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DEVELOPMENT WHEEL (DEW)



GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Development Wheel (DEW)

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PREFACE

After over three decades of independence of Bangladesh, the state cannot ensure the rule of law or provide a well functioning regulatory and policy environment for women in our country which is really unfortunate. The overarching reality of Bangladesh poverty combined with shortcomings in governance, wide spread corruption and the failure of state institutions to respond effectively have resulted in major violations of women and human rights. Despite constitutional commitment to uphold human rights evidently human rights in Bangladesh including civil, political, social, cultural, legal, economic rights of across sections, from grassroots to national level are frequently being infringed. Largely corruption and poor accountability on the part of public sector institutions, law enforcing agencies have worsen the human right situation and also weaken national capacity to protect women/human rights.

Development Wheel (DEW) has identified through its long involvement in implementing various projects on gender issues and observed the gender discriminations in our community. DEW believes that women should get equal rights in the society and other sectors and state should ensure their right which is their constitutional rights. Our vision is to a society where all people will enjoy equal rights, equitable access to employment and adequate resources necessary for their livelihoods and will live in dignity

INTRODUCTION of DEW

Development Wheel (DEW) is a non-profit development organization founded in 1996 by a few development professionals and researchers to promote self-help poverty alleviation initiatives of the poorest households in Bangladesh. The main focus of the organization is to work for the promotion of the Arts and Crafts sector of Bangladesh through facilitating the development of small enterprises with an aim to generate sustainable self-employment opportunities for under-privileged rural and urban people. Besides, DEW is also active in the fields of climate change, livelihoods security, agricultural promotion, gender issues, essential service, sustainable livelihoods, human rights and good governance in partnership and collaboration with different international and national organizations.

Vision of the organization is to established a society where all people will enjoy equal rights, equitable access to employment and adequate resources necessary for their livelihoods and will live in dignity and the **mission** is dedicated to improving livelihoods security of the poor segments of the society in Bangladesh through increasing their participation (particularly women) in small scale economic activities by creating the provision of a range of business and life skills for them.

The organization is largely depended on the financial support of various donor and partner organizations. Over the years the organization has also built up some finances of its own.

DEW is a fairly matured organization in terms of years of operation and program promotion. Along the process DEW has concentrated much on formalizing the whole system of financial, human resources, gender and administrative issues for managing the day to day affairs of the organization as well as long term vision. This revision of DEW Financial policy and procedures is the first such comprehensive exercise since the inception. In all of this, DEW is attempting to become a very different type of organization – more efficient, more streamlined, more consciously values-based, more able to address the root causes of poverty, more able to learn from and work through other organizations, and more effective in field-level outreach. This manual has therefore been developed keeping the existing practices in mind and recommending some other polices which would give the organization the guidance for managing the finance in a more organized way.

GENDER POLICY (GP)

1. Introduction:

Since its inception, DEW has been emphasizing on mainstreaming the women and adolescent through its development programs. As a development organization, DEW believes in equal rights, opportunities and dignity for all women, men and children. More specifically, DEW believes that children today are leaders tomorrow and girls today are mothers tomorrow. Subsequently, special attention was given to women and gender issues. The process of integration of gender dimension in all its activities however had been slower than expected. The present paper is a follow-up of the overall activities with regard to gender policy perspective of the organization. It is based on DEW's own staff and that of all concerned with gender issues converged in formulating the policy paper. DEW expects to develop gender strategy on the basis of this policy. It provides the scope for reflecting upon past experiences and also provides opportunity to update the strategy for future.

2. DEW and its Goal for Women's Development:

The overall goal of DEW is to improve the socio-economic status of the most disadvantaged community and thus to establish the rights, especially of the distressed, resource poor women producer group members, children and adolescent girls of the project areas. DEW is committed to the economic and social development of those without wealth and/or power. In most cases, it is women who fall under this category, and thus, they have become the prime focus of all activities being undertaken by the organization.

DEW's development activities are targeted at its women participants, their daughters, female staff, and even extends to all the staff members' wives. Given the size of the population, DEW does appreciate the fact that DEW alone cannot change the fortunes of the deprived Bangladeshi female population. However, society and different organizations have appreciated DEW's efforts and initiatives. DEW is dedicated to improving livelihoods security of the poor segments of the society in Bangladesh through increasing their participation (particularly women) in small-scale economic activities by creating the provision of a range of business and life skills for them.

DEW has made headway in terms of generating employment opportunities for women, and has had a great impact in the fight against marginalization of women, trafficking, violence against women and to establish their rights and dignity in the Bangladesh community.

