Certificate Programme

Understanding Gender in Society: Concepts and Trends

Unit 6

Gender Mainstreaming within Institutions

Units of Understanding Gender in Society: Concepts and trends

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- Understanding gender
- Ending Gender Inequality: Two Schools of Thought
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Introduction

We are now at the end of our course with our final Unit on gender mainstreaming in institutions. In the previous units, we have seen how gender equality has been one of the core goals of development debates for several decades. We also observed how though there have been tremendous efforts to integrate women into the development processes, very little has been done so far with regard to integrating women and their needs into the workplace.

The opening years of this century have witnessed an increasing proportion of women in the workforce. As the situation stands today, despite this increased participation, women are still lagging behind their male counterparts in almost all areas of productive work. Attitudes within the workplace often, reflect the prevalent mind-sets within the larger society. In the past, since women were absent from the larger public arena, their presence in the workplace was also largely negligible. Workplaces thus, catered largely to the needs of working men. With the changed scenario, workplaces now need to be geared towards the increased and continued participation of women. A conducive and enabling environment for both women and men, based on the principles of equity and equality, need to find resonance in the practices, culture and systems within an organisation.

Since organisations are essentially microcosms of society, they reflect the attitudes, value systems and thought processes present in society. The experience of mainstreaming gender within organisations can be enhanced when there is recognition of the important role an organisation plays in bringing about an enabling environment that takes into consideration the needs of both women and men. Further, the change in attitude and awareness that takes place within the workplace has a multiplier effect when this thinking is transferred to situations and circumstances outside of the workplace.

For example, and understanding and analysis of the dual burden of productive and reproductive roles faced by women in the workplace, may then lead to a reflection on the burden faced by the women in one's own household.

By the end of this unit, you will become familiar with the conceptual framework, rationale and underlying strategy of gender mainstreaming in institutions. You will also learn about the concept and the processes of participatory gender audit; you will be able to analyse the strategies, activities, policies, programmes and organisational frameworks which constrain or promote gender equality within the workplace. You will also understand the significance of a gender policy within organizations and get acquainted with the process of implementation of a gender policy.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- Build an understanding on concept, rationale and strategy of gender mainstreaming in institutions;

- Become familiar with conducting a gender audit for an organisation.

- Comprehend the significance, components and implementation process of a gender policy to promote gender mainstreaming.

6.1 Gender Mainstreaming Within Institutions

6.1.1 Understanding Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. It is not an end in itself but a strategy, an approach and a means to achieve the goal of gender equality. It was established as a major global strategy for the promotion of gender equality during the Beijing Platform for Action in the United Nations' 4th World Conference for Women in Beijing, 1995.

Definition Of Gender Mainstreaming

UNDP - "Gender mainstreaming is taking account of gender equality concerns in all policy, programme, administrative and financial activities, and in organisational procedures, thereby contributing to organisational transformation. This includes core policy decisions, as well as the small everyday decisions of programme implementation" (UNDP, 2000, p. 30).

Economic and Social Council - " It is a strategy for making women's, as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality" (ECOSOC, 1997).

Gender mainstreaming calls for positive action at different levels, and requires commitment, capacities and resources at:

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Has there been any national-level policy in your country to promote gender mainstreaming? If so, how has it benefitted female participation is workplaces?

- The **policy level,** to ensure that the issue of gender equality becomes a visible and central concern in policy and planning.
- The **programme level**, to ensure that all supported interventions creates opportunities for women's empowerment and facilitates gender equality.

- The **organisational level**, to ensure that space and opportunities for learning, growth and contributing to organisational goals are created equally for women and men at all levels.

Varied experiences of gender mainstreaming in other organisations have shown that strategies for mainstreaming do not work if they are seen as a "lucky dip" of unrelated activities and actions. Organisations are evolving dynamic bodies, where people of different social structures and backgrounds meet, interact and work together. It is a space where individuals spend more than 50% of their waking hours. Therefore, men and women must go through a process of examining their own attitudes and responses to women's subordination and the cultural norms which justify it, before they can accept gender equality as a basic value. Such a process will inevitably impact both people's lives and their work, and influence their attitudes and decisions in both the private (home) and the public spheres (social, political and economic spheres).

