

Gender Policy, Ekta



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1st updated the policy on August, 2023

2nd updated the policy on September, 2025

Background of Gender Policy

Ekta has always recognized **gender equality and disability inclusion** as fundamental human rights and cornerstones of social justice. The organization believes that sustainable development and inclusive growth can only be achieved when women, men, persons with disabilities, and people of all gender identities enjoy equal rights, opportunities, and dignity.

Over the years, Ekta has worked closely with communities across different regions, addressing issues of health, education, livelihood, disability inclusion, and empowerment. In this journey, it has become evident that **gender inequality and disability-based discrimination** remain some of the most significant barriers to achieving social change. Women and girls with disabilities, in particular, continue to face multiple layers of exclusion, limited access to resources, and marginalization from decision-making processes.

In response, Ekta has developed this **Gender and Disability Inclusion Policy** to guide its programs, practices, and internal governance. The policy seeks to integrate gender and disability perspectives into all aspects of planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. It also reinforces Ekta's commitment to creating a safe, inclusive, and equitable workplace, ensuring equal opportunities for all staff and stakeholders, and challenging discrimination of every form.

Principles:

Ekta believes that **gender equality and disability inclusion** are fundamental human rights and essential for sustainable, people-centered development. Gender equality is not only a women's issue but must engage men, women, and persons of diverse identities equally.

We recognize that patriarchy and socially constructed gender roles continue to create barriers, especially for women and girls, including those with disabilities. These barriers prevent full participation in social, economic, and political life. Ekta is committed to challenging these inequalities both in society and within its own organizational systems.

Our gender policy is grounded in **feminist principles**, aiming to promote dignity, equity, and justice for all. In line with this, Ekta's commitment will be guided by:

- Treating gender equality as a **core organizational value**, not just a statement of intent.
- Recognizing structural inequities and working to address them through **affirmative actions** for women and persons with disabilities.
- Building an organizational culture that respects **diversity and inclusivity**.
- Promoting **democratic practices** and ensuring that the voices of the most vulnerable are prioritized.
- Reviewing all programs, processes, and behaviors through a **gender and inclusion lens**.
- Allocating adequate resources to ensure every intervention reflects gender justice and disability inclusion.

Scope

The purpose of this policy is to guide how Ekta's programs and activities contribute to advancing **gender equality and inclusion**. It provides staff and management with a clear understanding of cross-cutting issues and how these will be considered in project design, implementation, evaluation, and staff performance appraisals.

This policy complements Ekta's project strategies and planning processes, ensuring that gender equality is integrated into all proposals and organizational practices. The complete policy document will be available on Ekta's website: www.ekta.org.in

Goal

The policy aims to help Ekta achieve **gender equality and disability inclusion** by placing justice and equity at the centre of all its internal and external engagements. It will act as a framework to assess the quality and effectiveness of our efforts and guide the organization in allocating human and financial resources to realize our vision of a society free from patriarchy and discrimination.

Objectives

- a. To clearly state Ekta's commitment to **gender equality and disability inclusion**.
- b. To provide direction for building and advancing a gender- and disability-sensitive agenda.
- c. To establish a framework for effectively integrating gender and disability concerns into organizational policies and programs.
- d. To create **equal opportunities** and a safe, inclusive workplace for women, men, third gender, and persons with disabilities.
- e. To promote **equal representation and participation** of women and persons with disabilities in decision-making at professional, programmatic, and administrative levels.

Organizational Arrangements for Implementation

- All programmes, campaigns, and advocacy work will be guided by **gender and disability analysis** at every stage – planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Programmes will support **women, girls, and persons with disabilities** to secure their social, economic, political, and cultural rights, including safety, dignity, equal opportunities, and freedom from violence.
- Both **women and men, including boys and young men**, will be engaged as partners in challenging patriarchy and promoting equality.
- Partnership selection will ensure that allies have the **gender and disability sensitivity** needed to promote inclusive and non-discriminatory practices.
- Ekta will build the **knowledge and skills** of partners and staff to address gender inequality and promote disability inclusion in all projects.
- Planning, monitoring, and evaluation systems will focus on the most **marginalized women and persons with disabilities**, measuring progress from an inclusion lens.
- Adequate resources will be allocated to strengthen **women's groups, organizations of persons with disabilities, and equality-focused networks**.
- Ekta maintains **zero tolerance for sexual harassment**. Partnerships will be terminated if leaders of partner organizations are found guilty, and agreements will carry a clear clause on this.

Organisational Culture and People Processes

- Ekta will promote a workplace culture that is **gender-sensitive, inclusive, and respectful** of diversity, including persons with disabilities and sexual minorities.
- Regular **training and orientation** will be organized to strengthen staff knowledge and behavior on gender equality and disability inclusion.
- **Gender analysis** will be applied in all policies and decision-making processes to ensure fairness and inclusivity.
- All decision-making bodies will have **adequate representation of women and persons with disabilities**, with opportunities to build their skills for active participation.
- HR policies will recognize both women's and men's roles in caregiving and support staff to balance personal and professional responsibilities.
- **Zero tolerance** will be maintained for any form of discrimination, harassment, or violence. The Anti-Sexual Harassment (ASH) policy will ensure a safe and gender-sensitive work environment.
- Recruitment, induction, and appraisal processes will be **gender-sensitive** and promote a balanced gender ratio, encouraging applications from women, persons with disabilities, and individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- Training and capacity development opportunities will include **affirmative action** for women and marginalized groups to help them take greater leadership roles.
- Staff transfers, if required, will respect **personal and family concerns**.

Affirmative Actions for Gender-Sensitive Working Conditions

- Flexible working hours or work-from-home options will be provided to staff during family emergencies.
- Safe travel arrangements will be ensured for women staff working late.
- A **crèche facility** will be available for staff with children below three years.
- Women staff travelling with children under three years may request support from a **childcare minder**.
- Leave policies will address the physical and reproductive needs of both women and men, while encouraging men's active role in caregiving.

Implementation and accountability

1. Staff Composition and Representation

- Ensure fair representation of women, men, and third gender staff at all levels, including leadership.
- Provide equal opportunities for growth, promotions, training, and working conditions.
- Promote women's and persons with disabilities' participation in decision-making bodies.

2. Workplace Commitments

- Provide a safe, harassment-free workplace with a functional Gender Complaints Committee.
- Offer flexible working hours, work-from-home options, and safe transport when needed.
- Ensure maternity, paternity, and childcare leave as per law, with additional support (e.g., child care minder, crèche facilities).
- Regularly review workplace practices to address gender gaps.

3. Field-Level Engagement

- Promote women's participation in community decision-making and governance structures.
- Support equal wages for equal work across genders.

- Provide counselling, legal aid, and awareness support for vulnerable women.
- Mobilize men and communities to support gender balance and equality.

4. Non-Discrimination

- No staff will be denied benefits, training, or opportunities based on gender or identity.
- Equal scope for men, women, and third gender staff to build knowledge and skills.

5. Budgeting and Assets

- Allocate specific budgets for gender equality initiatives.
- Ensure gender considerations while procuring assets or resources.

6. Staff Capacity Building

- Provide gender training for all staff as part of induction and ongoing programs.
- Ensure all internal and external trainings are gender-sensitive.
- Support women's participation in all organizational and field-level trainings.

7. Policies and Systems

- HR systems will be gender-sensitive, with gender indicators included in performance appraisals.
- Recruitment processes will prioritize gender balance and diversity.
- Advocacy will focus on mainstreaming gender concerns into development programs.

8. Staff Benefits

- Ensure statutory maternity and paternity leave.
- Provide equal access to information, IT resources, and transparent appraisal processes.

9. Network and Partnerships

- Support partners and networks to develop gender-sensitive policies and strategies.
- Share resources, reports, and training with network members.
- Stand in solidarity with partners against discrimination and harassment.

10. Implementation and Accountability

- A **Gender Committee** of 5 members (3 women, 1 man, 1 third gender) will oversee policy implementation.
- The committee will meet quarterly, resolve staff concerns, and recommend actions to management.
- The committee will provide equal opportunity to all
- Gender has 60% male and 40% female
- Gender policy should incorporate with POSCO Act

Team Details

The Gender Policy of **Ekta** has been developed through collective efforts and consultations with senior staff, governing body members, and representatives of community-based organizations (CBOs) and network partners. We sincerely acknowledge their valuable contributions in shaping this policy.

Modification and Review of Policy:

The Organization reserves the right to modify and/or review the provisions of this Policy from time to time, in order to comply with applicable legal requirements or internal policies, to the extent necessary.

Approve in General body meeting of Ekta _____ Date _____

1st Approval of the polices by the Board: 3rd August 2014

Board approval Date Revisit & Approval: 5th March 2016

Date Revisit: 26th June 2022