

Gender Policy of Bangladesh Shrimp and Fish Foundation (BSFF)



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Bangladesh Shrimp and Fish Foundation (BSFF)

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1. Introduction

Bangladesh Shrimp and Fish Foundation (BSFF) is a non-profit research, advocacy and Business Support Organization (<http://shrimpfoundation.org/>). It was initially registered in 2003 under Trust Act 1882 and subsequently in 2008 under Directorate of Social Welfare Services in Dhaka (Registration No. DHA08488, Dated: 24 December, 2008). The organization was subsequently registered with Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms (RJSC) in 24th July 2023 (Registration No. S-14040/2023). The initial central objective of the Foundation has been to provide fisheries and aquaculture industries with critically needed supports for growth, sustainability and market access. It has also one of the BSFF's major objectives to realize the full potential of the fisheries sector, which in turn can contribute to the national policy efforts to reduce poverty, improve food and nutrition security, improve the lives and livelihoods of the vulnerable sections, women empowerment, gender equality and youth inclusion, especially the ones in the coastal areas where salinity intrusion and associated impacts are being increasingly manifested. The general thrust of the activities of the organization has been making important contribution to small-fishermen in particular in terms of improving their livelihoods, income enhancing skills and their overall nutrition status. BSFF has rich experience of working with the Government and Development Partners like World Bank, USAID, USDA, UKAID, UNFAO, British Council, WorldFish, Winrock International, Swisscontact, Solidaridad Network Asia, University of Maryland and UN University at Iceland. It has Memorandum of Understandings with relevant public and private sector institutions at the national, regional, and international levels. It has a rich track record of implementing collaboratively developed by private sector stakeholders, the Government of Bangladesh especially the Department of Fisheries and international and national development partners. It has experience of working both at the national and local levels.

BSFF is engaged in a range of activities with an objective to realize the full potentials and transform the sector in a sustainable and equitable manner. With rich experience of sector specific project implementation, it extends a wide range of services to the country's fisheries and aquaculture sector to promote pro-growth initiatives, build up capacities, introduce new technologies in the production processes, facilitate trade, exports, investments and ensure social and gender inclusion in the sector. It has also been increasingly working in wider areas to create the enabling condition for private sector investments and compliance with relevant sector specific norms and standards and environmental sustainability imperatives through research, dialogue, policy advocacy, organizing training, field level intervention to enhance production and other initiatives to overcome challenges faced by the sector. BSFF's works over the years also have continued to include a very significant and robust livelihood improvement components and activities with positive ramification for the nutritional status of target beneficiaries of its activities who also include women, youth and vulnerable groups in particular. The BSFF activities, ever since its establishment, also have had important research component in the areas with special relevance to policy formulation for the aquaculture and fisheries sector of Bangladesh and introduction of growth and development oriented modern technology.

2. Rationale for the Gender Policy

Gender inequalities persist at various levels of society, impacting access to resources, education, health facilities, and economic opportunities. Recognizing these disparities, BSFF is committed to promoting gender equality in line with international frameworks like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The Constitution of Bangladesh and the National Women Development Policy also support these goals. A comprehensive gender policy is essential for BSFF to foster an inclusive and equitable environment for all genders.

3. Guiding Principles

1. **Equality and Non-Discrimination:** All individuals, regardless of gender, have equal rights and opportunities. BSFF is committed to creating a gender-sensitive working environment that respects and values diversity.
2. **Empowerment:** Focus on empowering women and marginalized groups, including third-gender individuals, by ensuring their participation and representation at all levels.
3. **Participation:** Encouraging active participation of women at all levels of decision-making.
4. **Equity:** Promote gender equity through affirmative actions and policies that address the specific needs and challenges faced by different gender groups.
5. **Inclusivity:** Foster an inclusive culture where everyone feels valued and supported, ensuring that gender considerations are integrated into all aspects of BSFF's work.

4. Goals and Objectives

4.1. Goal

To establish gender equality and equity within BSFF at both institutional and program levels.

4.2. Objectives:

1. **Enabling Environment:** Create a supportive environment for women, especially those with disabilities, and third-gender individuals to participate freely and equally.
2. **Equality in Practice:** Ensure equal respect and treatment for all genders in the workplace.
3. **Inclusive Planning:** Integrate gender considerations into planning and implementation of development activities.
4. **Resource Allocation:** Develop gender-sensitive budgets to support necessary infrastructure and facilities.
5. **Representation:** Promote the representation and authority of women at all levels of the organization.

6. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Analyze and evaluate programs through a gender lens to ensure effectiveness and inclusivity.
7. **Empowerment Programs:** Lead initiatives to empower marginalized groups, promoting gender equality through targeted programs.

5. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, board members, volunteers, contracted personnel, and beneficiaries of BSFF. It covers various areas including:

1. Employment and Employee Relations
2. Staff Development
3. Working Conditions, Safety, and Security
4. Sexual Harassment Protection
5. Gender Integration in Programs
6. Values and Code of Conduct
7. Gender Policy Management

5.1. Employment and Employee Relations

5.1.1. Values, Behaviour, and Culture

- All personnel must believe in and act on the principle that all genders are equal.
- Respect for women's roles in the organization and society must be upheld.
- Gender-sensitive language should be used in all communications.
- Rules and regulations should ensure justice and equity.
- Special motivational activities and discussions on gender issues will be conducted to ensure support for the gender policy.

5.1.2. Recruitment, Promotion, and Leave

- Priority will be given to women with disabilities, followed by men with disabilities, women, third-gender individuals, and then men in recruitment.
- Affirmative action will be taken to create opportunities for women with disabilities and third-gender individuals.
- Job announcements will encourage applications from women with disabilities and third-gender individuals.
- Gender awareness will be considered in the selection process.
- Promotion policies will prioritize women and third-gender individuals with similar qualifications and performance.

- Leave policies will ensure equal treatment, with specific provisions for maternal and paternal leave.

5.2. Staff Development

- Training programs will focus on capacity development for all staff, with special emphasis on women and third-gender individuals.
- Gender concepts and sensitivities will be integrated into all training curriculums and modules.
- Opportunities for higher education and professional development will ensure appropriate gender representation.

5.3. Working Conditions, Safety, and Security

- BSFF offices will have separate facilities for female staff and lactating mothers.
- Transport facilities will prioritize women staff and those with disabilities.
- Safety measures will be in place to ensure a secure working environment for all staff, particularly women and those with disabilities.

5.4. Sexual Harassment Protection

- BSFF will implement a zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment, including mental harassment and abuse.
- Proper investigation and punitive measures will be taken against perpetrators.

5.5. Gender Integration in Programs

- Affirmative action will be taken to increase female participation in training programs.
- Partner selection criteria will reflect gender and disability equality.
- Monitoring and evaluation documents will include gender perspectives.

5.6. Values and Code of Conduct

- BSFF will maintain a code of conduct that promotes gender equality and respect for all individuals.
- Employees will be encouraged to participate in gender-related training and workshops.

5.7. Gender Policy Management

- A gender focal person will be designated to oversee the implementation and monitoring of the gender policy.
- Regular reviews and updates of the policy will ensure its relevance and effectiveness.

6. Implementation and Monitoring Strategy

6.1. Organizational Responsibilities

- **Leadership Commitment:** Ensure commitment from top management to implement the gender policy.
- **Gender Focal Points:** Designate gender focal points within the organization to oversee policy implementation.

6.2. Partnerships and Collaboration

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engage with stakeholders, including government bodies, NGOs, and community organizations, to promote gender equality.
- **Collaborative Projects:** Develop collaborative projects that enhance gender equality in the industry.

6.3. Monitoring and Evaluation

- **Performance Indicators:** Develop and use gender-sensitive performance indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy.
- **Periodic Reviews:** Conduct periodic reviews of the policy to assess progress and make necessary adjustments.

6.4. Communication and Awareness

- **Awareness Campaigns:** Conduct awareness campaigns to promote gender equality within the organization and the wider community.
- **Training on Gender Issues:** Provide training on gender issues for all employees and stakeholders.

7. Review

The gender policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains effective and aligned with BSFF's goals and objectives. By adhering to this comprehensive gender policy, BSFF aims to foster an inclusive, equitable, and supportive environment for all individuals, contributing to the overall growth and sustainability of the fisheries and aquaculture industries in Bangladesh.