

**FORMULATION PROCESS
OF
THE STATE GENDER EQUITY POLICY
FOR GUJARAT**

**Department of Women and Child Development
Gujarat**

Support by UNFPA

I. BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The twentieth century has brought not only women but issues concerning women to the forefront. Various developing countries including India have addressed the need for gender equality at high levels to march towards progress with equal participation of women in all sectors. Despite the various measures taken, women still face discrimination, marginalization, non recognition and neglect at home and outside.

Committed to improve the condition of women of the state, the Government of Gujarat has also initiated the formulation of the State Gender Equity Policy in line of the National Policy for Women's Empowerment, 2001. This policy would aim at integrating gender perspective in all the existing as well as the new programs/schemes that would be implemented by the state government.

1.2 National Policy

The National Policy for the Empowerment of women was formulated in 2001. This policy recommended the policy prescriptions and action points for economic as well as social empowerment of women in the whole of India. The formulation of this policy was followed by the state level women policies in the states of Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. With the need of the same, the state of Gujarat has also taken up the task of formulating the Gender Equity Policy.

1.3 Status of women in Gujarat

Gujarat is one of the most developed states of India. In the past few decades its economy has grown by leaps and bounds. The economy has grown at an average rate of 9.5% during the last one decade. There has also been a significant increase in the per capita income.

In spite of impressive economic growth, the performance of social indicators which form the core of human development has not grown pari-passu with the economic development. Economic development, without desired social transformation tends to be skewed. Therefore, empowering women is being given lot of importance in the recent past.

When we talk of holistic development of the state, it should include creating developmental opportunities for both genders in equal measures. But the situational reality of the status of women in the state is not too comfortable. The female literacy rate in the state is 58.6%, while the same for males is 80.5%. The sex-ratio of Gujarat was 934 in 1991 which has dropped drastically to 921 in 2001. This shows the prominence of discrimination against girl child and preference of male child. The female worker population rate is 28% in the state which is quite low as compared to the total worker population, representing the hidden nature of women's work as well as the mind set of the society which does not reflect accurately on the work done by women.

In order to provide equal and more opportunities to both men and women so that they can contribute to the process of development and well being of our society, the Government of Gujarat has decided to formulate a comprehensive gender policy for the state in concurrence with the National Policy for Empowerment of Women, 2001. The policy will provide thrust and momentum to the process of building up a gender-just society and will be a stepping stone for a fair and egalitarian socio-economic development.

1.4 Rationale/Objectives of the policy

The Department of Women and Child Development, Government of Gujarat has taken a step forward and developed a draft of state gender equity policy. The policy aims to narrow the gender gap and strive for an equitable social structure. Broadly speaking, following are the objectives of this policy:

- To incorporate gender perspective into various Government programs.
- To enact new laws and providing legal services to women in distress.
- Capacity Building of both genders in order to bring about attitudinal changes along with skill development.
- To view health and education as the focal themes of this policy.
- Ensure linkages between various development programs/schemes related women, under different Government Departments.
- Better coordination between GO & NGOs.

1.5 Background of Department of Women and Child Development, GoG

The Department of Women and Child Development, Government of Gujarat is committed for the welfare, development and empowerment of the women of the state. For this purpose, it is essential to reduce the gap between the status of men and women. Thus, it was decided to form a gender equity policy. The DWCD has come forward and facilitated the formulation of the state Gender Equity Policy with UNFPA funding.

II. FORMULATION PROCESS

2.1 Conceptualization

The first meeting for the State Gender Equity Policy was held under the Chairmanship of Smt. Anandiben Patel, Hon. Minister for Women & Child Development, Government of Gujarat. It was decided to form nine different groups for the formulation of the policy, focusing the key issues related to women. A Chairperson was nominated for each group comprising experts from different fields such as NGOs, Researchers, academicians, Govt. Departments, implementers etc. It was also decided to appoint a Consultant for each group who would guide the group members and raise key issues of concern.

The members were nominated for each group who are experts in the respective field. All the members were requested to participate in the task of policy formulation. The dates for the group meetings were finalized and intimated to all the members.

2.2 Meetings of groups

After receiving the brief from DWCD, the Consultants of all the groups prepared a base paper for highlighting the key issues for discussion and circulated among the respective group members.

Two - three meetings were held for each group, wherein various issues related to the particular sector were discussed in detail. Every member shared his/her experiences, bringing out the key issues of concern. Every group distinctly identified the core issues and prepared action points. They also designed strategies for better execution of the action points. All the groups were supported by their respective consultant and chairperson.

Based on the discussions held in the meetings, the consultants of each group prepared the draft policy document which was again circulated among the respective group members and the document was finalized after incorporating the changes suggested by the group members.

Annexure I contains the schedule of all three rounds of meetings held for all the groups.

2.3 Compilation of draft documents

Eventually, the draft policy documents submitted by the consultants were compiled into one compact Policy document highlighting the policy prescription, action points and agencies responsible for the actions for each thrust area represented by various groups. This document was widely circulated among all the participants in the policy formulation process and other experts in the field for their suggestions and comments.

2.4 State level Workshop

A State Level workshop was held which was attended the Hon. Minister for state for the Women and Child Department Smt Anandiben Patel, the group members including the Chairpersons and Consultants and other expert invitees.

In the Workshop, the consultants carried out a brief presentation of the issues raised and remedies suggested by the groups during the policy formulation meetings. Each presentation was followed by a panel discussion. The suggestions and comments resulting from the workshop were incorporated and the policy was finalized by the DWCD.

Annexure I (Schedule of all three rounds of meetings)*First round of meetings -*

Sr.no.	Group Name	Date	Time	Venue
1	Gender Perspective in Health , Nutrition, Sanitation and Drinking Water	20/10/02	3:00 PM	Circuit House Annexe, Sahibaug, Ahmedabad
2	Economic Empowerment of Women Women in Economy Women in Agriculture Women in Industry	19/10/02	5:00 PM	Hotel Comfort Inn, Airport Road
3	Literacy and Education	23/10/02	3:00 PM	Gandhi Labour Institute
4	Political Participation by Women Women in Decision Making	22/10/02	4:00 PM	Toran, Nr. Gandhi Ashram
5	Crime against Women Legal upport to women in distress Women in difficult circumstances	18/10/02	11:00 AM	Circuit House Annexe, Sahibaug, Ahmedabad
6	Legislative Action for Gender Equity	17/10/02	3:00 PM	Circuit House Annexe, Sahibaug, Ahmedabad
7	Capacity Building	19/10/02	3:00 PM	Circuit House Annexe, Sahibaug, Ahmedabad
8	Advocacy for Gender Equity Women in Masss media	17/10/02	11:00 AM	Circuit House Annexe, Sahibaug, Ahmedabad
9	Natural Resource Management Water, Fuel, Fodder, Environment	23/10/02	3:00 PM	Circuit House Annexe, Sahibaug, Ahmedabad

Second round of meetings -

Sr.no.	Group Name	Date	Time	Venue
1	Gender Perspective in Health , Nutrition, Sanitation and Drinking Water	22/11/2002	3:00 PM	Circuit House Annexe, Sahibaug, Ahmedabad
2	Economic Empowerment of Women Women in Economy Women in Agriculture Women in Industry	20/11/2002	5:00 PM	NABARD
3	Literacy and Education	16/11/2002	3:30 PM	Toran Resturant
4	Political Participation by Women Women in Decision Making	14/11/2002	12:30 PM	Toran Resturant
5	Crime against Women Legal upport to women in distress Women in difficult circumstances	25/10/2002	10:00 AM	Circuit House Annexe, Sahibaug, Ahmedabad
6	Legislative Action for Gender Equity	29/10/2002	3:00 PM	Circuit House Annexe, Sahibaug, Ahmedabad
7	Capacity Building	15/11/2002	4:00 PM	
8	Advocacy for Gender Equity Women in Masss media	1/11/2002	11:00 AM	Circuit House Annexe, Sahibaug, Ahmedabad
9	Natural Resource Management Water, Fuel, Fodder, Environment	25/10/2002	3.00PM	Gandhi Labour Institute, Drive in Road, Ahmedabad

Third round of meetings –

Sr.no.	Group Name	Date	Time	Venue
1	Gender Perspective in Health , Nutrition, Sanitation and Drinking Water	DRAFT POLICY DOCUMENT AWAITED		
2	Economic Empowerment of Women Women in Economy Women in Agriculture Women in Industry	30/11/02	3:00 PM	NABARD
3	Literacy and Education	DRAFT POLICY DOCUMENT AWAITED		
4	Political Participation by Women Women in Decision Making	DRAFT POLICY DOCUMENT AWAITED		
5	Crime against Women Legal support to women in distress Women in difficult circumstances	DRAFT POLICY DOCUMENT AWAITED		
6	Legislative Action for Gender Equity	16/11/2002	10:30 AM	Circuit House Annexe, Sahibaug, Ahmedabad
7	Capacity Building	DRAFT POLICY DOCUMENT AWAITED		
8	Advocacy for Gender Equity Women in Masss media	13/11/2002	11:30 AM	EMRC, Ahmedabad
9	Natural Resource Management Water, Fuel, Fodder, Environment	DRAFT POLICY DOCUMENT SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL		