

Code of Ethics & Conduct for Ekta



Ekta

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Chapter 1. Identity and organisation principles.

The entity was created, organised and operates legally and functionally as an society, that is, **a non- profit organisation for development and humanitarian action** aimed at working in the area of Livelihood, Disability, health, child rights & disaster on the need to promote the value of social justice and solidarity with disadvantaged people. This definition implies that it is independent of any government or intergovernmental agency and that the financial benefit generated by its activities is exclusively devoted to the fulfilment of its mission. In its Vision, Mission and Values statement, the principles and objectives Ekta pursues are summarised in:

Vision: Dreaming of a just, equitable & sustainable society where vulnerable can lead a healthy & dignified living without any discrimination by fulfilling their basic necessities, enjoying their rights & discharging their duties.

Mission: Ekta plays a role of a catalyst and adopts participatory approach for advancing the cause of the vulnerable, creating opportunity and building up their capacity. And we have addressed main issues of food insecurity, displacement, migration, tribal identity, discriminations, child abuse, school dropout, child labour & community health issues through active involvement of CBOs & target group.

Values

For this reason, our activity has always been oriented by a series values and guiding principles which the staffs & members of organization should not compromise with the ethics & value systems. Details summarised as follows:

- Believe in peoples' participation in all community works
- Respect & adhere to gender equality & equity
- Ensure honesty, transparency, accountability and impartiality in all our works
- Are committed to the cause and the organization
- Put utmost importance to people's custom, tradition, practices, culture, resources, manpower, skill, knowledge, experiences, techniques etc.
- Work within the true spirit of the democratic principles of the organization & Indian Constitution
- Give stress on tribal, dalit and other disadvantaged sections

Chapter-2: Activities of the Organisation. Lines of Action.

The activities defined in organization's mission and its concretion within the framework of organization's aims & objectives which has been mention in memorandum of association documents (Article 3 A to H) And also mention focused aims, objective & strategy its five years strategic planning documents which has been developed **professionally, effectively and efficiently**. The lines of action of the Organisation, in order to fulfil its mission, are the following:

2.1: Disability

- Community based inclusive development for Person/Children with disabilities
- Early Intervention of children with disabilities (Education, nutrition, assistive devices, health therapeutic intervention and health)
- Inclusive Education for children with disabilities (community/institution base inclusive education support with involvement of schools & Anganwadi Centre)

- Livelihood support
- Facilitate to linkage different entitlements for both person with disabilities & their carers.
- Intervention through Disabled People's Organization, Carers/Parents groups & federation.

2.2 Child Rights

- Education support for school drop out.
- Rescue children from difficult situations.
- Address issues of child marriage, child labor and abuse.

2.3 Sustainable livelihood

- Climate resilient agriculture through promotion of traditional farming
- More focus maximum use of land, local available resources for livelihood enhancement.
- Nutrition based livelihood
- Livestock promotion
- Micro, Small & Medium enterprise.
- Vocational skill & Skill up gradation

2.4: Health

- Strengthening Community health system in rural outreach pocket.
- Address issues of -HIV/AIDS.
- Referral linkage health services
- Capacity building of grassroots Health Service Providers.
- Special drive for COVID-19

2.5: Disaster

Address Disaster issues as when affected operational or any non-operational areas.

- Disaster preparedness
- Post disaster restoration, relief & need base support for affected target group.

Chapter 3. Organisational Criteria

3.1 Good governance.

3.1.1 The structure and system of governance are clearly specified in the organic documents (By-Laws and Internal Regime Regulations/Article: A1 to 8 & B1 to 16) and available to all parties involved. These documents contain the rules governing the operation of governing bodies (General Body & Governing Body) their responsibilities, the procedure for nominating and appointing members, as well as the conduct of this body.

The organisation develops these and other guidelines through the documentary system (manuals and procedures) that facilitate, among other measures, regular and permanent monitoring by the governing body of the operational and technical functioning of the entity based on planning strategic and annual meeting proposed by management and approved by the Board annually.

The Governing Body is made up of individuals who voluntarily commit themselves to the values and objectives of the organisation, devoting their time, knowledge and skills to make possible the fulfilment of

the mission. Likewise, they are expected to be able to offer considerable contributions to the organisation, be they economic, material, self-dedication or third-party support.

Transparency and Good Governance of Organization should periodical review (at least once in a three year) with the support of external consultant for further promote its continuous improvement.

