



Uttaran

Policy on Gender, Diversity and Inclusion

Community Mobilization

Poverty Eradication

Environmental Justice

Contact Information:

Head office: Flat # B1, House # 32, Road # 10/A, Dhanmondi, Dhaka 1209

Regional Office: Mobarakpur, Tala, Satkhira- 9420

Email: uttaran.dhaka@gmail.com

Website: www.uttaran.net, Contact no: +880-1711828305, +880255000691

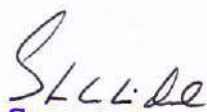
Facebook: www.facebook.com/org.uttaran, Twitter: @Org.Uttaran, Instagram: org.uttaran

Address: House # 32 (1st Floor), Road # 10/A, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1209, Bangladesh

Date: January 2000 Approved by on behalf of executive board Update – 1	Shahidul Islam Director	MD Nazrul Islam Chairman
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Recommended by	Zahid Amin Shashoto, Project Coordinator	

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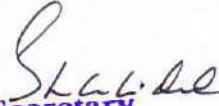
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1. Background

Uttaran dreams of establishing a discrimination-free society regardless of male-female, poor-rich or caste and creed. Basically, Uttaran emerged to form a balanced social background among the males and females. Uttaran has been working since 1983 to establish a humane and fair society free of discrimination and exploitation. Almost all the activities of Uttaran are aimed to improve the conditions of females who are leading meager lives filled with extreme exploitation and oppression in consideration of socio-economic and political, educational and cultural perspective. Uttaran covers different parts of Bangladesh with numerous such activities and there are plenty of teams to implement the projects.

Uttaran has been working, since its birth, on preserving the legal rights of women, capacity building, changing male-dominated attitudes, gaining their financial freedom and removing gender disparity, and to engage them into the mainstream development. The Policy has been adopted to strengthen the undertaken and potential activities for women's development and it will help to establish a balance among the men and women in the working regions of Uttaran. The Policy will provide directive to develop relations among the men and women and the advancement of the females. With the advancement of time and considering the needs, the Policy would be changed, edited, extended and revised regularly in future.

Uttaran, firmly believes that the main obstacle to an equal society is the current condition of the women and their status as majority of the women lead a neglected, assaulted and a miserable life. They live in the poorest section of the poverty as they are lagging behind in their social and civil life. This exploitation and oppression is not only against the women, rather it is about the entire society which impacts the family, workplace, educational institution and even social, political and cultural aspects.

Uttaran also considers that a real and sustainable development is impossible unless the women are integrated with the development activities in line with the men. In a word, the Gender Policy has been formulated for the overall development of the population (men and women) of this organization to its working areas and regions. It is also expected that the Gender Policy would be helpful and play important roles as well for the development of a women friendly institutional culture and attitudes.

2. Objective


Usually a policy refers to a fair and well planned work system. Policy is the base of any arranging, any initiative or organizing, instructing and coordination etc. and it sets the focus and outline of workings.

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This policy outlines Uttaran's commitments and guiding principles for gender and diversity across its operations and the inner functioning of the organization. It provides a clear framework for the organization to bring about a more inclusive working environment, and to systematically mainstream and monitor gender and diversity in Uttaran's operations. For its programs, Uttaran is committed to apply a Gender Diversity and inclusion **responsive approach** and, where possible within specific projects, aim for a **transformative approach**

Our commitment is inspired by the Human Rights Framework and the globally agreed principles, such as non-discrimination. It is based on international and regional standards, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), global ambitions set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), as well as

3. Rationale of this Policy

Uttaran is committed to bring diversity as well as ensure inclusion and to implement vision and mission of Uttaran, it is a must to bring the gender equality as well as ensure diversity with inclusion. Thereby, the organization should be gender sensitive and to make it gender sensitive, the policy has been formulated. Uttaran is using all of its resources and merits to improve the condition of the women living in the South-Western region. To implement the dream of the organization and ensure the smooth execution of the other activities, the policy will be used as a guide line.

The policy has been formulated based on the learnings and experiences of the employees by the projects run by Uttaran and by realizing the needs and necessities for development. The policy will also be used as a tool to enhance a greater participation of women to challenge the gender discrimination of men and women and the male dominated social system and by the same time the policy will also be helpful to improve capacities of all level employees working with the other beneficiary organizations.

