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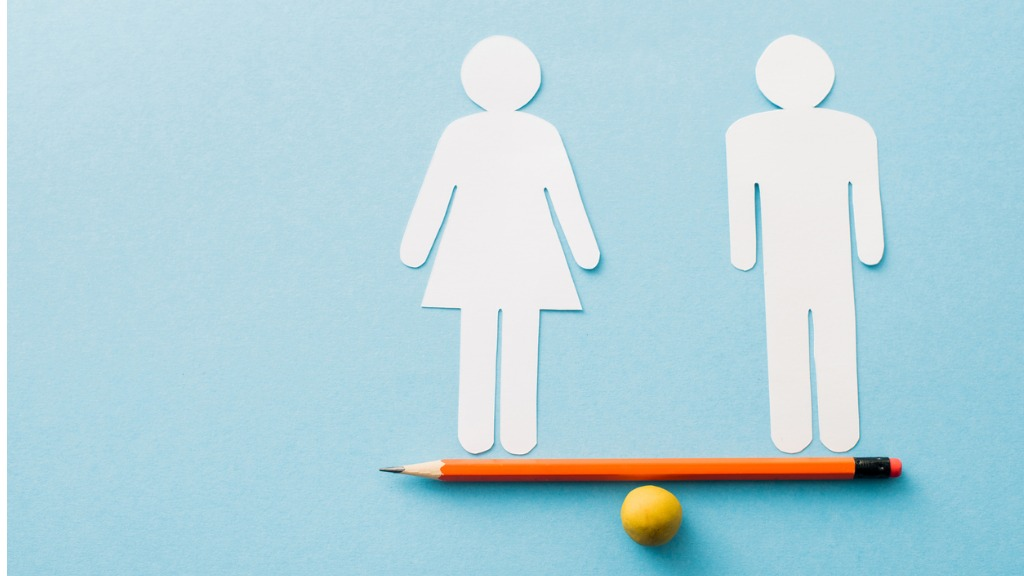
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Gender Policy, Laws and Practice in Bangladesh

# Introduction

A gender policy is a set of rules, tactics, and measures intended to combat gender inequality and advance gender equality in a particular setting, like a government, institution or organization.



Gender policies are designed to tackle gender inequality by addressing gender gaps and promoting allocative efficiency. These policies aim to ensure that resources are allocated in a way that benefits both men and women equally. **(IMF)**

# Objectives of the Gender Policy

The goal of gender policy is to eradicate discrimination based on gender and establish a society in which men and women have equal rights and opportunities. It seeks to eliminate obstacles to women’s growth and to enhance women’s involvement in social, cultural, and economic spheres. Creating an atmosphere where women may engage freely and equitably is the goal of gender policies, which also seek to empower women socially, legally, economically, and politically. So, by guaranteeing equal participation for men and women, gender policies seek to advance good governance and establish norms and principles for gender equality.

# Overview of DoE’s Gender Policy

In this assignment I will share my view regarding Gender Policy of the Department of Environment (DoE) and the practice of this law in Bangladesh. The Government of Bangladesh (GOB) ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1984. It has pledged to take the required actions to end all types of discrimination against women. Articles 10, 19, and 28 of the Bangladeshi constitution provide women's employment rights in every occupation;

*Article-10: Steps shall be taken to ensure participation of women in all spheres of national life*

*Article-19 (2): The State shall adopt effective measures to remove social and economic in equality between man and woman and to ensure the equitable distribution of wealth among citizens, and of opportunities in order to attain a uniform level of economic development throughout the Republic.*

*Article-28(2): Women shall have equal rights with men in all spheres of the State and of public life*

Based on these articles, the Department of Environment's (DoE) gender policy was launched in Bangladesh in 2016. To increase the involvement of both men and women in the Department's development process and promote sustainable and equitable development, this policy was created to mainstream gender problems. This Policy has 4 core principles: -

1. **Equity and Equality: -** Equality is a matter of equal rights, opportunities and obligations for both women and men. Equity is the quality of being fair and right, a stage in the process of achieving gender equality. DoE will emphasize equity and equality in its entire structure and processes.
2. **Empowerment: -** Empowerment refers to measures designed to increase the degree of autonomy and self-determination in people and in communities in order to enable them to represent their interests in a responsible and self-determined way, acting on their own authority. DoE will ensure equal opportunities and access for both women and men employees in the entire process of the department.
3. **Management and Governance: -** Governance refers to the processes of interaction and decision-making among the actors involved in a collective problem that lead to the creation, reinforcement, or reproduction of social norms and institutions. DoE will undertake proactive efforts to assure participation by women in decision-making and governance at all levels and in all areas of the business, including budgetary decision-making.
4. **Working Environment:** - DoE will prevent all forms of violence in its workplace, including verbal, physical, or sexual harassment. DoE will also ensure the safety of its female employees in the workplace, including separate prayer rooms, restrooms and travel to and from the workplace.

They enacted this policy to eradicate discrimination based on gender and establish a society in which men and women have equal rights and opportunities. But now the question arises, have they been able to implement these policies properly?

# Practice of this policy in the government sector of Bangladesh

The first principles of this policy emphasized equity and equality. But there occurs gender inequality slightly. In our country, women are generally being paid less opportunities than men. Our government encourages the active participation of women in decision-making processes and leadership roles equally but there are some limitations for them. The government make opportunities for women in written rules but they don’t find out the barriers behind the non-implementation of these principles.

The second principle of this gender policy is empowerment. In Bangladesh, the rate of empowerment of men is high than women. Generally, in every government sector the number of male employees is greater than female. Though the previous government of Bangladesh emphasized on the empowerment of women but they didn’t follow the CEDAW`s principles properly. They empower women in different sectors but the number was minor.

The third principle of this policy is management and government. With more women occupying public office and taking part in decision-making processes, women's involvement in politics has grown. Women have been merged into local governance through the reservation of seats. Women face some challenges in representing themselves from the local level to the national level.

The fourth principle is the working environment. The topic of women's safety in Bangladeshi workplaces is complicated. Despite efforts to increase safety, there are still issues. Women often face violence and harassment in public spaces, through workplaces. This includes offensive remarks, physical abuse, and even sexual assault.

Several articles of the Bangladeshi constitution deal with gender equality and women's rights. Although there are still obstacles to overcome, the Bangladeshi government has made great strides in enacting laws relating to women. Here are some key points: -

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Successes | Obstacles |
| Political Empowerment | Violence Against Women |
| Constitutional Provisions | Child Marriage |
| Economic Empowerment | Workplace Discrimination |
| Education | Cultural Norms |
| Gender-Responsive Budgeting | Limited Access to Healthcare and Reproductive Rights |

# Practice of this policy in the private sector of Bangladesh

The private sector of Bangladesh has made tremendous progress in practicing gender policy. The private sector has taken a more varied approach to gender issues, despite the public sector giving gender equality a lot of attention and implementing numerous institutional and legislative changes. Though, there are still obstacles in properly implementing and institutionalizing these policies across all sectors, companies and industries have taken action to advance gender equality. One of the most important pieces of law designed to safeguard workers' rights in the private sector is the Bangladesh Labor Act (2006). At this point, I will make a comparison between these principles and BRAC.

The first principle of this policy is precisely followed by the private company of Bangladesh. They follow this principle in recruiting and hiring employees. With an emphasis on expanding the number of women in leadership and decision-making positions within the company, BRAC advocates for the equal treatment of male and female employees and their payment system is equal to all.

The second principle of this policy is empowerment. BRAC operates a number of initiatives to educate women and girls, particularly in neglected and rural areas. Education is the prerequisite for empowerment. BRAC provide microfinance to women through small loans, savings, and financial literacy training in order to make themselves financially independent and improve their economic condition.

The third principle is governance and management. With an emphasis on expanding the number of women in leadership and decision-making positions within the company, BRAC advocates for the equal treatment of male and female employees. We noticed that there are many female project managers and leader in BRAC. The number of both male and female are equal in the top position.

The final principle of this policy is the working environment. BRAC endorses equal treatment of male and female employees in their workplace. They have implemented various measures to support women employees. Such as maternity leave, sexual harassment policy and childcare support for female staff.

So, it is clear that the private sector is ahead of the public sector in implementing gender policy in Bangladesh. The government sector only includes this policy in their rules and regulations but in practice, they failed to implement it properly.

# Recommendation

Here I draw some recommendations for implementing gender policy in Bangladesh. Implementing gender policy is essential to the accomplishment of everyone's human rights and is inextricably related to sustainable development. So, collective effort is mandatory for the successful implementation of this policy. Now the question is “To implement this policy, what to do, who will do it and how?”

What to do?

A complex strategy involving extensive efforts at governmental, organizational and social levels is needed to advance the implementation and strengthening of gender policy in our country. To accomplish these objectives, legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms must be strengthened. Programs that address the unique needs of women and girls, whether in the area of healthcare, education, economic development, or legal protection, must accept funding from the government & private sectors. From villagers to city dwellers, all have to be aware of gender equality and this policy.

Who will do?

The effective execution of gender policy necessitates cooperation and active participation of partners from many sectors of Society. An overview of the main actors who can work together.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Government and Public Sector | Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA), Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Finance |
| Civil Society Organizations and (NGOs) | **BRAC, Nari Unnayan Shakti,** Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK),UNDP**, UN Women, World Bank & UNICEF** |

How

To make sure its laws pertaining to gender are still applicable and efficient in tackling new gender concerns, Bangladesh must review them on a regular basis. The government can set up a monitoring team to assess its effectiveness. The government can conduct research projects to make great evaluations and should give importance to the recommendations of scholars and public opinion. If the government cannot do it alone, then various international organizations, NGOs and experts can includes to these activities.

Finally, we can say that with the collaboration of civil society and government, we can make a gender-equal society. Then our country and society will progress socially and economically and will be able to keep pace with the third world country.

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