of women
- Extending constant orientation of all the Community Based Organizations on gender perspectives in livelihood and natural resource management as part of long-term gender goals like formal recognition of women's rights over resources like land, assets etc.
- Ensuring equal wages to equal work for both men and women in the works as part of the programs, where SASY is directly or indirectly involved either as an anchor of the program or as a facilitating support service provider.
- Making special efforts to constantly identify vulnerable women and provide them the necessary support and guidance
- Sensitizing the men and mobilizing their support towards gender balance
- Building awareness and sensitivity by processing information and publishing communication material in diverse media to appeal different strata of people in our functional domain.
- Besides, the following basic principles are to be followed in mainstreaming gender:
 - Establishment of adequate accountability mechanisms for monitoring of progress within the institution programmatically.
 - Identification of issues and problems within the organisation will focus on the gender differences and disparities wherever they exist.

SASY's Thrust areas:

- *Protection and promotion of the human rights of Dalits, Adivasis, Women and Children.*
 - *Abolition of untouchability*
 - *Prevention of atrocities*
 - *Enforcement of the SC/ST (prevention of atrocities) act 1989.*
- *Gender equity & Women's rights and Empowerment*
- *Organizational Developmental services to CBOs*
- *Dalits and local self government*
- *Land and Shelter for Dalits*
- *Child Focused community Development*
- *Promotion of Livelihood for Economic sustainability*
- *Acceleration of comprehensive Natural Resource Management systems*
- *Building awareness on prevention of HIV/AIDS.*

6. Addressing the issues of Sexual harassment / discrimination

SASY planned to address the 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 redressed of their complaints.

7. Networking

- SASY would proactively make several efforts in promoting gender concerns in the work with development partners. It involves extending support to partners in organizing training programs, conducting gender studies, preparing resource material, providing documentation support etc.
- SASY would extend support to partner organisations in developing their own gender policies, strategies and programs
- SASY would further strengthen linkages with appropriate institutions to work on various women and children issues. Participation and contribution to the common platforms of women and children of all solidarity Institutions will further help the organization.
- Sharing Gender reports with our network members and partner organizations and also facilitating similar process within the partner organizations to promote gender sensitivity
- Associating with networks and organizations working on this agenda
- Supporting and expressing solidarity with partners at field level in taking up issues of discrimination or harassment against women

8. Documentation of Processes and Dissemination:

SASY planned to ensure a detailed documentation of all the processes related to the activities on the issue of gender within the organisation. These will be reported in the SASY Newsletter and Website regularly and easily accessible to all those who wish to use the same to promote and strengthen gender equality within their work spheres.

Note:

This is a policy statement, which outlines SASY's sensitivity towards Gender and its operational framework to address the related concerns. The exact operational procedures would have to be worked out in detail for all the above outlined statements in a consultative process; internally involving all the staff with possible external facilitation support. The idea of formulating gender policy for the organization started some time back. There were initial rounds of internal discussions within the team. Later a preliminary workshop on evolving the policy was anchored. Various staff concerns relating to gender were discussed and small teams were formed to work on various heads of the policy. The current Gender policy of SASY is an outcome of collective efforts of all the SASY team.
