



# GENDER POLICY

2020

Note:  
National Gender Task Force (NGTF) recognizes Late Mrs. Sheila Jones former Chief Zonal Officer, Chennai and Mrs. Indrani Michael, Executive Secretary to the Director, their contribution - the pioneers of Gender work in CASA. This document is a reviewed, revised and reworked version from the original Gender Policy of CASA 2006



Member of **actalliance**

church's auxiliary  
for social action

"I measure the progress of a community with the degree of progress women have achieved."

**-Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**

## **PREAMBLE**

The Gender Policy of CASA represents the organizational commitment to gender equality. It aims to enable itself and its stakeholders to ensure that the interventions improve the lives of all human being irrespective of their gender - all boys and girls, women and men, sexual minorities (LGBTQAI+) by promoting gender equity. Gender equity gives everyone substantive justice in all aspects of human development including economic, social, cultural and political rights; the same level of respect and dignity; substantial options and opportunities to make choices, same level of power to shape the outcomes of these choices and the same level of access to resources. CASA believes gender justice is a human rights issue.

## **THEOLOGICAL BASE**

CASA, the social action arm of all the protestant and orthodox Churches in India, represented by 30 denominations, was founded on Christian faith and values nearly 7 decades ago. CASA believes that all human beings, man and woman, sexual minorities,(LGBTQAI+) are all made in the image of God and are equal participants in the body of Christ. Consequently, it is cognitive that all human beings made in the divine image of God deserve God given dignity. As a faith-based organization, we are aware and sensitive to the gender disparities and gender injustices and thus uphold gender justice.

CASA is committed to take sides with the marginalized, vulnerable, and the poor. Woman and sexual minorities face more injustice. CASA strives to secure women and sexual minorities the dignity and rights to emerge economically independent, socially dignified, and politically, culturally confident of their choice. With this singular objective CASA sets forth to articulate a Gender Policy that would direct the organization and its constituencies to endeavor a gender equitable world. CASA also believes gender justice is breaking all barriers of injustice and oppression, barriers based on caste, creed, language, ethnicity, class, race, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, HIV/AIDS etc.

## **VISION**

CASA's Vision is inspired by the Christian Faith and Values. CASA visualizes a society in which peace, justice and equality prevail and wherein all citizens - irrespective of caste, creed, language and religion - live in peace and communal harmony. CASA also envisages a society where the poor, women, the marginalized and the under-privileged lead a quality life with dignity and have equal opportunity for their involvement in the development process which is value based and sustainable, and also have an appropriate environment to develop their fullest potential.

## **MISSION**

CASA actively supports and works for a just and sustainable society by creating opportunities for the participation of the socially and economically marginalized sections in the development process through networking, alliance building and strengthening of their organizations. CASA also supports local self-governance, protection of human rights, peace and reconciliation and sustainable livelihood measures and responds to the environmental issues, natural and man-made disasters and strives to bring the victims to the mainstreaming at all appropriate levels, mobilizes resources in favor of the poor and optimizes all potentials and capacities existing within the organization and other partners.

## **COUNTRY CONTEXT**

Women and sexual minorities (LGBTQAI+) in India are deprived, underprivileged and disadvantaged sections of the society, irrespective of caste and creed. Caste, religion and patriarchy intersect and escalate Gender injustice.

Gender discrimination is prevalent both in private and public domain. With still a continuous retrograde in areas of health care especially maternal mortality rates, literacy and sex ratio. Women in India are not only economically poor with non-existent decision-making powers; they have little to no access and availability of resources, and are socially marginalized.

Poverty is a vicious cycle and is due to unjust distribution of power, resource, opportunities which keep girls, women and sexual minorities poor according to various scientific analyses. Gender relations and inequities are fundamental cause of poverty. Women, girls and sexual minorities neither enjoy the same status, power, opportunities nor access and control over resource as men and boys do. As all are born equal in the world, all should have equal opportunities for expressing and using their potential irrespective of sex, age race, caste, creed, class and ethnicity. We need to put energy and resources to create value of equality among girls and boys, women and men and sexual minorities. We live in a society and work with men, boys, girls and women whose belief mostly is ingrained in patriarchy which leads to women facing resistance, discrimination in society and even in institutions its felt in subtle as well as in open ways.