Organisations reflect, shape and maintain the values of the larger society, which is largely a gendered space. Gendered power relations and dominant ideologies often shape the nature and extent of both men and women's participation within it. For instance, workplaces are known to assign tasks to men and women which are more designed to their societal masculine and feminine characteristics, rather than based on their personal capabilities and competencies. Men, are the ultimate and perfect image of the professional worker – they work longer hours, travel for long periods and without too much prior notice, , take tasks home to complete and never get distracted by crisis situations in the family. This is the role model that organizations expect women to follow and aspire towards. What they fail to understand is that women cannot make these changes, unless society makes the change and takes away some of the reproductive roles that women play – giving them to men, the other half of society. Further, once this happens then most men will not remain the ultimate worker as they will be taking on the reproductive roles that women currently play.

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Gender and Agriculture

Like in most sites of work, the primary sector i.e. the agricultural sector also is affected by gender. A popular phenomenon that is being seen in agriculture, especially in the post-liberalisation era is the 'feminisation of farming'.

Since women are constrained in terms of mobility and time, the chances of them migrating to urban centres for jobs is lesser than women. Thus, as men migrate, women stay back and so there is a larger proportion of women working in agriculture. But, when we look at male and female farmers, we are bound to observe certain gaps in terms of land, finances, access to finances etc. (World Bank Group, 2014)

Some of them are (World Bank Group, 2014, pp. 24-25):

- As a result of gender-specific constraints, female farmers tend to have lower output per unit of land and are much less likely to be active in commercial farming than men
- Women typically farm less profitable crops and smaller plots than men
- Women entrepreneurs and farmers tend to have less access than men to capital, financial services, equipment, land, agricultural technologies, hired labour, and market information.
- There are well documented disparities in access to and control of land
- Women have less access than men to financial services

Currently, the 'Glass Ceiling' exists for the vast majorities of women in the workforce. In fact, many organisations have an unwritten policy which prevents the advancement of women and does not appoint them into higher positions. The issue of sexual harassment of women in the workplace increases their insecurity and vulnerability. In a fast evolving social order, where new spaces and new roles have been defined for women, they clash with deep- rooted values, beliefs and centuries of behaviour still etched deeply in the human psyche.

Theories of organizational culture point that people (the human resource) within the organisations and the foundational structure of the organisations, (even if autonomous), are actually parallel forces that either challenge or maintain the gendered status quo. The gendered belief systems not only affect the manner in which the organisational

activities are structured, but also the functioning of organisations' internal processes as well. There is a link between the inner workings and outer impacts (Farrell & Tandon, 2006).

Gender mainstreaming necessarily involves both men and women. As a strategic approach, gender mainstreaming obligates an institution to systematically introduce a gender-oriented perspective for every decision. It attempts to examine and analyse an institution in the context of its structure, functions, activities, policies and decisions with regards to their effects in relation to gender.

6.1.2 Strategy

Gender mainstreaming in institutions is a strategy, a process and a method of bringing about change in organizations. It also brings together the experiences, knowledge and interests, of both men and women to have a positive impact upon the functioning of the workplace. It is based on the principle of gender equality and implies providing equal opportunity for men and women in leadership management and indeed in all spheres and activities of the organisation.

Mainstreaming is not about adding on a 'women's component', or even a 'gender equality component', to an existing activity. It involves more than merely increasing women's participation. Mainstreaming ensures that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities - policy development, research, advocacy/ dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, as well as planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects.

Gender Mainstreaming takes into account the two most important aspects of social integration and social cohesion that are integral to an individual's life:

a) The home and family
b) The workplace

Principles of mainstreaming gender take into account:

- Current social constructs
- Requirements of both the home and the workplace
- Needs of the male and female worker
- Opportunities for better work distribution
- Stress on equality, freedom and empowerment

However, some key elements have been identified that are required to successfully implement a mainstreaming strategy.

