

Gender Policy Guidelines

VISION

Flowing from the vision of Jesus Christ, the Champion of the equality the oppressed, exploited and marginalized of society, and inspired by His love that makes no distinction between male and female, the NCCI in India is committed to building a world where all human persons are free to grow in the image and likeness of God.

MISSION

1. To deepen among women and men a sense of their dignity as human beings created in the image and likeness of God. (Gen 1: 26-27)
2. To stimulate reflection in the Church on its mission to form a discipleship of equals. (Luke 22:26-27)
3. To contribute to the process of creating a gender just Church and society with a special focus on the marginalised. (Luke 4:18-19)
4. To make space for a spirituality that is shaped by women's life experiences and creative expression. (Mark 14: 3-9)

OBJECTIVES

1. To facilitate change in the mindsets of women and men so that they relate to each other with respect and dignity.
2. To ensure fulfilment of the human rights of women especially of the marginalized groups.
3. To ensure that all Church ministries, policies, structures, procedures and programs are gender sensitive and gender balanced.
4. To make provisions for adequate human and material resources to achieve the objectives.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The NCCI Gender Policy is rooted in the following principles which also provide direction for its implementation:

1. Equality and dignity of all human persons form the basis of a just and humane society. Women's issues are social concerns that impact society at large. Commitment to and solidarity with the marginalized sections of society, especially women, is therefore essential.
2. Human persons have the innate potential to transform themselves and their environment. Such transformation, however, begins with a change in beliefs, attitudes, practices and patterns of relating to one another.
3. Women's empowerment is central to achieving gender equality. Through empowerment women become aware of unequal power relations, gain control over their lives and resources, as well as acquire a greater voice to overcome inequality in their homes, workplaces, community, church and society. The desired transformation will take place only

when women are at the forefront for the cause of dignity and a rightful place for themselves in the Church and society.

4. Gender equality is a cross-cutting issue that needs to be integrated in all the Commissions, Church bodies, institutions, policies, and programs of the Church. It pertains to women in education, social development, health, peace and justice, interreligious dialogue, youth, SC/ST, labour, communication and media, liturgy (doctrine) and ecumenism.

5. The experiences and wisdom of women are conducive for the growth and transformation of the Church and society. Women's unique experiences and insights enrich deliberations and must influence agendas, policies and action programs. 6. Achieving gender equality requires the recognition that every policy, program and project affects women and men differently. This necessitates effectively designing and managing action plans that result in equality of outcome and impact.

7. Gender just structures are imperative to facilitate the equality of opportunities and justice for all. This requires the establishment of women inclusive, participatory, accountable, transparent, efficient and sustainable structural mechanisms within the Church and society. Women must be a part of decision making and their contribution within the Church and society must be formally recognized. Women's skills and needs must be taken into account so as to promote familial, economic, social, political and religious equality.

8. Gender equality can only be achieved through equal partnership among and between women and men. Equal partnership goes beyond numbers. It involves women's equal right to articulate their needs and interests as well as their vision of society and the Church and to shape the decisions that affect their lives.

9. Networking and collaboration are crucial processes to mobilize collective action for social transformation. Partnership with women's organizations and other groups working for gender equality is necessary to assist this process.

AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION

1. Women and Family: The family is the most precious human institution and every couple has the important responsibility to safeguard it against the numerous forces that seek to destroy or weaken it. As the family forms the foundation of the Church, the family needs to be supported and nurtured.

Policy: 0% tolerance for any form of violence within family.

Strategies:

Church to organise orientation programs to build mutual respect and equal partnership in the marriage relationship.

Impart skills for effective parenting through family education programs and marriage preparation courses, keeping in mind the need to overcome the cultural bias against the girl child and sexual stereotypes.

Actively advocate the equal rights of the daughter and the son over family property and strongly discourage demanding and offering of dowry. Discourage lavish wedding ceremonies and persuade the rich to offer financial support for the marriage of the poor.

Foster a culture of sharing in household chores among all the members of the family overcoming gender division of labour.

Accompany women, emotionally, financially and legally, through the painful processes of moral policing in church /organisation and civil divorce.

Include in marriage preparation courses, education for a healthy, loving and reciprocal relationship in marriage with special emphasis on educating men in power sharing. Promote mutual responsibility, accountability and transparency in all decision-making processes.

Advocate strongly and publicly zero tolerance to all forms of domestic violence (physical, verbal, emotional, sexual and economic).

Promote stability in married life through effective ways of conflict resolution.

Nurture a culture of respect and care for the elderly.

Support a culture that promotes life at all stages and address the cultural and economic factors that lead to abortion, foeticide, suicide and homicide.

