

GENDER POLICY

INTEGRATING GENDER PERSPECTIVES IN THE WORK OF MASHAL



Mashal
20-C, Pataliputra Colony

P.O. Patna
Bihar
Pin: 800013

Foreword by the President

At Mashal, we believe that social transformation cannot be achieved without gender justice. Women, men, and people of all gender identities must have equal opportunities, dignity, and the freedom to participate fully in social, economic, and cultural life.

This Gender Policy is an expression of our unwavering commitment to inclusiveness and equity in all our work. It is grounded in the belief that gender is not just a women's issue but a human rights issue. It is essential that our policies, programmes, and institutional practices reflect sensitivity, fairness, and respect for all.

As President of Mashal, I urge every staff member, partner, and stakeholder to not only understand this policy but to internalize and practice it in their day-to-day work. Let us lead by example, ensuring that Mashal continues to be a space of justice, peace, and dignity for all.



Sister Mary Alice,
President, Mashal
Date: 12.07.2025

Integrating Gender Perspectives in the work of MASHAL

Background

MASHAL is a charitable social organization, registered under **Societies Registration Act, 21, 1860 (Reg. No: 708/2000-01)** It has its registered office in 20-C Patliputra Colony, P.O. Patliputra, Patna, Bihar, India. MASHAL works in the field of peoples' empowerment and development. It is an apex body comprising 4 integrated healthcare institutions and 9 social work centers. The 12 units of Mashal are in the State of Bihar and one unit in the State of Assam.

Mission & Vision

Vision: An Egalitarian Society Based in the values of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

Mission: Committed to accompany and to enable the marginalized communities to affirm and uphold their rights and dignity

Rationale

In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, decision-making opportunities as well as exercise of human rights. These differences are socially constructed and learned through socialization processes and are therefore context specific. These gender inequalities intersect with other factors such as class, race, economic status and ethnic group resulting inequitable patterns of exposure to conflict, injustice and exploitation, and differential access to and utilization of information, care and services. This creates an imbalance between the development outcomes for men and women, as issue which is increasingly being recognized and emphasized in the international development for a as well as academic circles. Taking cognizance of this reality and in keeping with its long-standing concern with peace, justice and equity MASHAL will, as a matter of policy and good development practice, initiate gender mainstreaming in all spheres of its work. This action is in consonance with the gendering of the International Development Policy as witnessed in the UN Women Development conference from Mexico City (1975); Copenhagen (1980); Nairobi (1985); Beijing (1995); Engendering of

other UN Conferences Rio De Janerio (1992), Vienna (1993) Cairo (1994). This action is also necessary in terms of the gender disparity in basic human development in India as evidenced by the skewed population sex ratio (940 in 2011) as well as the negative imbalance between the gender Related Development Index (GDI) value and the Human Development Index (HDI) values of India, making it rank below (134) countries out of (187) countries with both HDI and GDI values in 2011.

Understanding of Gender:

The terms sex and gender are often used interchangeably in the vernacular. However, in a medical and technically scientific sense, these words are not synonymous. Increasingly, the term gender is being accepted to define psycho physiologic processes involved in identity and social role. Therefore, it is not uncommon to hear references to "gender". It is defined by one's own identification as male, female, or intersex; gender may also be based on legal status, social interactions, public persona, personal experiences, and psychologic setting.

Sex: Identifies the biological differences between men and women, such as women can give birth, and men provide sperm. Sex roles are universal.

Gender: Identifies the social relations between men and women. It refers to the relationship between men and women, boys and girls, and how this is socially constructed. Gender roles are dynamic and change overtime.

- That gender refers to the attributes and opportunities associated with being male, female and transgender and the socio-cultural relationships between women and men.
- These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially contracted and are learned through socialization processes
- These are context specific and be changed.
- The actual differences and inequalities between women and men are in activities

undertaken, access and control over resources as well as decision-making processes and opportunities.

- Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context which takes into consideration several factors such as race, ethnic group, caste, economic status, class, group and age.

Gender mainstreaming initiatives are in sync with the efforts towards gender equality which strives towards gender justice in all its development intervention as well as institutional setups.

This policy also falls into the broader context of the five years Strategic Planning of **MASHAL**.

Aims and objectives

Gender policy of MASHAL seeks to ensure that all researches, policies, programmes, projects and initiatives with MASHAL involvement addresses gender issues. This will contribute to increase in the coverage, effectiveness, efficiency and ultimately the impact of development interventions for women and men. At the same time contributing to achievement of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda of poverty eradication and women empowerment. This policy will focus, address and integrate gender issues at the institutional and programme level ensuring gender justice and equity.

Institutional Level

- Promote equal representation and participation of women in decision making at the administrative levels.
- Maintain gender sensitivity in all policies pertaining to staff recruitment, induction, and performance reviews.
- Create an enabling working environment within the organization that attracts and retains gender sensitive staff.
- Facilitate the Health Centers and Social Work Units to close the gender gap in employment of their work forces, if any.
- Undertake gender- responsive planning, implementation and evaluation of policies

programmes, and projects.

- Provide guidance and technical help to likeminded NGOs in this aspect.

Programme level:

- Integrate gender equity across the programme management cycle and in strategic planning
- Carry out gender analysis, gender budgeting and gender audits for all programme interventions
- Focus on the gender component in all evaluations and reports
- Provide qualitative and quantitative information on the influence of gender on priority intervention areas such as education, health, micro-credit, human rights, sustainable agriculture, skill training, care of girls in distress and violence against women.

Organizational arrangements for implementation:

MASHAL has been working on gender related issues through women empowerment interventions. It believes in restoring dignity to women respecting their fundamental rights for equal opportunities and equal wages. It shall:

- Take necessary steps to ensure that the policy is translated into action in both technical and management aspects of MASHAL programmes.
- Ensure the successful incorporation of gender mainstreaming at institutional and programme levels.
- Assist and support the development of methodologies and material for gender analysis, standard terminology to ensure coherent communication about gender issues, a strategy for appropriate capacity building across the organization and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.
- Collect and disseminate on-going information such as case studies of “good practice” in mainstreaming gender in various development issues and contribute to the building of an appropriate evidence-base on priority gender-related issues.

Mashal shall institutionalize mechanisms for building capacity among the staff by providing information, training or technical support from gender consultants in order to ensure the policy's success. It shall develop mechanisms, appropriately staffed and resourced, and strategies to promote the integration of gender issues in development interventions.

Conclusion

This gender policy not only gives directions to MASHAL in practice, but also holds MASHAL accountable in its commitment towards gender justice and equity. Successful realization of this policy will contribute towards providing an enabling environment for both women and men within the organization, various partners and the communities with whom MASHAL is working and strengthen the gender sensitivity among all.

Second Edition Approved by:

Governing Body of Mashal

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Chinnamma

Chinnamma KC,
Secretary,
Mashal