The Good Governance indicators stated in the By-Laws are:

- Minimum number of members of the governing body (GB): 7 people with 50% women reservation with open space for SC/ST/Minority/3rd Gender/Person with disabilities.
- No any blood or marital relation membership in General Body & Governing Body.
- The nomination and replacement of positions of the GB takes place every 5 years.
- Board meeting should 4time in a yearly basis.
- The quorum for Governing Body meeting is 2/3rd of the total members thereof respectively.

Conflict of interests. A Member's personal interests should never influence their judgment or the decisions they make on behalf of Ekta. The organisation establishes and defines in its management system the corresponding policies and procedures on how to avoid or resolve such conflicts. To this end, it has developed the procedure for Conflicts of interests in a separate policy published and available to any interested person. This procedure defines courses of action in order that the interests of the entity prevail over the personal interests of its members, and establishes rules on the way to avoid or solve such conflicts. The personal interests of a Member must never influence their judgement, nor the decisions they may make on behalf of organization. This procedure defines under which circumstances a Member must:

- Refrain from carrying out specific actions;
- Inform their supervisor of such actions;
- Obtain written approval from a superior.

Any person, both within and outside the organisation, that might identify a situation of conflict of interests, should notify the organisation through the e-mail address info@ekta.org.in, activating immediately the action protocol established in the Conflict of Interest Control Procedure by the independent committee of the organization.

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3.2 Transparency Policy.

The organisation will annually publish on its website the results of the financial audits, which are available to all and any who request them.

☐☐Annually publish information on the activities, programs, available resources and destination of the activities, detailing the distribution of their expenditures, specifying the amounts allocated to administrative expenses.

☐☐With regard to promotional materials, the organisation will ensure that they are correct and clearly and truthfully represent the mission and programs of the organization. Any information/Data will not include exaggerations of facts or omission of information, nor any communication or images that might create a false or misleading impression.

3.3 Combating fraud and corruption.

Ekta strongly opposes and denounces corruption, bribery, and any other improper or illegal behaviour in financial and organisational matters. For this purpose, it has a Policy against Fraud and Corruption through which organization can detect and, if necessary, manage cases of corruption, as well as those breaches of the Code of Ethics and Conduct.

Neither organization, nor any of its associate/affiliates shall offer, promise, give or solicit, directly or indirectly, illicit payments or other improper advantages to obtain or retain any benefit. Neither will they request nor expect such advantage from any Entity, by any means.

Ekta will work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery. It will respect applicable legislation on anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism. Based on our Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy, we support and inspire the actions of all of us who form Ekta in the fight against fraud and corruption, through awareness, encouragement and challenge. The members of organization, aware of this Policy, will extend it to their staffs, volunteers & Network/CBO partner's counterparts and target population.

On the website of the organization, any individual or collective person, internal or external to the organization can know the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy of Ekta, and if they consider it convenient, they can file a complaint about corruption with the organization - through the following channels:

- A written report addressed to the organisation, presenting the case to the attention of the Ethics Committee.
- An e-mail to the address info@ekta.org.in.
- An anti-corruption form, published on the web together with the Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct, which is automatically forwarded to the Ethics Committee.

From that moment on, an investigation process is opened that guarantees the independence of the parties that will carry it out, as well as the confidentiality and integrity of both the complainant and the accused, ensuring that the conclusions and recommendations adopted in the investigation will be followed up in a timely manner.

Chapter 4. Performance criteria.

4.1. Human Resources (HR).

For Ekta, the people who make up the team are its greatest strength and the organisation maintains a determined commitment to the development and professionalisation of the human team, through the application of a competency-based and results-oriented human resources management model, ensuring equal treatment and non-discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, age, religion, sexuality, culture or disability materialized in Ekta's Human Resources Policy. The different functions of the Human Resources area are framed in the competence-based management model and are listed below:

- Selection.
- Induction.
- Staff development.
- Remuneration and reward system.
- Performance appraisal.
- Knowledge management.
- Prevention of Occupational Hazards.

- Equal opportunities and respect for diversity.
- Transparency and anti-corruption.
- Communication and participation.

4.2 Data Protection (DP)

In terms of data protection, Ekta complies with the provisions of the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data.

To this end, the necessary technical and organisational measures have been taken to ensure that the process of implementing the protection of personal data is properly managed.

On the organisation's website any person can access the Ekta Privacy and Data Protection Policy, which is shared in all our relations. Likewise, all persons who join the organization as employees or volunteers are informed of the Personal Data Protection Policy of the organization team, through the Privacy Notice and Confidentiality and Secret Duty Agreement.

- All soft copy of financial & program data of the organization should backup system before any loss of data due to crash of system or any reason for data damage.
- All hard copy of the program, finance & legal data should proper storage in a safe place of the organization to avoid damage. Data should storage at least for 10 years after windup of any project.

5. Principles of Fundraising and Management

Ekta only accepts funds that are consistent with its mission, and that do not compromise its fundamental principles, nor its ability to handle relevant matters with total freedom, depth and objectivity. It does not tolerate unethical activities.

- i. The principles of transparency, ethics and accountability that govern the organisation in the management of financial resources and investments will ensure that:
- ii. The provenance of funds does not prevent the free action, nor condition in any way the attainment of the entity's mission objectives.
- iii. The donor's will in relation to the final destination of the finalist funds is respected at all times.
- iv. The relations of collaboration with donor, CSR & Government respect at all times the values of independence, transparency and effectiveness established by this policy and professional codes of ethics.
- v. The transparency and coherence of all financial transaction, utilization & activities.
- vi. As per the donor, CSR & government guideline project team should submit periodically program, finance & MIS report.
- vii. Fundraising activities will always respect the guidelines of truthfulness, avoiding misleading messages. Funds will be requested only for the activities to which the organisation can respond adequately, always avoiding the use of pressure or blame-attributing tactics.

Ekta facilitates the external control of its activities and resources, its relations with other organisations and all contacts with public administrations, the public, donors, partners, target group and other interested parties. Therefore, it ensures that:

- I. The governing body, staff and volunteers do not maintain any relationship with the donor or potential donor of a personal benefit or any relative, friend, associate, colleague, and so on.
- II. Confidential information regarding a donor or donation is not disclosed to unauthorised parties.

- III. The information disclosed is accurate and presented in an appropriate context as defined in the Code of Conduct, and respects the guidelines of the communication, advertising and image use code.
- IV. Annually, Ekta prepares and makes available to the public information about its programs, services, relationships with other public and private bodies, composition of the management and technical team, and funding, in a timely and truthful manner.

This information is published on its website, in the activity report which is also published on paper and accessible to all partners, as well as the complete report with the annual accounts submitted to an external audit.

Ekta, as a recipient of funds for specific purposes and as a guarantee to donors, partners and collaborators, will safeguard these funds in a transparent, ethical, safe and effective manner, giving priority to the basic criteria of security, liquidity and utilization purposefully.

5.2 Ethical purchasing-Procurement.

Ekta selects its suppliers as partners for the development of its work, and therefore we select suppliers that work in accordance with this Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct, and will apply the same principles defined in the relationship with suppliers. The organisation will particularly consider the suppliers/Vendor/service provider who subscribe to this code of ethics. And organization should strictly follow all the code of conducts of finance & procurement policy with the involvement & approval of finance & procurement committee.

In the execution of the purchases, Ekta applies the principles of: Transparency, Legality, Conflict of interests that govern this code, promotes local consumption and fair trade and guarantees through the management system implemented the Equality of treatment and proportionality between potential suppliers.

The principles of Social Responsibility will be applied during any procurements, such as: protection of workers' and children's rights, environmental protection, etc.

Chapter - 6. Relations with local CBOs, institutions and target group.

Relation with local CBOs/Institutions-counterparts.

The construction of the relationship with its counterparts and target group is for Ekta the basic element of any joint work, and its objective is to develop a relationship of trust, mutual learning, and knowledge exchange in order to optimise the planning and execution processes between institutions and ensure the strategic objectives defined in the joint work. Thus:

- In the first contact between a local existing institution/CBOs/Network and Ekta, institutional strategic planning documents are exchanged, considering as the fundamental framework from which to evaluate the relevance of future joint actions
- The relation is established as a partnership, where the synergies and vision of the organisations are verified, and common work guidelines are established based on shared objectives.
- For the identification of its counterparts, Ekta establishes a series of previous criteria that determine the field of action in Cooperation and the organisations with which it intends to work, all previously defined and communicated to the parties involved.

- Initiatives supported by Ekta must meet the requirements of quality and technical coherence in terms of their identification, formulation, participation of the target population and their viability.
- Ekta will inform the counterpart in a timely manner of the status of the project and of the different steps necessary for its achievement, formulation, request, follow-up, etc., so that the latter can act accordingly at any time.

Relation with the target group population.