Design faith-formation programs for catechists, children, youth, those in marriage preparation, couples and families to reorient them towards gender equity and mutuality in relationships, in their prayers, language, attitudes and actions. Church teachings on interpersonal dynamics across gender should be grounded in the gospel values of truth, love and justice

Encourage Church to be a part of Movements like, Thursday in Black

2. Women and Education

The NCCI recognises the fact that education can be a double-edged instrument which can be used to reinforce gender role stereotypes or to facilitate critical questioning of discriminatory forms of behaviour and practices. Hence, specifically designed educational interventions are required to facilitate change in mindset, behaviour and practices which will contribute to eliminating unjust gender relations.

Policy The Church commits herself to incorporate gender awareness as a cross-cutting issue in inputs in formal educational institutions and nonformal educational interventions. This will enable all members and leaders of the Church as well as those that the Church caters to through its various services (i.e. welfare, education, health, development, advocacy) to adopt forms of behaviour and practices that are gender sensitive. It also recognises the need to enhance the capabilities of women and men of the marginalised groups by providing them access on a priority basis, to all educational opportunities equitably at all levels. Strategies

Allot at least 25% of seats in all Church run and Church related institutions to the first generation learners, especially women from SC and ST and backward communities.

Prioritise compulsory and free education of girl children in Church schools, with special emphasis on reducing the gender gap in secondary and higher education.

Oppose child labour.

Educate women, and men especially the more disadvantaged, about their constitutional and legal rights.

Actively partner with Govt ministries and agencies for various educational programs.(e.g. Service Support Analyst (SSA), National Council for Educational Reserch and Training (NCERT), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

3. Women and Health

The alarming statistics relating to survival, nutrition and morbidity of women in India make it imperative for the church and all civil society organisations to directly intervene in the health care delivery systems especially for the marginalised in the poorly served areas. The Church will endeavour to work with government agencies and NGOs to ensure effective implementation of the health and nutrition related programs.

Policy The Church recognises its responsibility to study, analyse and address the root causes (such as violence) responsible for the serious physical and mental health concerns of women and men. It will launch community based interventions to meet the emerging challenges against the right to life and give priority to prevention over curative health care. It will give special attention to girls and women in health concerns related to their mental health, reproductive health, STDs, HIV/AIDS including rehabilitation of victims. Introduction:

We are committed to providing a secure and enabling environment to our employees/visitors/members, a place of work/serve that is gender sensitive and recognizes the role of men and women as equal players, agents and leaders of change in their families, communities, churches and society.

The objectives of this gender policy are:

- a) To espouse the cause of the right to gender equality and right to dignified livelihood.
- b) To foster a social, physical and psychological environment that will enable employees/worshippers/Visitors to work productively.
- c) To strive for gender justice at both institutional and programmatic level.

We define gender policy guidelines at two levels:

Institutional/Church and programmatic.

1. Institutional Level(Church)

a) Staff Policies: All staff policies, rules and regulations shall be gender sensitive and will be reviewed periodically. They need to have sexual harassment Policy and work Place Policy.

They need to be in line with the law of the land at all level.

b) Recruitment: We seek gender balance in staffing. Women candidates will be encouraged to apply for all vacancies including management and leadership positions both at the field and head office. There will be adequate representation of women in recruitment and interview panels.

c) Performance reviews: Gender sensitivity will be one of the performance indicators for assessing employees.

d) Capacity building for gender sensitization: We will organize workshops, training programs and discussions for promoting and enabling a gender sensitive work culture. Also, regular trainings will be conducted on awareness and confidence building of field staff, with special focus on women staff.

e) Harassment: Our Anti Sexual Harassment policy should be gender neutral and is in compliance with the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013.

f) Leaves and allowance: Leave policy should be gender sensitive too. Paternal and Maternal leaves should be specified in the workplace policy. Child Care leaves and medical leaves should be planned.

2. Programmatic Level

a) Building skills and capacities on gender perspectives to enable greater participation of all sections of community in our programs will be one of our objectives in all programs.

b) All programs will promote equal participation of all stakeholders. To promote and assess inclusion of gender equality in each project, managers will prepare and use a gender equality checklist.

Committee on Gender Sensitization

Composition of our committee on gender sensitization to address gender issues and concerns is in accordance with committee provisions of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013.

Applicability

This policy applies to all regular and contractual staff of [Church/organization]. In case of a complaint as a result of an act by a third party, management will take the necessary preventive and reasonable action to support and assist the affected party.

The policies should be made public to all the members and employees.

Reporting

Management will report annually to the Trustees on implementation of this policy.