The Global Gender Gap report 2020 by the World Economic Forum indicates that the opportunities for women are extremely limited in India, being as low as 35.4%. India trails behind BRICKS partners in health care with a very low spending of less than 1% of GDP. Reflecting on the magnitude of the challenges when it comes to gender parity, India ranks 112 among 153 countries in the Global Gender Gap report of 2020. In India as per the report, 66% of women are literate compared 82% of men and the abnormally low sex ratio at birth in India (91 girls for every 100 boys).

About 71.4 million single women constitute 12% of the total female population in India (inclusive of never married, divorced, separated or widowed). There was a 39% increase in the number of single women in India from 51.2 million in 2001 to 71.4 million in 2011 census.

As per the National Crime Records Bureau's 2017 reports, 3, 78,277 cases of crime against women were reported in the country. Conviction rate in rape-related cases stood at 27.2% even though the rate of filing charge sheets was 85.3% in such cases. Of the total suicide rates in India, 17.1% suicides are committed by housewives followed by cruelty from the husband or his relatives (31.9%) followed by assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty (27.6%) constituted the major share of crimes against women, as per the NCRB report.

The social evils such as honor killing, rapes, teasing, child marriages are still prevalent in India. Institution such as Khap Panchayats, Villages elders, patriarchal and customary laws which favor men with all authority are still prevalent in many parts of India.

According to UNICEF -1 in 3 of the world's child brides are in India of the approx. 223 million child brides, 102 million were married before the age of 15. Uttar Pradesh is home to 36 million child brides, the highest in the country, followed by Bihar, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. Girls who live in rural areas and poorer households are more susceptible to child marriages, with little to no education. There is an increase in such trends during disaster and pandemic like Covid-19.

In 2018, the United Nations was under fire for continuing to employ individuals who have had a history of sexually assaulting women. The world's biggest intergovernmental organization is, unfortunately, also home to sexual harassment of women.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

CASA as an organization believes in a just, peaceful and equal world for all and is working towards developing a critical mass to advocate for an alternative world order .CASA stands by for gender justice as a key requirement to achieving a just and peaceful society. CASA's organizational policies and programs, principles and values, strategies and operations in Human Resource, Finance, IT and Communication, Fundraising, and Branding would reflect and highlight the commitment towards gender justice. Organization would express and do within and outside what it says, by specially standing with the affected and marginalized women & marginalized gender groups for their rights.

Change in behavior, attitude, and action of all associated with the organization from the members of the Board, staff to the community, is imperative. Capacity building alone will not accomplish gender justice but political will and actions towards achieving it is critical. Consistency in our work, word, practice, policy and principle is the crux of the policy and will make it a reality.

## KEY DEFINITIONS

### Gender

Gender is not predetermined and can be changed. It refers to the roles, traditions, social relationships and cultures together which determines for an individual irrespective of its biological sex. The process also decided for an individual what is masculine or feminine, which is played over by the power dynamics fabricated within the society. Gender roles and expectations are learned and they can change over time and they vary within and between cultures. Systems of social differentiations such as political status, class, ethnicity, physical and mental disability, age and more also modify gender roles. The concept of gender is vital because, applied to social analysis; it reveals how women's subordination (or men's domination) is socially constructed.

### Engendering

Engendering means much more than just identifying the impact of policy or program changes on women. It involves the recognition that the gender division of labor and its associated norms, values and ideologies about masculinity and femininity are defined by a complex of power relations which tend to accord - women lesser political voices, social, cultural values and access to control over economic resources. These power relations of gender vary with historical and regional context in addition to being cross cut by other social relations of class, caste, ethnicity or race within a given society.

### Gender Equity

Gender Equity refers to the fair treatment of women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities" (International Labour Office [ILO], 2000).

### Gender Equality

Gender equality is intrinsically linked to sustainable development and is vital to the realization of human rights for all. The overall objective of gender equality is a society in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all spheres of life.

### Gender Based Violence (GBV)

GBV is violence directed against a person because of that person's gender or violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately. It is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against gender.

### Gender Audits

Analyze the income and expenditures of the government, organization, family from a gender perspective. The basic assumption of gender audits is that public policy, organizations, private spaces/families impacts differently on men and women.

### Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy for integrating gender concerns in the analysis, formulation and monitoring of policies, programs and projects. The purpose of gender mainstreaming is to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in all spheres in the society.

### Sexual Harassment

It is unwanted sexual attention that intrudes on a person's integrity. This includes sexual requests or unwelcomed sexual remarks, or touching. It is a form of discrimination and an abuse of power.

## THE KEY PRINCIPLES OF CASA GENDER POLICY

### 1. Practice a governing board approved gender policy.

CASA's policy on Gender permeates from the Governing Board through the execution at all levels and also in the program premises. It applies to each staff, volunteers, communities and any stakeholder who are associated with CASA, without bias, prejudice or compromise at any cost. CASA through understanding of the different concerns, experiences, capacities and needs will analyze, plan, implement and evaluate all its activities through an inherent and integral planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning mechanisms across programs and aspects of its engagement through gender lens.

## **2. Ensure gender equity in all program and organizational strategic areas by transformation of the structures and systems which is within.**

CASA ensures that its interventions improve the lives of women and men also sexual minorities by promoting Gender Equity. CASA would work with men, women, sexual minorities together and separately, to have a more lasting impact on beliefs and behaviors and it would ensure that any work done with them is in an equitable manner. CASA recognizes Gender Equity empowers women, men and sexual minorities for justice in all aspects of human development including economic, social, cultural, political rights.

## **3. Ensure gender equality at the organization, through its policies and programs and its engagement with its stakeholder.**

Gender equality as envisaged by CASA ensures that perceptions, interests, needs and priorities of women, men and sexual minorities will be given equal weight in any given context.

CASA recognizes equality through its practices, policies, ideas and beliefs that perpetuate gender inequality and prevent women and girls and at times, men and boys from enjoying the dignity of life, livelihood, and participation in public life, protection and basic services. CASA believes that gender equality is based on the recognition that gender inequality is caused by structural and institutional discrimination, and there by CASA through its activities ensures to transforming these barriers cohesively and sustainably.

Women and sexual minorities suffer the most from inequality, prejudice, discrimination and injustice within social, economic and political realms; their concerns have to be addressed. CASA's Partnerships and alliances would be assessed on the basis of their commitment to demonstrate gender equality with practice. CASA would seek to ensure the full participation and empowerment of women in all areas of its work, and would promote women's rights as human rights in all aspects. CASA would strive to bring about gender equality within the organization and in all programs.

## **4. Integrating Gender mainstreaming and also an independent thematic focus.**

Gender mainstreaming is practiced in CASA across all peripheries. Gender mainstreaming in CASA involves strengthening of women in leadership positions, building their perspectives, working with men on gender justice issues, enhancing livelihood of women and encouraging women and men to practice non patriarchal roles.

CASA enables transformation of patriarchal social structures and institutions that are sustained and strengthened by value systems and cultural rules which propagate the notion of women's inferiority and subjugation. Transformation of gender relations is recognized as a central focus within all activities of CASA.

Members of the organization and its stakeholders recognize the concept of gender and the rationale of gender mainstreaming as CASA constantly creates safe spaces and opportunities for women's voices and views to be heard in all forums. Gender mainstreaming is therefore a strategy for addressing and reversing the gender-based inequalities towards a just, equal and sustainable environment. There would be targeted approach of the marginalized gender groups like women and sexual minorities through independent thematic focus.

## **5. Ensure protection from gender-based violence**

CASA opposes any kind of gender-based violence not only in armed conflicts but also during peacetime.

CASA believes that gender violence is an unrecognized human rights issue in the world, despite being the most insidious problem. The manifestations may differ in different socio-cultural settings, but its impact, intensity and consequences on women remain the same. Gender violence perpetuates a situation that keeps masses of women in a state of despair, dehumanization, intimidation, subjugation, terrorization and humiliation. CASA condemns all forms of gender-based violence including sexual harassment of any form at the work place and empowers communities to stand against gender violence.

## **6. Ensures to advocate gender justice goals and strategies**

CASA's campaigns, advocacy and public image, emphasizes the importance of gender justice as a human right which is indispensable through its programs for sustainable development. CASA's commitment to gender

justice and the essential roles played by women in all aspects of its development and humanitarian activities is recognized. An integrated gender perspective is built as part of the advocacy strategy to influence the policies and institutions that shape circumstances for people. CASA would promote gender justice with stakeholder, agencies and networks that we are associated with.

### **7. Ensure capacity and knowledge building for all staff**

Gender policies and programming is supported by an investment in capacity-building for all staff at every level, with strong investments in training, exposures, dialogues so that the staff have the necessary skills and information.

Gender Task Force at national and regional (zonal) levels comprising gender sensitive women and men cutting across the organization is formulated and this group has a critical catalytic, advisory, and monitoring role to play in the organization's efforts to gender mainstreaming and increasing organization's effectiveness in programming for gender equality.

Creating organizational networks, partnerships and alliances which leads to identification and sharing of best practices related to mainstreaming a gender perspective in all substantive-programming areas.

## **GENDER POLICY IN ORGANIZATION**

### **1. Staff Policies**

All staff policies, service rules and regulations of the organization are gender sensitive and in line with the gender policy. Periodic reviews of the same would be done through gender lens to ensure that gender sensitivity is maintained. These policies would be in line with the government provisions. CASA's Gender Policy is aligned with HR, Grievance, Finance, Program and all internal policies and systems. Gender inclusivity, sensitivity in all MoU, TORs, contracts etc will be ensured.

### **2. Recruitment and Induction**

All interviews for staff recruitment in the organization will have women equally represented on the interview panel of interviewers. CASA will have a gender sensitive recruitment policy where preference would be given to women candidates based on merit during appointments.

Efforts shall be made to maintain a gender balance in the composition of the governing board, committees, as well as management positions so as to maintain a balanced leadership.

50% at grass root staff and 50% at leadership position will be by women along with the recruitment committee itself to have a transparent panel with 50 percent women. Sexual minorities will be encouraged to join as staff, volunteers and partners.

All advertisements for employing staff shall specifically state that we are an equal opportunity employer and that CASA particularly encourages women and sexual minorities to apply. The organization shall encourage women to apply for management positions to deconstruct gender stereotype in its staffing patterns.

Staff recruitment upholds the diversity principle of gender, faith, age, disability, caste, ethnicity and region with special preference to the marginal groups with merit.

All new staff members joining the organization shall be oriented to CASA's gender policy and the role and functions of the NGTF and ZGTF within the organization. Staff induction procedures include orientation on gender justice and gender sensitivity.

### **3. Performance Review**

All performance review forms of individuals by self or supervisors/peers/subordinates will have indicators to access gender understanding and sensitivity in the overall performance.

CASA would be committed to creating and promoting a gender sensitive work environment within the organization and its various zones/field offices.

#### **4. Capacity Building**

Towards achieving the gender justice goal, CASA would organize regular workshops, seminars and exposures to a variety of other inputs regularly. All CASA organized events and programs both internal and external will have a gender component and address gender specific needs of the participants. CASA will recognize and build capacity & competence on gender justice, gender sensitivity, gender empowerment and have gender understanding as core for staff and stakeholders.

#### **5. Sexual Harassment**

CASA in its HR policy has a section on sexual harassment at work place policy. Committees (ICC) are formed in line with the current policy of the government POSH which is mandatory. The organization shall be responsible to set up structures where staff members may feel free to seek redressal of their complaints. This will enable women employees to work as equals without the constraint of having to conform to stereotyped expectations and providing them appropriate working conditions, facilities for safety, also preventing sexual abuse, mental and other kinds of harassment.

#### **6. Documentation of Processes and Dissemination**

CASA would also ensure a detailed documentation of all the processes related to the activities on the issues of gender within the organization. This would be accessible to all those who wish to use the same to promote and strengthen gender equality within their work spheres. This would also be reported in CASA newsletter and website regularly.

#### **7. Travel**

While on travel safety of the staff shall be given due importance, where necessary staff will be escorted or reimbursed transport expenses. Special concessions could be made for staff with children below 5 years of age while on travel.

Long periods outside home due to travel time puts a lot of pressure on staff for fathers / mothers/guardians. CASA shall consider reducing the travel time by exploring less expensive and faster mode of travel. Staff travelling extensively (more than 15 days in a month) and travelling outside their program area shall be supported. Safety and security of women staff while travel and overtime work shall be maintained. (Provision done in the travel policy revised and approved in 2019). Women staff has access to resources, information, transport facilities, etc.

