

SRUTI GENDER POLICY

The SRUTI gender policy is based on universal human rights and democratic values and our analysis of gender within values articulated in our vision. It provides the rationale and starting points for promoting gender equality for all our activities.

The nature and scope of all SRUTI activities promoting community initiatives provide the necessary as well as an ideal condition for promoting gender equality. The policy emphasizes gender equality both within the organization, as well as in the programmes and activities supported by SRUTI.

Understanding of 'Gender'

Gender refers to the attributes and opportunities associated with being a female, male or third gender and the socio-cultural relationships between them. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are largely socially constructed and learned through a process of socialization.

Application of the Policy

The guidelines for the Gender Policy apply to the entire SRUTI team while they are at office, travelling for field activities or for any other relevant program organized by Fellows or any other solidarity groups/networks. However, it is expected that a person associated with SRUTI will conform to and promote SRUTI's gender approach at all aspects of life, especially their families and homes. This Gender Policy forms part of the terms of the service contract and Office Manual.

1. Guiding Principles

We recognize that:-

- Integration of gender issues in SRUTI activities and programmes is an important strategy for realizing our overall goals of a society free of all kinds of discrimination.

- Various forms of discrimination and deprivation existing in our society, social and political instability or conflicts may affect women, men and third gender differently.
- Similarly, long term strategies for social change and emergency responses may impact women, men and the third gender differently.
- Equal participation of women, men and the third gender in all SRUTI activities and those of the organizations it supports promotes gender equality as well as increases effectiveness of the work.
- Affirmative action measures, like maternity benefits, are not discriminatory.

2. Gender in SRUTI Programs and Processes

A 'gender equality perspective' shall be promoted at all levels and stages of the SRUTI programs with the objective of ensuring that the activities offer equal opportunities, benefits, participation and rights to women, men and the third gender and consists of the following :

Promotion of numerical and qualitative gender balance

- SRUTI shall take all appropriate measures to modify social and cultural patterns of conduct of men, women and the third gender which are based on ideas of any kind of discrimination or gender inequity;
- SRUTI shall provide an assessment of the fellow's progress around gender issues;
- SRUTI shall take appropriate measures for deepening the understanding and analysis of all its relevant stakeholders (program personnel, fellows etc.) on gender relations within our society, thereby providing an informed basis for gender equality struggles;
- Such activities shall be included in the SRUTI's work areas that are directed towards contributing to women's empowerment and challenge unequal gender power relations in households, workplaces and in all society in general.
- SRUTI shall ensure that there is a gender perspective in its all organizational processes and programs such as trainings, workshops, capacity building programs and events;

- All publications and information material prepared under SRUTI programs shall reflect commitment to gender equality and include the interests, needs, and experiences, visions and impacts with regard to women, men and third gender.

Providing a conducive and safe working environment for women, men and the third gender.

a. Working Environment

- To be comfortable and safe psychological and physical working environment for women, men and the third gender.

A psychological and physical work environment that suits women, men and the third gender should advocate, stimulate and create a climate where their full competence and capacity are acknowledged, used and appreciated. Furthermore, the environment shall be free from norms and cultures that divide duties with respect to sexes.

- To facilitate the combination of gainful employment with successful parenting for women, men and the third gender.

We believe that pregnancy and parenthood are a natural part of life. An organization contributing positively to parenthood enables commitment from members who are parents and long term relationships are formed. We believe that a better balance between the parents regarding parental responsibility will have a positive and wide-ranging impact on the society as a whole. To this objective focus should be made for paid and unpaid parental leave.

- To encourage and use gender-neutral language.

SRUTI recognizes that the use of language is an integral part of communicating and advocating gender equality. Use of language that is discriminatory or derogatory to any gender shall be treated as misconduct and gender-sensitive language shall be actively promoted.

b. Employment

(i) Recruitment

Overall objectives:

- Recruitment to be based on the highest standard and in accordance with the needs of the institute
- A numerical gender balance shall be promoted at all levels

Women, men and the third gender are different in a number of aspects. Having all sexes at the workplace in equal numbers encompasses more perspectives and more quality and inputs. Gender equality is a fundament for equal rights, opportunity, access of power etc. As an organization that supports people's organizations, it is of utmost importance that we reflect these conditions in SRUTI's own structure.

