

INTRODUCTION

BTS is a non-profit, non-political organization established in 1994 through committed efforts of a group of professionals and volunteers. The organization's work was done voluntarily by the founder members to breaking the silence in the community. The members of BTS have taken upon themselves to raise awareness to protect the children from sexual abuse.

BTS envisions a protective environment in the society and state for promoting child rights. In line with this vision, the organization has conducted analysis, research, advocacy, policy development, implementation and capacity enhancement of BTS. Following thematic approach, BTS has initiated several programs & activities under following heads to address violence against women and children.

Since inception gender equity has been a core programmatic principle as well as part of organizational values and culture of Breaking the Silence. It is necessary to integrate gender into problem analysis, strategy development and execution of any project implemented by Breaking the Silence. One of BTS's major objectives is to create a gender sensitive environment within the organization where all BTS policies and activities are based on the principles and support of gender equity principles.



ব্রেকিং দ্য সাইলেন্স

Breaking the Silence

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MISSION OF THE ORGANIZATION

To support children, caregivers, family and other stakeholders to realize and promote child rights and reduce all forms of child abuse with particular focus on child sexual abuse through meaningful child participation and by facilitating good governance.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ORGANIZATION

Objectives of Breaking the Silence

April 2019

INTRODUCTION

BTS is a non-profit, non-political organization established in 1994 through committed efforts of some of the prominent development activists in Bangladesh and subsequently registered as a legal body in 2000 with the Department of Social Services (DSS) in 2000 and NGO Affairs Bureau in 2001. Much of the work was done voluntarily by the founder members to breaking the silence in the community. The members of BTS have taken upon themselves to raise awareness to protect the children from sexual abuse.

BTS envisions a protective environment in the society and state for promoting child rights. In line with the vision and mission and from contextual analysis, BTS has identified four strategic areas: a) Enhanced children capacity for establishing their rights, b) Community mobilization for collective actions for child protection, c) Advocacy for policy development reform and implementation and d) Institutional Capacity Enhancement of BTS. Following thematic approaches, BTS had initiated several programs & activities under following heads to address violence against women and children.

Since inception gender equity has been a core programme principle as well as part of organizational values and culture of Breaking the Silence. It is mandatory to integrate gender into problem analysis, strategy development and measures of any project implemented by Breaking the Silence. One of BTS's major priorities is to create a gender sensitive environment within the organization where other BTS policies and measures are consistent with, and supportive of gender equity principles.

VISION OF THE ORGANIZATION

A protective environment and proactive system in the society and state for promoting child rights.

MISSION OF THE ORGANIZATION

To support children, caregivers, duty bearers and other stakeholders to realize and promote child rights and reduce all forms of child abuse with particular focus on child sexual abuse through meaningful child participation and by facilitating good governance.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ORGANIZATION

Objectives of Breaking the Silence



Objectives:

The prime objectives of the Breaking the Silence is to create a safe and positive environment for children and family as well. However the specific objectives are:

- Targeted children and parents/guardian/caregivers and mass people will be sensitized and empowered through social counseling so that they will respond positively to save children from sexual abuse.
- Enhance capacity of partner/networking organizations, formation of local pressure committee for consensus on prevention of sexual abuse and create linkage with child rights based organization to mainstream CSA issue in their respective program component.
- Advocate the policy makers: Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and Education Ministry (Primary and Mass Education Division) to activate CRC & NPA.
- Working with local government to include children in their governance and allocate resources for the wellbeing of the children.
- Ensuring participation of children in decision making process in budget allocation, formulation of code of conduct, initiation of complaint and response system and service monitoring for child protection.
- Enhance capacity of local government representatives so to play active role in creating child friendly environment through provision of education, healthcare, child protection and recreation facilities in the community.
- To introduce UN-CRC in all level of the society.
- To build awareness about child rights specially protect children from sexual abuse.
- To undertake different activities to prevent child sexual abuse and gender based violence.
- To promote life skill of children to protect his/her from any kind of abuse especially sexual abuse.
- To provide skill development for right holders and duty bearer to protest about sexual abuse in his/her surroundings.
- To raise awareness to the right holders about counseling and psycho-social support for the survivors.
- To play important role in net-working and advocacy for establishing safety education (sex education) in educational curriculum.