#### **8. Staff Development**

Equal opportunities shall be provided to all employees for their professional development and growth. However CASA shall make sustained efforts towards enhancing awareness of women employees and building their self-confidence by providing them opportunities for involvement in key plan and decision-making process.

#### **9. Flexibility & Family Time**

Without affecting the number of working hours CASA would be empathetic in supporting flexi timings to support staff to work in a stress-free environment and also support domestic responsibility by both genders. For example, new parents, recovery from illness, care for the aged, etc.

CASA shall support all staff to be able to pay equal attention to profession (office work) and home (care work), to maintain work life balance for quality life. CASA in its HR policy has made provisions for various types of leaves, for example earned leave with LTA, maternity and paternity leave, etc. However CASA will recognize the role of women employees in the family and the responsibilities of motherhood and enable their balanced and optimal development with special care, as still family care is a huge burden on women in India.

#### **10. Gender Proofing, Audit and Impact Assessment**

CASA will periodically undertake gender proofing, check gaps, audits and undertake impact assessment to ensure that gender mainstreaming is effectively undertaken in the organization. This would also include special focus on recruitment, promotions, retentions, finance allocations, facilities provided and perk CASA will constantly review and transform structures, institutional processes and practices which reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality if any.

# GENDER POLICY IN PROGRAMS

## **1. Program Planning**

All program and documents like proposal, concept note, reports and program support documents shall reflect values of gender justice and sensitivity. Program and plans will have allocation of resources for gender work in all programs. Programs shall be designed in such manner that will address all discrimination and injustice against women, girls and sexual minorities.

## **2. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning**

Programs will conduct implementation of gender analysis, monitoring, review and evaluation in all programs of the organization. The derived learning will be further implemented and consolidated in the programs. CASA will incorporate and adopt across programs quantity and quality indicators that capture women's progress in terms of equality, leadership within the programs. Poverty eradication, PRI & Governance, Participation, Gender based violence are some of the basic program aspects CASA will engage with regard to gender.

## **3. Proactive Women Centric Participation**

Women across all programs will be encouraged to participate in all program and representation in each institutions critical mass/network /forum established at local, district, state and national levels. Women will be consciously identified and recruited in leadership positions in institutions, which shall be promoted through all CASA's intervention.

## **4. Capacity Building**

Gender capacity building and technical support will be available and adequate to integrate gender at all stages of all CASA's program/project cycles. Capacity of the program staff will be enhanced to carryout gender mainstreaming processes. Staff, partners, community leaders will undertake training and capacity building program to promote women's leadership, strengthen women's institutions, networks, and forums, gender equality and legal awareness on related acts/policies for women and girls. Developing awareness, knowledge, and capacity at all levels in the organization to gender mainstreaming is a commitment of CASA.

## **5. Communication and Advocacy**

CASA will take on Formal and informal participation in women's coalitions in gender justice advocacy and campaigns, design objectives and strategies. CASA will design and drive campaign against discrimination and injustice and develop IEC and BCC materials on promoting gender equality and disseminate in all program areas and include gender perspective in all programs of the organization. Promoting and supporting women's movements, programs for women's rights and undertake policy influencing work on gender equality and gender roles.

## **6. Emergency and Humanitarian Assistance**

Emergency and Humanitarian assistance program will have give special focus to women and sexual minorities .Women's , sexual minorities safety , needs , protections , privacy and hygiene needs will be prioritized in such programs . Women staff will be deployed to address such special concerns in special circumstances .

## **7. Implementation**

A Gender desk with adequate resource for facilitating gender work will be set up. Gender work cuts across all departments, programs, sectors and regions of CASA. Gender sensitive culture inculcated in the organization across National Gender Task Force & Zonal Gender Task Force will be institutionalized and operational. Gender Task Force will monitor and review the gender related work in the organization.

## **POLICY REVIEW**

CASA strongly believes and will work towards gender justice, gender equality and equity in all aspects of its programs as well as organizational strategies at all levels. This policy is a commitment, a means towards gender mainstreaming within the organization. The policy will undergo a review by staff and expert committee every three years and if need be even earlier as per contextual need. We hope this document to be a living and dynamic document.

"You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women"  
**-Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru**