

**MANUSHER JONNO FOUNDATION (MJF)
Policy Transmittal Form
(for use of MJF staff)**

Title of the policy- **Gender Policy**

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Gender Policy

Manusher Jonno Foundation

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1. Introduction

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) supports rights and governance initiatives in Bangladesh. Since inception gender equity has been a core programme principle as well as part of organisational values and culture. It is mandatory to integrate gender into problem analysis, strategy development and measures of any project supported by MJF. Ensuring that an organisation addresses gender justice is an important criterion in the establishment of partnerships. One of MJF's major priorities is to create a gender sensitive environment within the organisation where other MJF policies and measures are consistent with, and supportive of, gender equity principles.

The rationale for adopting gender as a core principle is simple. MJF perceives gender equality not only as a development priority but also as a human right. All human beings should have equal rights and any form of discrimination and disparity between women and men is unacceptable. Discrimination and disparities created by the family, society or the state prevent women from enjoying other rights and entitlements.

MJF supports national and international commitments towards gender equality. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the international human rights treaty for women, requires all States parties to take "all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men" (Article 3). This includes not just revising discriminatory laws, but also formulating laws and policies to ensure non-discrimination, change attitudes, practices and procedures within Governments, ensuring that private organizations and individual citizens do not discriminate against women, and changing harmful cultural stereotypes. Bangladesh ratified the Convention in 1984. The Beijing Platform for Action recommended two parallel approaches to achieving gender equality: specific policies, programmes and resources for women's empowerment, and the integration of women's issues and gender equality perspectives into all policies, programmes and resource allocations (i.e. gender mainstreaming). The Sustainable Development Goal Five is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. In 2011 already the Bangladesh Government has developed the Women Development Policy and National Action Plan with the aim to mainstream gender from policy to practice level to promote gender equality.

MJF core principle related to gender

Actively promote gender equality, diversity and religious minorities

GOAL of MJF

Poor women, men and children achieve their rights, their well being and security ensured by accountable and transparent institution.

gender responsive manner, as well as to ensure a gender sensitive work environment for all staff.

Vision of MJF

A world free from exploitation and discrimination where people live in freedom, dignity and human security.

Mission of MJF

Right holders (especially the poor and marginalized) are capable of demanding fulfillment of their fundamental and basic rights and duty bearers are responsive, accountable and transparent.

Scope of the Policy

MJF has scope as well as challenges to ensure gender equality within its own organisation and through programmes, partnerships and advocacy. This Gender Policy is applicable for all staff, beneficiaries as well as stakeholders and partners of MJF. It is felt that a policy document, with guidelines, will assist MJF and its staff in translating the gender specific goals and principles into reality, thus contributing to the elimination of discrimination and inequalities.

Need for Revision

The Policy was reviewed and revised to (1) take into account changes in context, role, scope of work of MJF, partners and other NGO activities and (2) take into account past experiences, challenges and lessons learned.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The efforts to address gender equality in MJF will be guided by the following principles:

- A. Equality as a right. This is upheld by international standards in CEDAW, CRC, SDGs and national policies.
- B. MJF's programmes and operations are guided by human rights standards and principles.
- C. Root causes of gender inequality have to be addressed. This requires addressing discriminatory social norms and institutions which reinforce gender inequalities as well as advocating for and fostering legislation and policies that promote gender equality. Transformational change can only be achieved if structural constraints and unequal gendered power relations are addressed.
- D. Gender equality is a cross cutting issue. The policy seeks to integrate and mainstream gender concerns in all program efforts and institutional arrangements, as well as the organisation's operating environment.

- E. The policy seeks to assist MJF in integrating gender equity goals and objectives into its entire programming and organisational processes and structures so that these goals become internalised and institutionalised.
- F. It ensures that principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination are integrated and protected all through the organisation and its programmes.

3. GOAL AND OBJECTIVES of the GENDER POLICY

3.1 Goal

Contribute towards making MJF a gender sensitive organization with gender responsive programs and projects

The overall goal of this policy is to integrate and establish gender equity concerns within MJF and improve its capacity for developing programs and projects that will improve the social, legal/civic, political, economic and cultural conditions of the poor, disadvantaged and marginalized people of Bangladesh. In particular it seeks to provide a safe, enabling and dignified working environment for all staff.

