

GENDER POLICY OF VANI

Background

VANI's vision of desirable world is where voluntarism and voluntary organisations play a dominant and constructive role in social cohesion, economic empowerment and nation building. Besides social cohesion and economic empowerment, VANI believes in gender justice as the basic foundation of nation building and effective voluntarism. The core values of VANI visualise justice and equity for every individual in society, this necessarily includes that we address gender, social, economical and physical marginalisation. This is achieved through three broad strategies- capacity building, policy advocacy and knowledge building, which operate in an integrated and interlinked manner.

VANI's analysis of existing situation of discrimination in society provides the basis for identifying the poor and marginalized especially women. It believes that gender discrimination necessitates focusing upon changing women's roles and status, as agents and leaders of change. Hence VANI's core values, guide us to mainstreaming gender-justice and equity through analysis of social reality, organisational policies, systems and structures, and programme priorities and plans as integral to its vision.

Gender mainstreaming in the institutional development of VANI has become an explicit Governing Board Policy, which is driven by VANI's long-standing concern about gender equity in voluntary sector. Taking cognition of these and adhering to its commitment to gender justice at workplace VANI formed a Committee Against Sexual Harassment (CASH). The decision was also in response to the guidelines by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. The CASH – VANI has a well defined Terms of Reference, which act as guidelines to its functioning.

VANI's commitment to gender-justice and equity may be defined at two levels: Institutional and Programmatic levels. This would also include initiating gender mainstreaming with members, associates and partners.

I. Institutional Level:

a. **Staff Policies:**

All staff policies, service rules and regulations of the organization shall be gender sensitive. Periodic reviews of the same would be done through a gender lens ensure that gender sensitivity is maintained. These policies are in line with the government provisions.

b. **Recruitment & Induction:**

All interviews for staff recruitment in the organization will have women equally represented on the interview panel of interviewers. VANI would have a gender sensitive *recruitment policy*; preference is given to women candidates in appointments.

All new employees joining the organization shall be oriented to VANI's gender policy and the role and functions of CASH within the organization.

c. **Performance Reviews:**

All performance review forms of individuals by self or supervisors/peers/subordinates have indicators to assess gender sensitivity in the overall performance.

d. **Work Environment**

VANI would be committed to creating and promoting a *gender sensitive work environment* within the organization and its various State/District field offices. Towards achieving this goal, it would organize regular workshops/seminars and exposure to variety of other inputs regularly. All events/programmes organized by VANI, both internal and external, have a gender component and address gender specific needs of the participants.

e. **Sexual Harassment:**

Through CASH, VANI also addresses complaints relating to sexual harassment made by employees, guests, and participants to workshops etc. The organization shall be responsible to set up structures where employees may feel free to seek redressal of their complaints.

f. **Documentation of Processes and Dissemination:**

VANI would also ensure a detailed documentation of all the processes related to the activities on the issues of gender within the organization. These are accessible to all those who wish to use the same to promote and strengthen gender equality within their work spheres. These would also be reported in VANI Newsletter and Website regularly.

II. Programmatic Level

VANI would set up systems to ensure that gender equity forms an essential element of all its project planning, implementation and monitoring with specific indicators to measure the progress that has taken place with respect to the same. All reports and evaluations would also include a specific focus on the gender component. Similar interventions will be ensured with members, associates and outreach partners in order that their own programmes intervention (those in collaboration with VANI) are also gender just and equitable. Gender audits and gender analysis would form a part of VANI's gender mainstreaming efforts.

In an attempt to focus on, address and integrate issues of gender equity within the organization CGAMP will play a key role in the mainstreaming of gender within the organization.

The basic principles to be followed in mainstreaming gender will be:

- Establishing adequate accountability mechanism for monitoring of progress within the institution as well as programmatically.
- The identification of issues and problems within the organization should be focus on gender differences and disparities wherever they exist.