(ii) Performance Appraisal

- Each staff member's potential is to be used and explored to the optimum level.
- Implementation of gender equality shall be included in Performance Appraisal.

We believe that making sure that women and men, on equal terms, are able to use their full capabilities, both individually and as a team will lead to the most beneficial result. As gender equality is a prioritized task it shall be made visible and rewarded.

(iii) Salaries and Job Evaluation

- SRUTI works on the principle of equal pay for equal work for women, men and the third gender.
- Posts at SRUTI shall be objectively valued regardless of the sex of the person.

We recognize that establishing pay criteria and the value placed on different posts may derive from values of subjective judgments. It is therefore highly important to eliminate any aspects that could lead to discrimination or be interpreted as such.

(iv) Parental Rights, Benefits and Childcare

SRUTI shall establish parental rights for its team members. Parental rights must entail a full package of provisions and should not be seen as only negotiating some maternity and paternity leave. The aim of the parental rights is to enable women, men and the third gender to combine a career with a full family life, while infants are given all the care and attention required.

- Paid maternity leave
- Job security and health and safety for pregnant women
- Paid and unpaid parental leave
- Childcare leave

- Flexible working time
- Provision of childcare
- Breaks and facilities for breastfeeding mothers

c. Prevention of Sexual Harassment

SRUTI shall provide a safe and secure workplace free of sexual harassment for women, men and the third gender.

SRUTI implements the provisions of ‘The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013’ (The ‘Act’) and rules framed thereunder.

Sexual Harassment means sexual harassment as defined by the Act and includes any one or more of the following unwelcome acts or behavior (whether directly or by implication):

- i. Any unwelcome sexually determined behavior, or pattern of conduct towards any colleague (women/ men/ third gender), that would cause discomfort and/or humiliate a person at whom the behavior or conduct was directed namely:
 - Physical contact and advances
 - Demand or request for sexual favors
 - Sexually colored remarks of a sexual nature about a person’s clothing or body
 - Showing pornography, making or posting sexual pranks, sexual teasing, sexual jokes, sexually demeaning or offensive pictures, cartoons or other materials through email, SMS, MMS etc.
 - Repeatedly asking to socialize during off-duty hours or continued expressions of sexual interest against a person’s wishes
 - Giving gifts or leaving objects that are sexually suggestive
 - Eye-teasing, innuendoes and taunts, physical confinement against one’s will or any such act likely to intrude upon one’s privacy
 - Persistent watching, following, contacting of a person
 - Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature
 - The following circumstances if it occurs or is present in relation to any sexually determined act or behavior amount to sexual harassment:
 - Implied or explicit promise of preferential treatment in employment;

- Implied or explicit threat of detrimental treatment in employment;
- Implied or explicit threat about the present or future employment status;
- Interference with the person's work or creating an intimidating or offensive or hostile work environment; or
- Humiliating treatment likely to affect her health or safety

The reasonable person standard shall be used to determine whether or not the conduct was offensive and what a reasonable person would have done. Further, it is important to note that whether harassment has occurred or not, does not depend on the intention of the people but on the experience of the aggrieved woman.

➤ **Redressal Mechanism:**

Redressal for cases of of sexual harassment at the workplace shall be in accordance with the provisions of '**The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2013**' and rules framed thereunder.

An Internal Complaint Committee (ICC) as provided under the Act is constituted to prevent instances of sexual harassment and to receive and effectively deal with complaints pertaining to the same. The names and contact details of the committee are displayed in the office premises. Complaints may be made in writing to the ICC.

Wherever possible, Gender Workshops and discussions will be held for the SRUTI team, Fellows and Karyakartas.