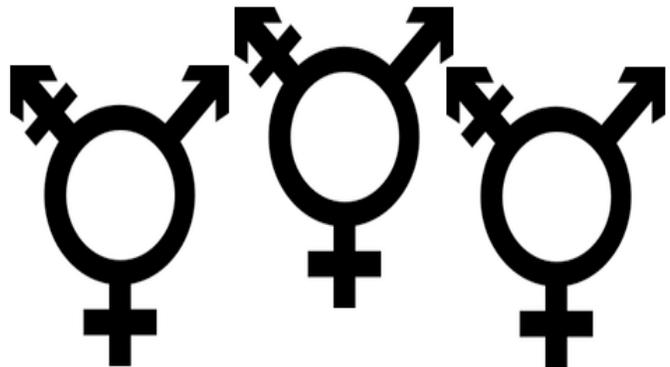


NEDSSS GENDER POLICY

*INTEGRATING
GENDER
PERSPECTIVES
IN THE
WORK OF
NEDSSS*



*North East Diocesan Social
Service Society (NEDSSS)*

2012

Integrating Gender Perspectives in the work of NEDSSS

Background

The North East Diocesan Social Service Society (NEDSSS) is the official organization of the catholic dioceses of North East India for the facilitation and promotion of the integrated development of the region. NEDSSS vision is a society where people live in unity in diversity based on gospel values of justice and love

Mission & Vision

NEDSSS mission is to enable member association to empower the poor and marginalized and the ethnic groups in the region for promotion of peaceful, just and equitable society through a participatory and sustainable development process.

Ten years after this mission was adopted, it is increasingly well recognized that there are differences in the factors determining peace, justice and equality for men and women. The dynamics of gender in such crucial development issues is of profound importance and the same has been long overlooked.

Rationale

In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, decision-making opportunities as well as exercise of human rights. These differences are socially constructed and learned through socialization processes and are therefore context specific. These gender inequalities intersect with other factors such as class, race, economic status and ethnic group resulting inequitable patterns of exposure to conflict, injustice and exploitation, and differential access to and utilization of information, care and services. This creates an imbalance between the development outcomes for men and women, as issue which is increasingly being recognized and emphasized in the international development for a as well as academic circles.

Taking cognizance of this reality and in keeping with its long-standing concern with peace, justice and equity NEDSSS will, as a matter of policy and good development practice, initiate gender mainstreaming in all spheres of its work. This action is in consonance with the gendering of the International Development Policy as witnessed in the UN Women Development conference from Mexico City (1975); Copenhagen (1980); Nairobi (1985); Beijing (1995); Engendering of other UN Conferences Rio De Janerio (1992), Vienna (1993) Cairo (1994). This action is also necessary in terms of the gender disparity in basic human development in India as evidenced by the skewed population sex ratio (940 in 2011) as well as the negative imbalance between the gender Related Development Index (GDI) value and the Human Development Index (HDI) values of India, making it rank below (134) countries out of (187) countries with both HDI and GDI values in 2011

Understanding of Gender:

The terms sex and gender are often used interchangeably in the vernacular. However, in a medical and technically scientific sense, these words are not synonymous. Increasingly, the term gender is being accepted to define psychophysiologic processes involved in identity and social role. Therefore, it is not uncommon to hear references to "gender". It is defined by one's own identification as male, female, or intersex; gender may also be based on legal status, social interactions, public persona, personal experiences, and psychological setting.

Sex: Identifies the biological differences between men and women, such as women can give birth, and men provide sperm. Sex roles are universal.

Gender: Identifies the social relations between men and women. It refers to the relationship between men and women, boys and girls, and how this is socially constructed. Gender roles are dynamic and change overtime

OR

- That gender refers to the attributes and opportunities associated with being male, female and transgender and the socio-cultural relationships between women and men
- These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes
- These are context specific and can be changed.
- The actual differences and inequalities between women and men are in activities undertaken, access and control over resources as well as decision-making processes and opportunities.
- Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context which takes into consideration several factors such as race, ethnic group, caste, economic status, class, group and age.