Introduction

Society prescribes different roles to women and men in different social contexts. There are also differences in the opportunities available to women and men leading to their differences in their decision-making capacities as well as in exercising human rights. These elements of gender sensitivity are observed not

only at grassroots level with whom Breaking the Silence works, but also at the level of its staff members since inception.

The rationale for adopting gender as a core principle is simple. BTS perceives gender equality not only as a development priority but also as a human right. All human beings should have equal rights and any form of discrimination and disparity between girls and boys, women and men is unacceptable. Discrimination and disparities created by the family, society or the state prevent women from enjoying other rights and entitlements.

In continuation, equal rights for women have been emphasized both in the administrative and staff policy as well as policies related to different development programs of Breaking the Silence. Though much headway has been made in securing women's equal participation in all activities, the formulation of this comprehensive gender policy is mean of the specific measures undertaken to deal with whatever gender gap that exists in the Breaking the Silence. The present policy is an improvement upon the previous administrative and staff policy and it incorporates some new measures, which would provide further opportunities for all employee of the Breaking the Silence.

Scope of the Policy

Breaking the Silence has scope as well as challenges to ensure gender equality within its own organisation and through programmes, partnerships and advocacy. This Gender Policy is applicable for all staff, beneficiaries as well as stakeholders and partners of Breaking the Silence. It is felt that a policy document, with guidelines, will assist Breaking the Silence and its staff in translating the gender specific goals and principles into reality, thus contributing to the elimination of discrimination and inequalities.

Need for Revision

The Policy was reviewed and revised to (1) take into account changes in context, role, scope of work of Breaking the Silence, partners, beneficiaries and other NGO activities and (2) take into account past experiences, challenges and lessons learned.

Guiding Principles:

The efforts to address gender equality in Breaking the Silence will be guided by the following principles:

- Equality as a right. This is upheld by international standards in CEDAW, CRC, SDGs and national policies.
- BTS's programmes and operations are guided by human rights standards and principles.

- Root causes of gender inequality have to be addressed. This requires addressing discriminatory social norms and institutions which reinforce gender inequalities as well as advocating for and fostering legislation and policies that promote gender equality. Transformational change can only be achieved if structural constraints and unequal gendered power relations are addressed.
- Gender equality is a cross cutting issue. The policy seeks to integrate and mainstream gender concerns in all program efforts and institutional arrangements, as well as the organization's operating environment.
- The policy seeks to assist BTS in integrating gender equity goals and objectives into its entire programming and organizational processes and structures so that these goals become internalized and institutionalized.
- It ensures that principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination are integrated and protected all through the organization and its programmes.

Goal of Gender Policy

The overall goal of this policy is to integrate and establish gender equity concerns within Breaking the Silence and improve its capacity for developing programs and projects that will improve the social, legal/civic, political, economic and cultural conditions of the poor and marginalized children, adolescent, youth and women include both victimized and at high risk point (rural, urban, slum, street, refugee, ethnic, disable) especially for sexual abuse. In particular it seeks to provide a safe, enabling and dignified working environment for all staff.

Objectives of the Gender Policy:

- To provide a clear vision, guidelines and a consistent approach to Breaking the Silence, its staff and partners for the promotion and integration of gender equity at all levels
- To create a gender friendly environment in the organization.
- To improve women's participation in the decision making process of the organization, its community and program area.
- To create organizational culture and practices within Breaking the Silence which enable all genders to work together in an equitable, effective and mutually respectful manner
- To provide a guideline to the staff and other stake holders to act in a gender sensitive way.
- To promote equity and equality between male and female staff members in the organization and in program area.

Strategies to Achieve the Objectives:

The policy objectives shall be achieved through the following strategies:

- Sensitisation and capacity building of staff at all levels on adopting the principles and practices of gender equality in their personal and professional lives.
- Ensuring the translation and dissemination of the policy to all persons employed in Breaking the Silence.
- Promoting appropriate education, sensitisation and creation of awareness on the responsibilities of management and individual staff members to address gender concerns in their daily work relations as well as in program and project.
- Adopting an explicit advocacy role in promoting gender equity.
- Ensuring that Breaking the Silence partners have gender equality policies and practices consistent with BTS's

Organization Level

Goal:

- To establish a friendly atmosphere in working areas where all staffs (male & female) can take part in development process equally.

Objectives:

- To ensure equality among all levels (male and female) of staff in the Breaking the Silence.
- To ensure equal rights dignity and opportunities among all level of staff and their equal participation in all activities.
- To create a friendly and right-based environment to change and improve the status of women in the society.
- To undertake affirmative actions considering the historically created social backwardness and deprivation as well as specific needs of women.

Policy Areas:

Affirmative actions have been undertaken for the female staff in the following areas:

- Recruitment, leave, promotion, posting, transfer, termination and dismissal;
- Financial and other material benefits;
- Infrastructural and some other special benefits;



- ❑ Staff development;
- ❑ Specific problems of the female staff
- ❑ Values and code of conduct.
- ❑ Workload; (Equal Rights, Ministration Period, Pregnancy Period, Breast feeding)
- ❑ Information flow
- ❑ Monitoring & Evaluation

1. Recruitment, leave, promotion, posting, transfer, termination and dismissal

In the existing recruiting recruitment policy certain rules are equally applicable for both male and female. However, to increase the number of female staff, the following affirmative actions have been taken:

1.1 Recruitment

The recruitment will proceed as per personnel policy. The recruitment committee will follow the policies below:-

- i) Recruitment must be balanced with the gender policy of the organization, female staff not be exceed 60% of the total staff. The number of female staff in Breaking the Silence will be increased gradually. This increasing will take place at the field level as well as other levels of management.
- ii) In the case of equal educational qualification for male and female candidates working experience would be relaxed a little bit for the female candidate.
- iii) It must include at least one female member in 3-membered recruitment committee.
- iv) To achieve the target of increasing female staff, if necessary, applications will be invited from female candidates only.
- v) Applicant must mention mother's name in his/her application along with father's name.

1.2 Leave

The policy for annual leave, medical leave, and casual leave are the same for both male and female staff. But there is a provision for maternity and paternity leave for the female and male staff respectively, which are as follows:

Maternity:

A female staff will be entitled to 6 (six) months of two times of maternity leave with full pay as per Govt. rule during child birth and, if necessary, medical leave,

annual leave and leave without pay may be added to this leave by the organization approval of the authority.

Paternity:

Breaking the Silence gives mental support to the male staff's wife during childbirth and the succeeding days for postnatal care, here is also a provision for paternity leave for the male staff as given under:

The male staff of Breaking the Silence will be entitled to 30 (thirty) days' paternity leave with full pay during the period of childbirth of his wife. The paternity leave will be granted for two times in maximum.

1.3 Promotion

Promotion would be totally indifferent of gender issues, only the service rule would be considered. However, a little relaxation may be given to the female candidates.

1.4 Posting and transfer

The rules of posting and transfer are same for the male female staff. But the following positive exceptions will be made for the female staff:

The female staff can be deputed in the nearest locality on aspect of communication with her locality and community easily.

At the time of posting and transfer of a female employee, the workstation and place of residence of the husband/parents are to be taken into consideration.

During the period of pregnancy, i.e. from the first month till the fifth month after childbirth, the female staff will not be transferred from her work place.

1.5 Dismissal

A staff, irrespective of sex, can be dismissed in accordance with the set service rules of the organization. But the male/female staff will be subject to dismissal for the following additional reason:

- If any male/female staff physically or mentally abuses any child he/she will be dismissed immediately from his job if it is proved.

- If any male/female staff abuse (any kind of) the male/female staff of the organization, he will be dismissed from his job if it is proved.

2. Financial and other material benefits

All staffs will be entitled to equal pay scale, house rent, travel allowance, increment, training allowance, transportation expense, medical facilities, telephone (According to Service rule), etc.

All female staffs of the organization will be entitled for her safety travel i.e. avoiding night travel, if it is necessary for her to travel at night she will entitle (in case of bus journey) two tickets.

3. Infrastructural and other special benefits

Some Infrastructural and special facilities to be offered by the organization to the female staff are as follows:

- i. There will be separate toilets for the female staff, if possible, in all other offices of Breaking the Silence.
- ii. All the female staff can bring her baby to working place with helping hand so that she can contribute to her assigned responsibilities. There is child friendly environment in the organization.

4. Values and Code of Conduct

- Gender equity is one of the core values of the organization. All staff of Breaking the Silence should believe this value.
- There will be no gender division of work in Breaking the Silence. Opportunity to participate in all works remains equally open irrespective of gender/sex.
- Any comment, made directly or indirectly, which may cause humiliation to the female staff, is considered as a punishable offence.
- To provide proper orientation about gender issues has been made mandatory for all its staff members.

5. Workload; (Equal Rights, Ministration Period, Pregnancy Period, feeding)

Organization will take role in the Workload areas, which are as follows:

1. Equal Rights: As per service rule.

2. Ministration Period: During the period of Ministration female staff will be permitted to 3 days desk work.

3. Pregnancy Period: As per service rule.

4. Breast-feeding: For breast feeding, a female staff can bring her baby with a helping hand and can use the allocated corner of the office. Or she can get the flexible office time for her baby from 10am to 4pm from child birth to 9 months.

6. Information flow

The Executive Committee will collect all sorts of information collectively from bottom to upper level in order to overcome misappropriation of any incident against men and women of Breaking the Silence.

7. Implementation in appraisal process

At the time yearly staff member appraisal, specific component are considered on the point of gender issue. Management or HR will take proper initiative and necessary action as per rule.

Program Level

Program:

Goal:

To promote child rights and reduce all forms of child abuse with particular focus on child sexual abuse where gender sensitivity will be addressed and ensured.

Objectives:

The objective of the project is to create a safe and positive gender friendly working environment for all staff, stakeholders and beneficiaries of BTS.

However the specific objectives are:

- a. Targeted children and parents/guardian/caregivers and mass people will be sensitized and empowered gender issues so that they will respond positively.
- b. Enhance capacity of partner/networking organization and create linkage with child right based organization to address gender issues in their respective program component.
- c. Advocate the relevant policy makers to promote child rights, protect children from abuse and violence especially child sexual abuse and to create child friendly environment.

Project Planning:

- ☐ To ensure gender analysis during project planning.



- ❑ At the time of facilitation, if possible, with the children male facilitator facilitate with the boy child and female take girl child session.
- ❑ If the children especially girl children participated in any out side program then the female staff member assigned for the responsibility depending on their availability.
- ❑ To aware right holders (both girls and boys) about their rights according to CRC.
- ❑ To aware the duty bearers (both male and female) about their duties how to establish child rights in his/her surrounding (family, school, community, working place, street children).

Implementation:

- ❑ To eliminate social and cultural constraints for ensuring women's participation in the project.
- ❑ To ensure equal participation and role of female in the implementation of the project.
- ❑ To ensure the access of female to information during implementation of the project.
- ❑ To increase the efficiency of female for active participation and role in implementing the project.

Monitoring and evaluation:

- ❑ To ensure equal participation of female in monitoring and evaluation of the project.
- ❑ To ensure collection of gender based information and analyze progress of the project on the basis of collected information during monitoring and evaluation.
- ❑ To bring necessary change in the project for affirmative change of children (both boys and girls), especially of the girl child's condition and position during monitoring and evaluation.

Impact study:

- ❑ To ensure use of gender sensitive indicator (qualitative and quantitative)
- ❑ In analyzing impact of the project children's (girls and boys) active participation and sharing can be ensured through following PRA.
- ❑ To analyze the noticeable changes in children's condition and position especially of the girl child due to implementation of the project.

Gender Policy Implementation and Monitoring

Executive Committee Members will have monitored the implementation of the policy of the organization smoothly through management.

Management will assign a gender focal person in every office of BTS who will implement and monitor the policy in regular basis.

Organizational focal person will collect all kinds of information through the flow of collecting methods and take necessary action, and will coordinate with focal persons as well as BTS management. Capacity building among the staffs of BTS on gender policy will be also taken care of by the focal persons.

Discussion on various agenda according the collective information and therefore solve and recommend for cases to the existing authority for take necessary action and implementation.

The rules must be followed the annual planning of the organization.

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