3.2 Objectives

1. To provide a clear vision, guidelines and a consistent approach to MJF, its staff and partners for the promotion and integration of gender equity at all levels
2. To create organizational culture and practices within MJF and its partners which enable all genders to work together in an equitable, effective and mutually respectful manner.
3. To engage partners in joint approaches to promote gender equality

4. STRATEGIES

The policy objectives shall be achieved through the following strategies:

1. Sensitisation and capacity building of staff at all levels on adopting the principles and practices of gender equality in their personal and professional lives.
2. Ensuring the translation and dissemination of the policy to all persons employed in MJF.
3. Promoting appropriate education, sensitisation and creation of awareness on the responsibilities of management, Gender Committee and individual staff members to address gender concerns in their daily work relations as well as in program and project.

4. Adopting an explicit advocacy role in promoting gender equity.
5. Ensuring that MJF partners have gender equality policies and practices consistent with MJF's

5. ORGANISATIONAL MEASURES

Measures will be taken in the following areas:

- Political will
- Organisational culture
- Technical capacity.
- Accountability
- Budget allocation

The first three bullets above are dealt with in section 5 and the last two in section seven of the policy.

5.1 Political Will

Political will is to be demonstrated through putting in place a comprehensive Gender Policy that will translate into practice at all levels. This will require the commitment of sufficient technical and financial resources, as well as structural changes, to bring about an overall orientation towards gender equity. The principles of equal opportunity for all genders (women, men and third gender) need to be institutionalized. This includes equal opportunity in terms of access, use of resources and benefits and gender balance in all positions (not only in numbers), especially at strategic levels, whereby all staff are considered equal.

The adoption of gender equity as a strategic direction in programming has to be supported by adequate institutional capacity and appropriate orientation of staff. The following measures will be taken:

1. Formation and empowerment of the Gender Committee to regularly monitor the policy instruments and other institutional measures adopted to achieve gender equity. Members of gender committee will be drawn from Director level, mid level programme and finance team members (2) and representative from support staff.
2. Terms of Reference of the Gender Committee will be prepared in consultation with MJF staff.
3. Affirmative action in the recruitment of women will be a guiding principle for the achievement of an equitable staff sex ratio, especially at senior management level.
4. All organisational policies and procedures will be revised in accordance with the gender policy. The organisation's Strategic Plan will also reflect MJF's commitment to Gender Equality and be consistent with this policy.
5. The performance appraisal system will not include any criteria that are prejudicial to the achievement of gender balance in the organisation. Rather it will include criteria that

will assess the staff member's commitment to gender equality principles and ability to translate that into their work.

6. Some affirmative actions will be encouraged such as paternity leave, flexibility in leave, field visit and timing for female staff during special circumstances (pregnancy etc.), conveyance/benefit for assistant of nursing female staff etc.
7. Provision will be made for day care or a baby corner.
8. Staff and career development plans will be developed by the organisation in consultation with individual staff, to groom potential staff to take on new and/or greater responsibilities, keeping in mind the overall goals of ensuring gender balance within the organisation as well as increasing women's leadership.

5.2 Organisational Culture

It is the responsibility of all staff in general, all section heads, management team members in particular and the organisation as a whole, to build and sustain an organisational environment or culture that is supportive of "Gender Equity" as a programming goal. An enabling and inclusive workplace environment will be developed that promotes diversity abolishes inequality, discrimination and prejudice. The following measures will be taken:

1. A gender-sensitive leadership will be ensured that will confront both overt and subtle forms of inequality and discrimination in the workplace
2. Promote equitable sharing of power and decision-making between women and men at all levels of the organisation. This will include recruiting, training and supporting women in leadership and other positions
3. Enable all genders to access facilities (support services) and opportunities (study tours etc) that are needed to address their special needs. The organisation will try its utmost to provide for the safety and security of its staff.
4. Ensure the right of all staff to choose when, to whom and how to disclose information pertaining to their sexual orientation or gender identity, and protect all persons from arbitrary or unwanted disclosure, or threat of disclosure of such information by others.
5. A "zero-tolerance policy" will be taken towards sexual harassment. The procedures for dealing with this are included in the Operational Policy . These procedures will be reviewed and revised to ensure that they are consistent with the Bangladesh High Court guidelines on Sexual Harassment. A Sexual Harassment Complaints Committee will be formed accordingly.
6. Women will be supported to develop professionalism and work skills which will enable them to function effectively in the organisation. This will include developing social, communication, time management and management skills. It will also include guidance and mentoring on how to work in difficult environments and remote locations, if and when needed.

5.3 Technical Capacity

The following steps will be taken to enhance the organisation's technical capacity to equip staff with the skills and knowledge needed to make MJF a gender sensitive organisation and its

programmes gender responsive:

1. Gender awareness training for staff will be undertaken, with emphasis on building sensitivity to women's needs and issues and developing abilities to address women's special needs;
2. Staff participation in gender training will be given positive priority and all projects, departments and sections should have annual training targets for improving gender sensitivity and building competence in gender analysis;
3. Provision of gender training is a part of MJF commitment and its relevance and use must be made clear in terms of both staff performance criteria as well as program enhancement criteria;
4. Wherever possible, gender training should be integrated and incorporated into other training (project specific) or monitoring and evaluation training and should be taken into account in the planning phase of projects so that it is clearly stated in the project "Logical Framework";
5. Ensure follow-up training and refreshers training on gender sensitivity and gender analysis;
6. Design training which would ensure the maximum direct application of the tools learned (e.g. bring draft project designs for gender analysis and revision or conduct training in conjunction with a project needs assessment).
7. Special initiatives will be taken to develop and foster growth of women staff, including provision of, when necessary, counselling of female staff members facing abuse/violence at home as well as confidential counselling for female staff facing abuse/sexual infringement at the workplace;
8. Competencies will be built on gender analysis and conceptual clarity on equality issues will be promoted;
9. Special focus on violence against women will be built into training;
10. Special emphasis will be placed on capacity building of gender focal points and gender committee members;
11. Special training on conflict resolution will be provided in order to minimise tensions and resistance in relation to equality issues;
12. Skill will be developed to design gender sensitive monitoring indicators during project preparation.

6. PROGRAM MEASURES

6.1 Facilitating long-term structural change

MJF will implement long-term strategies of social change to address the causes of gender-based exclusion and discrimination

1. Gender discrimination compounds social discrimination. Women and girls of marginalized communities are doubly discriminate against – as community members and as women and girls. This is also true of members of the third gender. Therefore efforts to address social marginalization will address gender injustice as a specific area as well as other causes of discrimination.

2. Men and boys will be engaged to promote gender equality by challenging gender stereotyping and other root causes of gender discrimination.

6.2 Integrating gender in the programme/project cycle

Ensuring that gender analysis and actions to promote gender equality are included in all programmes will be done through the following:

1. Gender analysis and interventions will be included in MJF's own proposals/Business Case, thematic papers and the LFA/results framework and indicators set accordingly. MJF will integrate gender equality measures at all stages of the project cycle including analysis, planning, implementation and monitoring.
2. Ensure identification and prioritisation of basic problems and needs as well as strategic interests of women, men and third gender persons.
3. Staff capacity to undertake gender analysis of programmes will be enhanced and their effectiveness in facilitating partner organisations' gender responsiveness programming will be assessed.
4. Gender specific elements or gender dimensions will be included in all dimensions of log-frames or results frameworks of partner organisations.
5. Incorporate gender as an essential component in project evaluation, analysis and research.
6. To ensure the active participation of women in all levels of project implementation.
7. The Gender Advisor will have a key role in supporting activities related to Integrating gender in the programme/project cycle.

6.3 Engaging partners in joint approaches to promote gender equality and women's rights.

MJF mainly implements its programme through various partners. Gender responsiveness of partners will be an important criteria in partner selection. The following measures will be taken to address gender equality in partnership development:

1. During negotiation and revision of the project MJF will ensure gender integration at different stages of project cycle. A guideline will be developed and used to review projects by the gender committee to reflect relevant points and contextualize it in broader framework of HR and G (Human rights and governance)
2. Project proposals received from PNGOs will be reviewed using a gender lens
3. PNGOs will be supported to develop and implement gender policies
4. Partners will be encouraged to maintain gender balance in recruitment
5. MJF will promote gender sensitive measures within PNGOs and provide necessary budget for such measures.

6.4 Strengthening MJF's efforts to advocate for equal rights for women, men and third gender persons

1. MJF carries out national advocacy work on a selected number of governance and rights issues. In the case of gender equality the organisation will advocate for the formulation of laws and policies that will support gender equality or the reform of discriminatory laws and policies so that they do so.
2. As part of the advocacy MJF will ensure that the voices of women, girls and third gender persons are heard and that they can voice their own priorities and concerns thereby setting the agenda for MJF's advocacy work.
3. Gender equality will be promoted through campaigns which will prioritise issues that address barriers to gender equality. This might include equal wages, recognition of care work and accountability for and with girls and women. MJF will also assist partners in building in gender dimensions to their campaigns.

7. TRANSLATING THE POLICY INTO ACTION

The dissemination of the Gender Policy will be carried out in a manner to ensure clarity among staff at all levels, particularly at management and program leadership levels. Both the conceptual underpinnings of the policy as well as the policy formulation process itself must be well understood by all. To translate this policy into action and to ensure that gender equality is integrated across MJF's work and organisation, leadership, resources and technical capacity are needed. The adoption of gender equity as a strategic direction in programming has to be supported by adequate institutional capacity and appropriate orientation of staff.

7.1 Governance and Accountability

The Gender Policy will be approved by the MJF Board and management will be responsible for its implementation and monitoring

1. The Gender Advisor will oversee the implementation of the Gender Policy and monitoring of gender issues. S/he will prepare yearly action plans, annual budget and yearly reviews of progress. These will be presented by MJF management to its board on an annual basis for information and approval of the annual plan.
2. Observations and recommendations of Gender Advisor will be placed at the SMT (Senior Management Committee) meetings on a regular basis for discussion and decisions.
3. Each staff member of MJF plays an important role in upholding the Gender Equality Policy. All staff members are accountable for implementation of the commitment outlined in this policy
4. Management will ensure that all staff understands gender concepts and are aware of their roles and responsibilities with regard to the implementation of the policy.
5. Specific accountabilities – including deliverables, roles and responsibilities – will be included in internal action plans.

6. Indicators for staff performance will be elaborated and included into performance appraisal with regard to adherence to gender policy. This will be particularly important for staff at senior levels.

7.2 Development of technical capacity

1. Ensure all staff is equipped with the appropriate skills and knowledge needed to make MJF a gender sensitive organisation. Regular training and orientation will be arranged.
2. All new staff will be provided induction training which will include gender training and training on sexual harassment.
3. On joining staff will be provided a copy of the HR, Finance and gender policies and sexual harassment guidelines

7.3 Allocation of Resources

Necessary allocations of resources will be made for promotion of gender transformative/ re-distributive initiatives across the organisation.

7.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

1. To establish and utilize monitoring and evaluation systems which measures gender impact (positive or negative) of projects and programs and which will include processes for review and corrective action.
2. Review and revise monitoring tools and processes to ensure that gender dimensions and issues are addressed and information collected and analysed adequately.
3. To ensure that mid-term and final evaluation of projects and programme has integrated gender as an important criterion for evaluation.
4. To assess gender sensitivity of the organisation by donor conducted evaluation such as output- purpose review, cluster review or any other review.
5. A gender audit will be carried out every three years.
6. Staff responsible for projects will categorise projects accordingly to how far they integrate gender equality issue and monitor trends of gender integration across the programme as a whole

7.5 Time Frame

This policy is a living document and it will be reviewed at three years intervals.

Annex 1: Key Concepts and Definitions

1. Gender blind

Gender blindness refers to the non-recognition of distinctions between sexes, both biological as well as socially constructed distinctions, and the differences in the implications these distinctions have in terms of the needs and interests of women and men. Gender blindness, by not taking conscious account of these distinctions, assumes biases in favour of existing gender relations and thereby tends to exclude women and favour the perpetuation of male privilege.

The following practices have led to gender blindness:

- Compartmentalising: refers to the practice of treating social realities of women and men in segregated compartments as though these are isolated from each other and one has no bearing on the other. Compartmentalising tends to, therefore reinforce stereotyping male female dichotomies (e.g. 'technical and social', 'macro and micro' etc).
- Aggregating: refers to the use of aggregate categories which conceals differentiation and inequality within categories (e.g. household, poor, labour force, etc). This tends to homogenise women and men in these categories as having identical needs and interests.
- Externalising: refers to the tendency to assume gender attributes and gender relations as essential and absolute (i.e. therefore assuming that these cannot be changed). Thereby, biological attributes of women and men may be highlighted in rationalising the perpetuation of existing distribution of resources, opportunities and rights.
- Depoliticising: refers to a common tendency to conflate women with the private sphere and outside the realm of political intervention and men with the public sphere.

2. Gender Aware

Gender awareness is the recognition that development actors are women and men, and that women and men are advantaged and constrained in different ways with implications for women and men having differing needs, interests and priorities. Rethinking the assumptions and practice of gender blind policies through gender analysis and learning about gender differences have resulted in what is referred to as gender-aware policies.

3. Categories of Gender Aware Policy:

- Gender Neutral: Becoming gender aware does not necessarily imply adoption of gender equitable policies. Having become aware of the differences in needs and interests of women and having an accurate assessment of existing gender distribution of resources and responsibilities, one can adopt 'gender-neutral' policies whereby existing gender relations are not subjected to change. Such policies can contribute to correcting male bias in delivery and ensure that women and men are both targeted and both benefit in terms of practical needs without necessarily addressing any change in the relative social positioning of women and men.
- Gender Specific: Uses knowledge of gender differences to meet the practical needs of women or men.
- Gender Redistributive: Targets women, men or both in terms of a redistribution of resources and responsibilities towards redressing existing imbalances and seeks to transform existing gender roles, relations and identities.

4. Gender Disadvantage:

Cumulative effect of past and current discrimination against women and of the existing disparities between women and men in social, political, economic and health indicators. Disadvantage has a restrictive effect on access to opportunities and resources.

- Gender Intensified Disadvantage: Women suffer the same disadvantages as do men in the same class or socio-economic category, but these are more severe for women because of the additional factor of gender discrimination in the allocation of resources and responsibilities.
- Gender Specific Disadvantage: Women across classes and categories suffer a common subordination and are more vulnerable. However, the extent and nature of their subordination and vulnerability varies across class and category.
- Imposed Gender Disadvantage: The power of some groups to universalise their norms, prejudices and stereotypes as applicable and appropriate for all, thereby imposing additional disadvantage which is not intrinsic to the reality of the target group.

5. Gender Equality

Refers to equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for women and men. It does not mean sameness. In other words it does not imply identical rights, responsibilities and opportunities, nor does it imply equal numbers or percentages.

Equality includes both quantitative and qualitative aspects. The quantitative refers to distribution issues whereas the qualitative refers to valuation issues.

6. Mainstreaming:

Mainstreaming implies the effective inclusion and system-wide integration into the main current. Mainstreaming, when used in the context of gender equality and development implies that attention to equality between women and men should pervade all development policies, strategies and interventions. It is not simply about the participation of women, but more importantly about the recognition, consideration and integration of equality concerns in relation to problem analyses, policy formulation, program and project planning processes as well as institutional practices. It implies that this will be done effectively by both women and men.

7. Practical gender need

Practical gender needs refer to those needs which are manifest in everyday life in order that men and women can fulfil their socially ascribed roles and responsibilities prevalent in a given culture at a given historical moment.

8. Strategic gender interests

Strategic gender interests arise out of the fact that men's and women's needs are gendered, arising out of the underlying structural inequalities in resources, rights and responsibilities which determine and define inequality in a given culture. Men and women have different stakes in defending or transforming existing gender relations.

9. Transformatory potential

Transformatory potential is a conceptual criterion which attempts to bridge the everyday practical concerns of women and men with the larger goal of social transformation.