Therefore, with the implementation of this Policy of Uttaran, it would be a gender sensitive as well as inclusive organization and the policy will ensure gender balance inside the organization. All the activities, projects, initiatives will rightly ensure the interest and demands of men and women and overall, it will abolish all sorts of inequality against women.

4. Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all levels of the organization, whether at headquarters or in field delegations. All staff (directors, managers, employees, interns, volunteers) and consultants, regardless of their status, type of contract, or percentage of work are

responsible for knowing its content and applying the commitments as they relate to their work. It is valid for both development and humanitarian contexts.

5. Principles

In alignment with its core values Uttaran seeks to advance gender and diversity across the organization guided by the following principles:

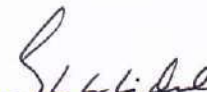
- **INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT:** Uttaran works with a wide range of actors including children, families, communities and local/national authorities. As Uttaran's stakeholders and beneficiaries represent a highly diverse group, it is vital that this diversity is reflected within the employees of the foundation. Uttaran believes that a diverse workplace represents a deeper pool of knowledge, skills, life experience, perspectives and expertise.
- **A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH:** A human rights-based approach is at the core of all Uttaran's work. Human rights determine the relationship between duty bearers and individuals or groups according to international human rights law. For Uttaran, this means understanding and transforming power relations and inequalities that lead to discrimination and impede individuals and groups from enjoying their rights.
- **INCLUSION & PARTICIPATION:** Placing children at the center of their own recovery and development is an essential part of a safe, dignified, appropriate, and sustainable response. In this context, it means ensuring all children regardless of Gender or Diversity are enabled to meaningfully engage and participate throughout the program and project cycles. By enabling children, their caregivers, and relevant stakeholders to analyze their situation, enhance their knowledge and resources, and strengthen their capacities, Uttaran contributes to their empowerment to act and claim their rights.
- **COLLABORATION and LEARNING:** Collaboration and continuous learning are key conditions to achieving more impact within Uttaran interventions. Uttaran will seek out strategic partnerships at global and local levels to continuously improve its understanding and competencies in gender and diversity and share lessons learned widely both internally and externally.
- **DO NO HARM & SAFEGUARDING:** The protection of target populations, in particular those most vulnerable to abuses of power, is at the core of Uttaran's mission. By integrating a gender diversity and inclusion approach Uttaran will contribute to mitigating the risk of harm arising

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from Uttaran actions, including abuse and exploitation. Harm includes physical or psychological harm to individuals or groups, as well as harm to the environment (economic, social, political, climate, etc.) that might otherwise affect individuals or groups.

6. Strategies

The strategy aims to engage them with the mainstream

Policy implementation strategy

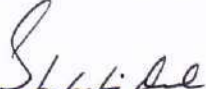
- A gender focal will work in the organization and the remaining staffs will work as members. The gender focal will have some specific written responsibilities and annual plans while the other members will be bound to assist in implementing the plans. In this case, the organization will considerably pay attention to solve the complaints related to gender issues
- The gender focal point will observe the gender issues in the enlisted areas and monitor the advancement based on the gender mainstreaming plans.
- In case of any discrepancies, the project coordinator or any specific member will inform the focal point in written form
- All the project areas will have gender policies and the policy implementation situations will be discussed in monthly or quarterly meetings.
- The issues will be noted in the working areas and proper measures will be taken
- Financial supports will be there for implementing the gender policy
- All the other organizational policies will be analyzed based on the gender policy and the policies mentioned on the gender policy will be adjusted. Gender policy will also be considered if any new policy is adopted.
- New employees will be familiarized with gender policy so that they could follow the organizational values.
- An orientation will be provided to all the staffs once the policy is admitted.
- The policy will be reviewed in every three years after being granted.

7. Mainstream issues to be linked with Gender

- Deciding the difference and imbalance of gender roles, demands, responsibilities, opportunities and resource consumption
- Realizing the policy type especially legal and organizational background
- Prioritizing the women and teenage girls' interests after consultation with the men-women, teenagers.
- Creating difference on gender information
- Inventing gender balance index for development measurement
- Assisting in gender sensitive audit and evaluation

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- Disseminating and discussing the best practices and learned lessons
- Getting linked with the people of similar thoughts and coordination
- Using gender sensitive language for all types of communication

8. Organizational commitments and steps

In order to implement a gender and diversity responsive approach throughout the organization, Uttaran makes the following commitments.