The organisation ensures the participation of the target population throughout the life cycle of the projects, both in the initial needs identification phase, the formulation and design phase of the proposals, the implementation of the proposals and at the end of the intervention, with the evaluation of the results achieved and the compilation of lessons learned. To this end, participatory methodologies are applied, with the objective of involving community members to obtain and consider their opinions and expectations. It is important to clearly inform of the role played by each of the actors involved:

- Ekta responsible for the coordination of the different stages with the actors involved and, ultimately, responsible for accountability to the donor, for achieving the expected results, and for the execution of the allocated economic resources.
- Donor organisations: contribute their financial and in-kind contributions to the realisation of projects and programs.
- *Target population*: participate through contributions and input in the "participatory workshops" organised, as well as during the different phases of the projects. This can be translated into tangible contributions in labour or in carrying out training activities, among others.

Both the field & program staff in the intervention areas are responsible for disseminating the role and function of each one of the actors in the development of the projects, such as the planning, execution and expected and obtained results, always upholding humanitarian principles in all our interventions and making a requirement of their observance by our partners and collaborators.

In our relations both with the local CBOs/institutions - counterparts, and with the target population, we will take very much into account what is established in the related to sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as in the Protocol of Prevention Against Harassment, where it is indicated that the rights of all people will be respected, also of the children, contributing to generate a work environment characterized by mutual respect, integrity, dignity and non-discrimination, having to denounce the behaviors or bad practices that are detected before the independent Internal Complaint Committee of Ekta.

Chapter-7. Cross-Cutting Issues: Protection of the Environment, Gender, Children, Person with disabilities and Human Rights.

Ekta demands not only for its staff but also for the communities where it develops its activity, zero tolerance to situations of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, as well as any kind of unethical behavior, such as discrimination, forced and child labor, modern slavery, exploitative practices towards staff, partners, contractors or target group, illegal employment and intentional environmental damage. Zero tolerance means that any situation that is detected or reported as a result of the above points will be investigated by

the Ethics Committee and, if necessary, referred to the competent administration to resolve the case in question.

Protection of the Environment, Gender, Children, and Person with disabilities and Human Rights issues should incorporate when planning any project as cross cutting issues.

Chapter - 8. Legislative framework.

Ekta fulfils its obligations by submitting to the laws of the nation in which it executes its works. It also guarantees in all its activities the strict compliance with the applicable regulations, at national, regional and local as well as international levels when applicable.

The following categories must be acquainted with Ekta's Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct, having signed the Contract of Adherence to the Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct.

- Ekta's staff and volunteers
- Partners and members of the Board.
- All staffs (Admin, field, program, part time staffs)
- Volunteers (both paid & non paid)

The dissemination of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct is the responsibility of the organization itself. With a view to ensuring correct monitoring and observance of this Code by all stakeholders, an Ethics and Conduct Committee has been established. And the followings should be the minimum action for dissemination & orientation.

Dissemination in organization website, circulate among the staffs, target group, board members & scope for distribution as when request by any public or institutions. Regular orientation for staffs & members

Orientation for new staffs & volunteers during induction.

CHAPTER 12. DISCIPLINARY REGIME

With a view to ensuring compliance with Ekta's Ethics Code and Standards of Conduct, the following Disciplinary Regime has been established. Violations to the Code are classified as minor, major, and severe, and sanctions will take into account and will be based on:

- Degree of intentionality.
- Damage to the organization's principles or interests.
- Reiteration or repeat violations.

Chapter – 9 Violations of the Code by level of severity

Minor violations:

- Misuse of the organization's equipment and resources for personal or private matters.

Major violations:

- Reiterated neglect in dealing with target group and / or work colleagues.

Severe violations:

- Serious verbal offence or physical, psychical, or moral abuse towards target group of Ekta's operational area or their families, towards co-workers, or towards professionals of other entities collaborating in the intervention.
- Undue appropriation of material, documental, economic goods pertaining to the target group, the entity, or other members of staff.
- Sexual harassment as defined in the Criminal Code.
- Workplace harassment.
- Reiterated major or severe violations, although of different nature, during the span of a year, when sanctions have been imposed.
- Serious infringements of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct of Ekta, as well as all others the organization has adhered to
- Homophobic / biphobic / transphobic harassment

10 Sanctions

According to the classification of violations by severity, the following sanctions may apply:

For minor violations:

- Verbal warning.
- Written warning.

For major violations:

- Written warning.
- In the case of staff, suspension from duty without pay from 3 to 14 days.

For severe violations:

In the case of staff:

Suspension from duty without pay from 15 to 30 days.

- Forfeiture of promotion to a higher level for no longer than one year.
- Termination of employment.
- In all other cases:
- Temporary suspension of collaboration.
- Permanent suspension of collaboration.

The General Body of Ekta approves this update to this Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct on 14th August 2025.