Gender mainstreaming initiatives are in sync with the efforts towards gender equality of Caritas India, the development wing of the Catholic Church in India, which strives towards gender justice in all its development intervention as well as institutional setups. This policy also falls into the broader context of the five years Strategic Planning of the (NEDSSS).

In this direction NEDSSS has established Women's Desk in the organization in the year 2000. The main objective of the Women's Desk is to work towards women empowerment in all dioceses of northeast by taking up various programmes aimed at creating awareness on women's issues and building capacity of women leaders to take up issues. Mention may be made that the NEDSSS Women's desk was renamed as NEDSSS Gender desk in 2006.

Aims and objectives

Gender policy of NEDSSS is to ensure that all researches, policies, programmes, projects and initiatives with NEDSSS involvement address gender issues. This will contribute to increase the coverage, effectiveness, efficiency and ultimately the impact of development interventions for women and men. At the same time contributing to achievement of the broader United Nation's Goal of Social Justice and the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) agenda of poverty eradication and women empowerment. This policy will focus, address and integrate gender issues at the institutional and programme level ensuring gender justice and equity.

Institutional Level

- Promote equal representation and participation of women in decision making at the administrative levels.
- Maintain gender sensitivity in all policies pertaining to staff recruitment induction, and performance reviews
- Create an enabling working environment within the organization that attracts and retains gender sensitive staff
- Women representative in its general and governing bodies.
- Facilitate the member Diocesan Social Service Societies (DSSS) to close the gender gap in employment of their work forces
- Support member Diocesan Social Service Societies (DSSS) in undertaking gender-responsive planning, implementation and evaluation of policies programmes, and projects.
- Provide guidance and technical help to likeminded NGOs in this aspect.

Programme level:

- Integrate gender equity across the programme management cycle and in strategic planning
- Carry out gender analysis, gender budgeting and gender audits for all programme interventions
- Focus on the gender component in all evaluations and reports
- Provide qualitative and quantitative information on the influence of gender on priority intervention areas of the northeast region such as education, health, HIV/AIDS, disaster management, micro-credit, human rights, peace and conflict resolution, and violence against women.

Organizational arrangements for implementation:

NEDSSS has been working on issues of women and men through women empowerment interventions through its partners. It has become sensitive to the gender issues and concerns. It also believes in restoring dignity to women respecting their fundamental rights for equal opportunities and equal wages.

Gender Desk will:

- Collaborate with Gender Consultants and assist the Director to plan for and take necessary steps to ensure that the policy is translated into action in both technical and management aspects of NEDSSS programmes.
- Work in collaboration with director to ensure the successful incorporation of gender mainstreaming at institutional and programme levels.
- Will assist and support the development of methodologies and material for gender analysis, standard terminology to ensure coherent communication about gender issues, a strategy for appropriate capacity building across the organization and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.
- Collect and disseminate on-going information such as case studies of “good practice” in mainstreaming gender in various development issues and contribute

to the building of an appropriate evidence-base on priority gender-related issues in northeast India.

- Collaborate with gender desk in the DSSS, to ensure continuous implementation of this policy.

The Directors will be expected to institutionalize mechanisms for building capacity among the staffs by providing information, training or technical support from gender consultants in order to ensure the policy's success. DSSS will be expected to develop their own mechanisms, appropriately staffed and resourced, and collaborate with NEDSSS to develop strategies to promote the integration of gender issues in development interventions. The resources and administrative as well as operational mechanisms for implementation and monitoring effectively this policy will be made available by the Directors.

Conclusion

This gender policy not only gives directions to NEDSSS in practice, but also holds NEDSSS accountable in its commitment towards gender justice and equity. Successful realization of this policy will contribute towards providing an enabling environment for both women and men within the organization, various partners and the communities with whom NEDSSS is working and strengthen the gender sensitivity among all.
