

# GENDER POLICY



## Concept of Gender

- Gender is different from Sex.
- Gender is a socially constructed and sex is biologically determined. Gender issues differ from place to place depending on culture and tradition of that area.
- Gender includes both women and men. Since women are affected more and there is violence against women, there is a definite need to empower women and work with men.
- Women alone cannot bring sustainable women's development. There is a need to encourage male responsibility and male participation for women's empowerment. It is only when men break the moulds of society and express rather than suppress their emotions; they can become less violent towards women.
- When women become assertive the men should be able to acknowledge and sustain and be supportive.
- Empowerment of women mean – being assertive, realizing self worth, developing self concept, have access to all information, become aware of their rights and learn to demand.
- Gender is a cross-cutting issue and not a separate entity. It should be mainstreamed and integrated and should not become an independent activity.

## Rationale

The Constitution of India guarantees Equality to both women & men. This however remains as 'de jure' equality which requires to be translated into 'substantive' equality through affirmative action. It is recognized that inequalities in gender relations is the norm. The caste-class-patriarchal nature of society privileges men over women, leading to exploitation & oppression of women. Women are also victimized through violence. Association for Human Integrated Massive Social Action (AHIMSA) is making a conscious effort to address gender inequality within the organization & through its partner-led work.

AHIMSA clearly articulates both in its vision & mission statements the importance of Gender Equality & the focus on Gender Mainstreaming. It recognizes gender as a cross-cutting issue that is integral to the different areas of AHIMSA's thrust such as empowerment of women, livelihood promotion through sustainable agriculture, child development, socio-economic assistance to poor families, small & marginalized farmers along with their participation in governance.

To AHIMSA, Gender Equality is integral to its commitment to rights & hence is seen as an important aspect of the rights-based approach in the context of an all-

pervasive systemic gender discrimination & gender inequality. Gender based discrimination is the most widespread form of systemic discrimination, & gender inequalities pervade all families, societies & organizations. Commitment to rights & Gender Equality are cross cutting objective, filters through all programs.

It is clearly established in human rights norms that women & men are entitled on an equal & equitable basis to the enjoyment of human rights & fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. Women's rights are human rights & not special privileges. AHIMSA understands this & therefore aims at promoting these rights in the organization & through its partners working amongst the poor, marginalized women & men through means that address & remove the barriers that hinder the full enjoyment of their rights.

AHIMSA recognizes that gender relations & inequalities are due to unequal power relations which are major causes of poverty & gender discrimination. It further recognizes that women are not a homogenous group & therefore the discrimination & oppression meted out to them differs based on their social classification in terms of caste, class & religion. Women & girls do not enjoy the same status, power or access to & control over resources as men & boys. This is a violation of their rights. To realize AHIMSA's vision for Gender Justice, it must work to ensure that everyone has equal opportunity to express themselves & use their potentials irrespective of sex, age, caste, class, religion, HIV status or disability to the fullest.

AHIMSA's work at various levels has provided sample experience to introduce the gender perspective in its work. This experience has led AHIMSA to acknowledge that women's empowerment & recognition of women's rights are critical for sustainable development. AHIMSA's efforts & commitment is to provide space & opportunity to channelize the energy, effort & resources into processes to create resilient communities that value women, men, girls & boys equally. While AHIMSA highlights the need for women to have their space & time, it underlines the need to engage & involve men & boys in their efforts to improve the status of women & girls.

The aspiration for AHIMSA to be recognized as an organization that values gender as a core component of all its work begins with the staff, in programs, with partners & beyond. Therefore, to facilitate & translate AHIMSA's core values of Gender Equality & Gender Justice acknowledging that these have to be seen & addressed differently among the socially excluded groups.

## **Goal of AHIMSA's Gender Policy**

The goal of AHIMSA Gender Policy is to uphold & promote Gender Equality & Gender Justice as its core values by creating gender sensitive work place within AHIMSA Secretariat & its partner organizations through use of gender sensitive language, policies, programs & partnership and by advocating gender sensitive use & portrayal in media & all communication materials using gender sensitive language.

## **Objectives of AHIMSA's Gender Policy**

- To promote Gender Equality & Gender Justice in the organization through gender mainstreaming & positive discrimination towards women colleagues
- To promote the creation of a gender sensitive work environment within AHIMSA
- To facilitate the development of women leadership in the organization
- To ensure gender sensitive policies, programs & partnerships
- To encourage AHIMSA partners to promote Gender Equality within their organizations & in the community
- To advocate for gender mainstreaming & gender sensitive policy framework
- To periodically review the relevance of the policy

## **Institutional Level**

- The Board shall consist of equal number of men & women
- All Committees in AHIMSA shall consist of a minimum of 50% women
- The AHIMSA Secretariat & its partners will strive to have at least 50% women at Administration, Programs & Management levels
- All staff in the AHIMSA Secretariat & in partner organizations irrespective of their level shall uphold the gender values (in planning, appraisal, monitoring, reporting, data base etc.) & in their interactions show respect for each other
- AHIMSA shall undertake special efforts to induct women from socially excluded sections as staff
- AHIMSA shall identify issues & concerns within the organization to focus on gender differences & disparities wherever they exist & address them appropriately
- A gender sensitive recruitment policy where preference would be given to women candidates in appointments

- Human resource policies shall be gender sensitive
- All program related policies shall be gender sensitive in an explicit manner (goal, objectives, activities, strategies, indicators & budget)
- AHIMSA shall provide opportunities for women to enhance & equip themselves for upward mobility and for specialization in work related areas of interest
- AHIMSA will strive to provide both male & female staff equal facilities in terms of salary, travel etc.
- Space will be provided exclusively for women to discuss their problems both in the AHIMSA.
- In case of sexual harassment at the workplace a Sexual Harassment Complaints Committee shall be constituted & headed by a woman to address the issue
- AHIMSA staff shall always be committed to take appropriate action & address women's rights when they are violated
- Performance review of staff will have indicators to assess the degree of gender sensitivity of their overall performance
- AHIMSA shall organize periodic gender sensitization programs for all its partners
- Define the concept of gender (gender is different from sex While efforts will be made to empower marginalized women, AHIMSA will be inclusive of men; gender does not mean women alone. AHIMSA while creating women leadership will also simultaneously facilitate change among men to acknowledge it.
- AHIMSA will integrate “women's rights” perspective in empowering women.
- While working in areas like campaign against son preference, female infanticide, female feticide etc., AHIMSA will also work with boys and men with the same vigor.
- AHIMSA will work on an “inclusive approach” addressing the issues of the excluded communities as the widows, deserted, single women, elderly, MSMs, Transgender, Physically and Mentally challenged women and men.
- AHIMSA will train a core team from among the board member/advisor organizations in ‘gender sensitization’ and take it forward to reach others.
  - AHIMSA will ensure that gender is mainstreamed in the following program components:
    - Socio Economic Assistance to Poor Households

- Community Organization
- Community Development
- Child Development
- Livelihood promotion through Sustainable Agriculture
- AHIMSA will develop a training module on ‘gender sensitization’ as background material for the core team of trainers to educate others.
- Finally all stakeholders in the program (staff, clients, beneficiaries etc.,) will be facilitated to look through the “gender lens” as a practice and view gender as a cross-cutting issue and not as a separate topic

### **Program Level**

- AHIMSA’s core values of Gender Equality & Gender Justice shall get explicitly reflected into the partnership agreement so that AHIMSA can facilitate in strengthening this component within partner organizations at all levels
- AHIMSA will ensure that in all its programs at least 50% of women participate
- AHIMSA will ensure that there is equal participation of male & female staff in programs that it organizations
- AHIMSA shall facilitate in such a manner that all the groups demonstrate the core values of Gender Equality & Gender Justice in their organization level or terminate partnerships after a fair trial if the organization is nonresponsive
- AHIMSA shall have the gender related concerns in the mechanisms related to appraisal, monitoring, reporting & evaluation
- Gender analysis shall be an important criterion for applying all projects & programs of AHIMSA
- All AHIMSA programs shall concentrate on addressing practical needs & strategic needs of women

Policy Track Changes	
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Scrutinized & approved by:  
I.VICTOR,  
General Secretary,