Institutional commitments:

- Apply inclusive gender & diversity considerations in the development of Uttaran's internal organizational culture. Ensure equitable treatment and meaningful participation of all employees through the strengthening of collaborative and inclusive working methods and practices.
- Apply best practices of inclusive communication by using language and images that do not reinforce existing stereotypes but instead promote diversity and inclusiveness and show respect for all.
- Put in place measures to enhance gender equity and diversity in Uttaran teams and promote equal opportunities and inclusiveness in recruitment, orientation, promotion, retention, and duty of care. Special attention will be given to balance leadership and management positions.
- Value and leverage the knowledge, competence and experiences of Uttaran staff from all different backgrounds and origins. Enable horizontal cross-learning, respecting the capacity of everyone to engage using different methods and approaches. Collect and share best practices.
- Provide capacity building and awareness for all staff in gender and diversity at all levels to strengthen a gender and diversity responsive approach.
- Seek collaborations with partners and stakeholders who share Uttaran's desire to work for advancing gender equity and diversity.
- Incorporate GD&I considerations from this policy in the development of Partners selection criteria and the upcoming Uttaran Partnership Policy.
- Promote and implement the whistle-blowing procedure of Uttaran in order to report any type of action in violation of this policy or the Uttaran Global Code of Conduct amongst Uttaran employees.
- Allocate dedicated financial, human, and organizational resources to implement the commitments under this policy.

Operational commitments:

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- Integrate gender and diversity objectives in line with this policy in its future strategic plan, Programs Theory of Change and Plans of Action which implement Uttaran Strategies.
- Integrate GD&I Analysis into situation analysis (program/project level).
- Adopt a GD&I scale in Uttaran programs and commit all projects to be at least GD&I Responsive, with a desire where possible to move towards a GD&I Transformative approach.
- Develop M&E Approaches that are GD&I responsive, including the systematic use of qualitative and participatory methods and Sex & Age Disaggregated Data (SADD).
- Use appropriate approaches and tools to ensure that girls and boys and other target groups have equal opportunities to participate in, influence and benefit from Uttaran programs.
- Programs and Operations fulfill their duty of PSEA and prevention of GBV, incorporating and promoting Uttaran's

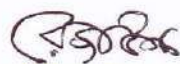
9. Roles and responsibilities

All of our staff members, regardless of function or location, are **responsible** for the implementation of the requirements outlined in this policy. These requirements are reflected in recruitment processes, job descriptions and performance reviews of staff at all levels and in the way we hold each other to account.

All senior managers are **accountable** for this policy; the International Board will **monitor** what senior managers are doing, and the Members' Assembly is **ultimately responsible** for our commitment to and implementation of this policy.

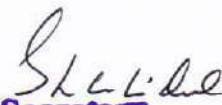
To support accountability for this policy, there will be an effective review and monitoring process, led by Uttaran's department. In Uttaran, this will include an annual review and auditing of implementation and compliance with the policy, which will be shared across Uttaran Entities, and the director of Uttaran will report on the implementation annually to the Board.

The use of policy in altered situations: the existing policy will be considered as a reference to take any decisions in the changed situations as 'Reference'



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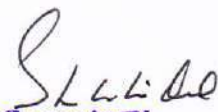
Annexure

Annex – 1: Background of Uttaran's advancement on Gender Equality

The aforesaid changes are not enough to prevent the challenges on women equality and women empowerment. Though the government of Bangladesh has signed and ratified different national and international rules and regulations to ensure constitutional bonds and ensuring women rights, the women are prevented from social, cultural, financial and political aspects. The government statistics show a huge disparity on health, nutrition, mortality rate, education, recruitment and wage issues. In personal life, women are the victim biased law. In this case, extensive and direct issue of women development is pointed here: ensuring the choice of women on her life and advancing the society to a social justice and equality in a broader facet because the condition of women is still dominated and repressive and they are deprived of their basic right. Thereby, Uttaran has formulated the Gender Policy to play its role on improving the conditions of women and make all the activities disciplined and more successful. The policy has pointed out the activities like rules, beliefs and ideals to be followed for decreasing gender disparity between man and woman. The current position of equality between man and woman is as followed –

