



Gender Policy

Version – 2025

Effective from 01-08-2025

APPROVED BY:

Board of trustees in its meeting on 28-07-2025

For private circulation only

1. Name and Title of the Policy

This document shall be known as the **Asian Bridge India (ABI) Gender Policy**

2. About Asian Bridge India (ABI)

Asian Bridge India (ABI), founded in 2009 in Varanasi, is a non-profit organization registered under the Indian Trust Act 1882. ABI is committed to empowering vulnerable and marginalized communities, including children, women, youth, Dalits, Denotified Tribes, and sexual minorities. ABI's work is rooted in the values of justice, equality, dignity, and human rights as enshrined in the Constitution of India.

As part of its commitment to institutional gender equity, ABI shall ensure that at least one-third (1/3rd) of the members of the Board of Trustees are women.

Vision

Our vision is to create a world where gender equality is not just an ideal, but a lived reality a world where all individuals, regardless of their gender, enjoy equal rights, opportunities, and dignity, free from discrimination, prejudice, and violence.

Mission

Our mission is to advance gender equality and promote the empowerment of all individuals, with a special focus on women, youth, and marginalized genders. ABI seeks to transform social structures, challenge inequalities, and build inclusive communities where men, women, and people of diverse gender identities act as equal participants and leaders of change.

3. Objectives of the Policy

The objectives of this Gender Policy are:

- To promote the right to gender equality and the right to dignified livelihood for all employees and stakeholders.
- To promote a social, physical, and psychological environment that enables employees to work productively, safely, and without discrimination
- To ensure gender justice at both institutional and programmatic levels.
- To establish clear procedures, responsibilities, and accountability mechanisms for mainstreaming gender perspectives in organizational and programmatic work.
- To comply with all applicable laws and conventions, including the Constitution of India, Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, and relevant labour laws.

4. Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to:

- All regular, contractual, part-time, volunteer, and consultant, staff of ABI.
- All program participants, community members, partners, and stakeholders who interact with ABI.
- Third-party contractors, visitors, or vendors working in or associated with ABI.

5. Definitions

- **Gender:** Refers to socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a society considers appropriate for men, women, and non-binary persons.
- **Gender Equality:** Equal enjoyment of rights, opportunities, and resources by people of all genders.

- **Gender Sensitization:** The process of making people aware of gender biases and encouraging behaviour that supports equality and respect.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Includes unwelcome acts, behaviour, or remarks of a sexual nature, as defined under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013.

6. Policy Guidelines

A. Institutional Level

1. Staff Policies

- All HR and administrative policies shall be gender-sensitive and reviewed every two years.
- Equal pay for equal work regardless of gender.
- Maternity, paternity, and adoption leave provisions will comply with statutory norms and be implemented fairly.

2. Recruitment

- ABI will seek gender balance in staffing across all levels.
- Women candidates will be encouraged to apply for all vacancies, including leadership roles.
- Recruitment and interview panels will have adequate representation of women.

3. Performance Reviews

4. Redressal

- ABI's Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy shall be gender-neutral and strictly compliant with the 2013 Act.
- Gender sensitivity and contribution to inclusive practices will be part of the appraisal process.

5. Capacity Building

- Regular workshops, training, and discussions on gender awareness, sensitivity, leadership, and empowerment will be conducted.
- Special focus on confidence building for women staff and equipping male staff to challenge stereotypes.

6. Harassment and

- A Committee on Gender Sensitization/Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) will be constituted (see Section 6 and detailed policy of POSH).
- Disciplinary action will be taken against offenders following due process.

B. Programmatic Level

1. Mainstreaming Gender in Programs

- All programs will integrate gender perspectives in design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.
- A Gender Equality Checklist will be used in all projects to assess inclusivity.

2. Participation and Leadership

- Programs will ensure equal participation of men, women, and non-binary persons.
- Women's leadership and decision-making roles will be actively promoted.

3. Capacity Building for Communities

- Training and awareness on gender issues will be conducted for communities, including men, women, transgender and youth.
- Focus on addressing harmful practices, stereotypes, and gender-based violence.

7. Committee on Gender Sensitization / Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)

ABI will establish a Committee on Gender Sensitization and Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) as per the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013.

Composition

- Chairperson: A senior woman employee (Chief Functionary/President or designated staff member).
- At least two members from among employees (preferably with gender sensitivity training).
- One external member from an NGO or legal background familiar with gender issues.
- At least 50% women representation in the committee.

Functions

- To receive, investigate, and redress complaints of sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination.
- To conduct awareness and sensitization programs for all staff.
- To maintain confidentiality and ensure non-retaliation.
- To submit annual reports to the management on complaints received, action taken, and preventive measures.

8. Reporting, Procedures & Redressal Mechanism

1. Filing a Complaint

- Any employee or stakeholder may file a complaint of harassment/discrimination within 3 months of the incident (extendable to 6 months in exceptional cases).
- Complaints may be submitted in writing to the ICC/Committee on Gender Sensitization.

2. Procedure

- The ICC will acknowledge receipt within 7 working days.
- An inquiry will be completed within 90 days.
- The report will be submitted to the management within 10 days of completion.

3. Outcomes

- If the complaint is upheld, disciplinary action will be taken (warning, suspension, termination, or legal recourse as appropriate).
- If the complaint is found to be malicious, action will be taken against the complainant (to avoid misuse).

4. Appeals

- Appeals against ICC decisions may be made to the Trustees/appropriate legal authority within 90 days.

9. Monitoring and Reporting

- Management will report annually to the Board of Trustees on the implementation of this Gender Policy.
- Periodic reviews and impact assessments will be conducted.
- Gender-disaggregated data will be maintained in all programs.

10. Accountability

- All staff, management, and Board members are responsible for upholding this policy.
- The Chief Functionary/President will oversee policy implementation.
- Program Managers will ensure gender mainstreaming in field activities.

11. Amendments and Review of Policy

- This policy shall be reviewed every two years, or earlier if required by changes in law or organizational needs.
- The review will be coordinated by the President/Chief Functionary in consultation with the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC), Consultants and approved by the Board of Trustees.
- Amendments may be made due to legal updates, organizational requirements, or ICC recommendations.
- All changes will be documented, approved by the Board, and communicated to staff through circulars, email, and orientation sessions.
- Updated versions will carry the date of effect and revision number, while previous versions will be kept on record.