3. DEW and its approach to Gender-related issues:

Since its inception in 1996, DEW has undertaken different projects/program to enhance the status of women and artisan groups in the working areas. During this period, DEW has undertaken its promotion of art and crafts through Fair Trade options (DEW is a Certified Guaranteed Fair Trade organization) and Sustainable

Livelihood projects to facilitate the development of women entrepreneurs in target areas. DEW has also undertaken programs to promote human rights and good governance for women at the grassroots level. Education and awareness development activities were aimed at ensuring that women would be able to fend for themselves and enjoy similar benefits that their counterparts enjoy in the area. One of the most significant projects undertaken by DEW is We Can End Violence against Women program. DEW has been concerned about the challenges of climate change and its impact on women's livelihoods because in Bangladesh women are always more vulnerable in any disasters. Promoting women's participation in social forums and networks is one of the major areas of focus for DEW. Programs are being undertaken to ensure that women have equal participation of voice in the project/programme, social forums/networks in our working areas.

4. What is the Gender policy?

The Gender policy (GP) is a document written to assist and guide DEW as an organization in its various gender-related activities. Amongst its beneficiaries, partners, staff, producer group members the GP will aid in creating an environment appreciative of the various gender-related issues. The GP is intended to give its staff a sense of direction as to where the organization is going to head in terms of its programs and how it shall be planning, implementing, and controlling the various programs that it undertakes over time. If used properly, this GP will ensure that women get more attention in the development programs undertaken by DEW. It will aid in enhancing their position in society via individual development. The GP is intended to hasten the empowerment, of women and bring about gender equality within DEW and beneficiaries in the area and to promote the organization as a gender sensitive development organization. The policy has been written keeping in mind that the bias and discrimination that exist in society against women needs to be removed and greater appreciation of women is developed in society.

5. Goal of the Gender Policy:

The goal of gender policy is to establish the equality among men and women which helps to reduce the disparity in organization including its beneficiaries for achieving the goals of DEW.

6. Objectives of the Gender Policy:

- Creating favorable, friendly and fair environment for women and men to work together
- Promoting gender equality in the organization as well as among the participants and producer groups
- Developing programs that will create more gender awareness
- To build organizations (groups) at the village/community level, so that women can form associations at the grass root level to establish their rights and dignity.

7. Who will use the Gender Policy?

The GP is to be used by the staff of **DEW** for the welfare and benefit of staff members, producer group members as well as the participants.

8. Mentoring and evaluation of GP:

DEW will provide mentorship towards its staff/producer group members and participants with the aim of maintaining gender equality. With the assistance of a gender expert, the Executive Committee (EC) of DEW will provide necessary guidance to ensure good gender practices in the organization. DEW will take an active stand against anti-women declarations, and will support all activities that will eradicate mental and physical violence committed against women. DEW will lend a helping hand to organizations working for women's empowerment and will incorporate the good gender practices of other organizations into their own.

9. Policy Implementation Principles:

As a strategy for GP implementation, **DEW will do the following:**

- ✚ Address the realistic gender needs of women in context of today's modern society and develop appropriate strategies and mechanisms and take necessary measures targeted at the staff of DEW and its producer groups.
- ✚ Undertake programmes to eliminate the gender disparities that may exist in the organization.
- ✚ Establish a working environment free of gender bias and shift from the traditional gender paradigm that exists in terms of gender roles.

DEW will NOT do the following:

- ✚ Undertake programs or activities that may undermine the role or status of women.
- ✚ Employ individuals who do not believe or appreciate the concept of gender equality.
- ✚ Silence the voice of women.
- ✚ Positively discriminate women and thereby sacrifice the ultimate quality of work.

10. Strategies for Program implementation:

Women form the core of all the activities undertaken by DEW. It is due to this fact that gender related issues are critical to the success of all of DEW's programs. When planning, implementing, and controlling the various programs, the major factor that **DEW** considers women and children, and their role in the different activities.

Projects that are undertaken are considered to be failures if the voices of women are not heard and their participation is hindered. The projects that **DEW** has undertaken or plans to undertake are aimed at achieving gender equity, more

freedom for women, poverty alleviation for women, establishment of women's rights, education, involving women in the decision making process, health awareness, and overall enhancement of the status of women in the community.

Women and Economic Empowerment:

DEW will:

- ✚ Encourage women entrepreneurs by providing them with group savings, micro-finance and other business financing schemes including fair trading. In addition, women in the group will also receive skill enhancement training in their relevant field.
- ✚ Encourage women to utilize their domestic savings to fund income-generating activities.
- ✚ Assist women in acquiring ownership of assets by providing loans. Mechanisms to repay these loans will also be introduced. Women will be involved in income-generating activities to facilitate repayment of the loans.
- ✚ Introduce projects, which will involve new low-cost technologies affordable to assist women by reducing their workload and expenditures.

Women's Rights and Human Rights:

DEW will:

- ✚ Incorporate the use of a "**gender lens**" to view all strategic plans and thereby will ensure that a gender perspective is incorporated in the strategic planning stage.
- ✚ Take measures to raise awareness about violence against women. DEW will also provide legal support to women victims whenever possible. The organization will also call for action against violence against women and children, abuse, and trafficking. Staff, client, and group members who refrain from receiving or giving dowry, and resist early marriages of their daughters will be supported.
- ✚ Continue human rights and legal education programs to motivate woman to establish their legal rights. In this regard, woman will be encouraged to fight for ownership for assets to secure their future. Influential members of the community will be encouraged and supported to establish women's rights in their local communities.