1. For the participation of men and women in gender and development, an alternative organization has been formed. The current ration of woman and man is 60: 40
2. Trainings, workshops, seminars, discussion sessions, gatherings, rallies etc. have been introduced and going on to change the male dominated attitudes and exercise man woman equality
3. Awareness raising activities are introduced on the participation in domestic help by men and ensuring participation of women in social, political and financial activities.
4. Women have been inspired on productive works for their empowerment. Women are provided with loans in line with providing training and consultancies to increase their skills. There are projects in the working areas for helping in female entrepreneurship. Some of the business are being run by women like two rice mills, one tally factory, fisheries, dairy farm, plant nursery etc. Around 80% of the women in the working areas are working out of home.
5. Organization is helping to inspire women in direct participation in productive activities and simultaneously building ownership and control on production materials.
6. Specific projects have been taken to expand female education and creating newer scopes. On the educative programs of the organization, 70% participation of women and girls have been made mandatory.
7. Importance has been placed on the political empowerment of women. Around 50% participation of women has been ensured in different organizational committees like central committee, union committee, area committee etc. The rate of female voters has been increased in local and national level (83%). In local election, women participation has been introduced.


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8. To raise awareness on women repression, dowry, oral divorce, polygamy, rape, women and children kidnapping, early marriage, guardianship, inheritance, low wage, trainings, workshops, seminar, meetings, rallies are going on.
9. The chances of participation and communication has been ensured with different organizations on using local resources have been ensured. The female members of the organization are maintaining liaison with the local autonomous government and service providers
10. Initiatives have been taken to protect the physical and mental health of women. The female health quality like health, nutrition, safe drinking water and sanitation etc. has been improved for awareness raising. For safe drinking water, tube well ownership has been ensured.
11. Women are being made aware of environment and the activities to ensure participation of women has been being successfully implemented
12. Opportunities have been created for women to participate in cultural activities
13. Committees formed with male and females to prevent women repression issues have taken joint efforts
14. 14 regular trainings, workshops and discussion meetings are held to raise awareness among the organization staffs. As a result, both the male and female staffs are aware of gender issues
15. Organization has decided to employ female staffs in all level. For the salary structure limitations and geographical locations, male-female balance has not been gained in the recruitment of higher level employee.
16. Different measures have been adopted for creating congenial environment for women like security of women in the organization, dropping at home, residential facility for employees from remote place, capacity building and special training, flexible working hours during pregnancy, leave during pregnancy, day care facilities, flexible vehicle use, flexibility on educational qualifications etc.
17. On staff and team level, environment has been created for women in decision making, planning and implementation
18. Importance has been provided on skill development for women. Women are selected for participating in different trainings based on their working importance
19. For employing women in higher level, initiatives have been taken to provide on the job special training and other assistances.
20. Men and women equality on the executive body and management have not been achieved yet.


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Annex – 2 Explanations of terms used in the Policy

Diversity

Diversity refers to the variety of differences among the members of a group. It includes different social backgrounds and identities that make up a population. Comprehensive analysis is required to identify in any context what forms of diversity could constitute a vulnerability and lead to marginalization and violation of rights. Uttaran recognizes that some diversifying factors are present and need to be addressed in all contexts, including but not limited to age, gender, (dis)ability, and SOGIE minorities

Equality & Equity:

Uttaran recognizes the existence of biases, prejudices and inequalities inherent across all societies, and will seek to address those through responsive and transformative programming. Equality refers to the goal we want to achieve, so that everyone can benefit from equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities in their lives. It means that individuals are empowered to develop their interests, needs and priorities without the limitations set by stereotypes associated with their Gender or Diversity. Equity refers to how Uttaran approaches and implements interventions, ensuring strategic planning and service delivery recognizes and takes into account individual conditions and specific circumstances and accommodating these through positive action. Focusing on equity means that we recognize that a given system in place is leaving some behind and we actively provide means and dedicate resources so that rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities for everyone involved are considered in equivalent terms.

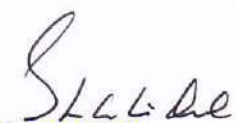
Gender and Sex

Learning begins since birth. It is specific socializing process of what people do, think and lead their lives. Sex refers to the physical features since birth which is naturally preselected but different attitudes and ideas towards different sex throughout a socializing process is known as 'gender'. Renowned social scientist Ann Oakley used the term – gender in development discourse in 1970. He used the term 'gender' to identify the socially imposed features on men and women. Usually gender refers to **the definition of men and women in social and cultural array, in fact the difference of men and women done by the society and how their social roles are that is known as gender.**

Sex refers to the differences created by natural or biological reasons and based on the physical features, the identity of men and women is set. Gender is the relationship among men and women based on social efforts, adaptable roles for men and women decided by society which varies form society-culture.

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Gender analysis

Gender analysis focuses on gender labor distribution, necessary opportunities and control on required materials for labor and the issues of consuming the labor outcomes. Gender analysis also clearly indicates that the benefits of development is different on men and women. Besides, gender analysis also analyses how gender discrimination is related with class, creed, color, religion, nationality and other issues.

Gender sensitivity

Gender sensitivity refers to realize and consider the gender disparity creating eco-social and cultural issues (for both male and female)

Gender awareness

Gender awareness is a sensitive attitude and a promise to place and prioritize women's demand in the core of development planning and activities. So, when gender awareness is reflected, it distributes the outcomes and participation of women at any activity or project from the targeted population.

Gender biased

Gender biased refers to favor the existing cultural beliefs, rituals and existing discriminatory social structure and attitudes to dominate women

Gender blindness

Gender blindness points that the outcomes of development will automatically be distributed among the males and females and both of them will be beneficiary or bear the same responsibilities

Gender devotee

Following the gender devotee point of view, it is likely that gender based labor distribution and the natural subordination of women is permanent and it is admitted all, logical and legal

Gender disaggregated data

Usually we prioritize the general or macro aspects while data collection on any issue and ignore some other sides. For instance, when it is about poverty-related information, we measure the gross poverty population. How many of the gross population is female is not considered on the data collection. Accordingly, the gender disaggregated data reflects different scenarios of men and women instead of a general average counting and for that, it becomes possible to identify the gender disparities, such as, based on disaggregated data, it should be mentioned that the

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'number of women in man power' when the 'participation ratio of people as man power'. Around 70% people of the country is poor, and how many of them are women will be published by the disaggregated data.

Gender inequality

Gender inequality is the most pervasive form of inequality around the world and a pressing human rights concern.⁷ It affects everyone, but women and girls first, constituting the majority of those affected by poverty and crisis. Harmful socially constructed gender norms often present a dominant view of what it means to be female or male and perpetuate a binary and exclusionary view of gender. These lead to discrimination and marginalization, which results in less access to resources, less power, less influence in decision making, and increased Gender-Based Violence.

Gender planning

Gender planning aims to involve women equally or with the same conditions to men as the key to development and beneficiary. Due to gender labor distribution, scopes of wealth gathering, empowering and controlling their lives for women is limited. Therefore, to change this reality, gender planning is a must

Gender Audit

Gender auditing refers to monitoring the projects/ activities formulated based on gender and if those are being implemented, or if the declared aims and objectives are being achieved. This audit or monitoring will help to revise any sort of inaccuracy during the implementation of the project/ activities. Some specific tools are required for this gender auditing or monitoring. The basic tool for gender audit is

- (1) Gender roles
- (2). Identifying gender demands

Gender disparity and differences

Gender disparity indicates that males are prioritized in the cases of rights which deprives women from the equal chances and damages them as well. Gender disparity is of two types - (1) direct and (2) indirect.

- (1) Direct gender disparities are -

- Succession of wealth

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- Rights of married women
- Rights on employment
- Retirement schedules

(2) Indirect gender disparities are –

- Neutral environment
- Not recruitment of women of potential pregnancy
- Prioritizing men on supervising or not appointing women on such posts

Difference is known as qualities which make people distinctive, their individuality or pointing on the differences. There are differences with men and women on physical perspective but discriminations have been created on their rights and responsibilities.

Inclusion

Inclusion is about bringing people into a process in a meaningful manner. It is the process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society and to fully enjoy their rights. It requires addressing the root causes of exclusion and understanding how intertwined the roots of different forms of exclusion are. Inclusion involves improving the opportunities available to girls, boys, youth, in particular those who are vulnerable and excluded, including children with disabilities, who are excluded on the basis of the social groups they identify with or are associated with, as well as respecting their dignity


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