Women in Community:

DEW will:

- ✚ Identify the obstacles that women face in their local community. The barriers will be removed and a way for the development of women will be paved. Traditional taboos such as women coming late from work will need to be eliminated from society.
- ✚ Work with women in a participatory manner with the aim to build their confidence so that they may be active participants in the local political front, and may also hold positions in various voluntary organizations.

- ✚ Encourage participants of DEW programs to actively support women's organizations working to stop violence against women and trafficking of women and children.
- ✚ Create alliances with other organizations to establish women's rights and protest against anti-women declarations and actions.

Women in the Decision-Making Process:

DEW will:

- ✚ At least 40% members of General Council of DEW will be female
- ✚ At least 30% of Executive Committee member will be female
- ✚ Encourage the concept of equal distribution of responsibilities between men and women.
- ✚ Promote women's authority over credit and income utilization and the right to participate on equal terms in the decision-making process with their male counterparts in the household and community level.
- ✚ Encourage women to increase the intensity of their participation in the local power structure.

Women's Participation in program:

DEW will:

- ✚ Ensure greater participation (at least 40% women) in project planning and implementation process.
- ✚ Provide direct and indirect incentives of participation.
- ✚ Empower the marginalized women by using their collective resources.
- ✚ Diversify the actions and scopes for mobility.
- ✚ DEW is committed to provide knowledge and skills to both women and men equally to see a knowledge based society.

Women and Climate Change:

DEW will:

- ✚ Raise awareness on impact on climate change.
- ✚ Provide awareness on vulnerability of women for climate change.
- ✚ Provide adaptation measures to Climate Change for them
- ✚ Raise their voice, upholding their rights for compensation and mitigation.
- ✚ Research/Study on the issues and the way forward

11. Measures for Employees

DEW: Code of conduct: DEW shall follow a rational policy in staff recruitment, promotion, financial benefits, dismissal and other needs of the personnel. Emphasis will be given on performance rather than unproved quality or nepotism.

Recruitment:

- # Women will be given priority in organization's job advertisement.
- # Interview board shall be comprised of equal number of male and female members.
- # Woman will occupy one of the two top positions of the organization.
- # Women will occupy 30% of the account personnel.
- # Women will share 30% of the policy level/program management.
- # 30% of total staff will be women eventually
- # There shall be no gender disparity in recruiting staff.

Promotion, Postings, Transfers:

- # There shall be no gender discrimination in case of promotion.
- # Gender sensitivity shall be considered in promotional principle.
- # For field level work the advantage of local women shall be emphasized.
- # In case of posting, the question of spouse's work place shall be considered.
- # In case of lactate mothers are welcome to bring children at office.

Financial and Other Material Benefits:

- # There shall be no gender disparity.
- # Women and men shall enjoy all provisions of benefits equally.

Leave Benefits:

- # There shall be full paid maternal leave for 6 months (180 days) and paternal leave for 07 working days (up till to two children)
- # Both, women and men shall enjoy maximum 20 days of leave for acute physical problems.

Dismissal:

- # There shall be no gender disparity in this respect.
- # For sexual exploitation, harassment, silly gesture, scolding etc. the person shall be dismissed upon inquiry.
- # An employee may be dismissed without any prior notice if:

#she/he is found guilty of misconduct after giving due opportunity of being heard.

#scope of self-defense must be provided to the concerned employee.

Affirmative Action:

- # Gender issue shall be given priority in project planning and implementation.
- # Gender sensitivity of the staff shall be monitored and that will be important criteria in giving promotion.
- # Special advantage shall be given during maternity.
- # Safe working atmosphere shall be maintained for women.
- # There shall be childcare center.
- # Positive attitude of the male colleague towards female colleague shall be maintained.

- ✚ There shall be coordination of women and men, and girls and boys in planning and implementing the programmes.
- ✚ Special attention shall be given strategizing the prevention of gender-based violence.

In Addition,

- ✚ There shall be separate toilets for women and men.
- ✚ Male colleagues shall extend hands of cooperation and assistance especially when the female colleagues are in physical trouble.
- ✚ Fieldwork during pregnancy shall be considered with utmost sincerity.

Women's Personal Safety:

- ✚ Institutional safety and security shall be ensured for DEW staffs and producer groups.
- ✚ If needed, organization shall support to bring female staff back home at night.
- ✚ Official decorum and decency shall be maintained in communication and conversation among male and female colleagues, producer group members and participants.

Sexual Harassment Guideline:

- ✚ Organization shall follow the definition of all kinds of sexual harassment outlined in the government sexual Harassment policy.
- ✚ There shall be clear demarcation of misbehavior, molestation, fondling, scolding, rape, etc.
- ✚ Judgment in case of sexual harassment within office premises and work places must be done on the bases of previous behavioral pattern, monitoring and substantial and /or circumstantial reference and witnesses.
- ✚ There must be gender equality and gender sensitivity in carrying out the judgment.
- ✚ The victim shall have the right to lodge the case of sexual harassment in legal body.