Institutions are shaped by the gendered ideologies and cultures of the wider society. Patriarchy and gender hierarchies are often reproduced in institutional set-ups through the set of institutional rules and procedures that shape the masculine culture of the organization. People who work in any organization hold different views on the issue of gender equality, therefore staff must be clear on what is expected from them and what are their specific roles and responsibilities with regard to gender mainstreaming. Only after that can the management expect staff members' contribution and inputs towards implementation of the given strategy. Additionally, if the institutional context is not gender sensitive and gender responsive, mainstreaming of gender is quite unlikely to take place. It is critically important that the commitment to gender must be reflected in the internal structure, as well as in the procedures and culture of the organization. Engendering of institutions is the pre-condition for the implementation of gender responsive development programs/projects (UNDP, 2008-2011).

- There is no "final blueprint" or "right way" to engage in gender mainstreaming. However, gender analysis is a key instrument for gender mainstreaming though it is a tool that requires expertise and careful planning

- It is often used to assess the different roles, responsibilities, needs and interests of men and women and to examine the relations between men and women pertaining to access and control over resources and decision making

- Gender analysis enables a critique of so-called "gender neutral" institutions and will reveal an understanding of the processes by which gender relations are negotiated and renegotiated. Gender analysis also considers the resultant social formations, the nature of households, of the constitution of the labour force, and of the informal economy

- It also makes visible the power relations and the situations of subordination that most women face in a workplace, in a family as well as in other social institutions.

Gender analysis can be used at all levels and in all areas of society - at household level, community level, government level, and also at institutional level.

Gender analysis is referred to in order to determine the division of resources and responsibilities. These include:

- Sex disaggregated data and statistics
- Skills and opportunities to carry out gender analysis
- Effective monitoring and evaluation systems and tools
- National/sub-national/local structures with clearly defined roles for leadership and support to gender mainstreaming
- Building capacities on gender within staff, partners and the stakeholders.
- Effective communication, networks and linkages
- Civil society participation (Canadian International Development Agency, 2000)

Gender analysis within an institution or organisation will provide a clear picture of the gender situation and will indicate what the next steps on the road to equality could be. If an organisation is gender sensitive and gender equal, this will have its effects on its operations and will thus contribute to gender equality in the society in which it works.

6.2 Participatory Gender Audit: Gender Assessment Of An Organisation

The discussion in the preceding sections clearly draws attention to the need to measure the extent of gender equality within organisations, including the gender-sensitivity of policies and programmes, as well as internal organisational structure, procedures, culture and human resources. Participatory gender audits are now used by many agencies for gender assessment of their organisations.

6.2.1 What Is Gender Audit?

An audit is typically an accounting term, which reviews the existing accounting norms and practices of an organisation and makes recommendations for improvement and strengthening of the systems. A **Gender Audit** would follow the similar procedures but would examine the existing reality of different aspects of the organisation from a gender perspective.

Every organisation regardless of its size, years of field level experience, background of its staff members, representatives on the Governing Body and other dimensions will have during the course of its history evolved and established norms and procedures, structures, policies and practices that are an integral part of its functioning. All of these practices that exist within the organisation could be termed as gender biased, gender fair, gender neutral or gender blind. The audit would assess and analyse all these varied dimensions of the organisation from a gender perspective and then present its findings and its recommendations for strengthening and/or improvement.

6.2.2 Rationale And Objective Of Gender Audit

Rationale and objectives:

Gender audit is an important concept because it:

- Establishes a baseline as to where the organization stands by way of gender sensitivity in systems, norms, processes and policies
- Identifies best practices, as well as critical gaps and challenges,
- Recommends ways of addressing the challenges and gaps, in innovative and creative ways
- Builds a common understanding on gender concepts and enhances the collective capacity of the organisation to examine its activities from a gender perspective
- Provides the organisation with a training needs analysis on gender issues
- Identifies strengths and weaknesses in promoting gender equality issues
- Monitors and assesses the relative progress in efforts of gender mainstreaming
- Works as an entry point for discussing wider substantive and operational concerns that are "beyond gender" issues such as:

  o The organizational culture of work – including long hours spent in office;

  o Deadlines and time pressures;

  o The 'bead curtain syndrome' (where people are only in contact vertically with their superiors and peers);

  o   Existence of structures for sharing, learning and adapting

- Gender audit sharpens organisational learning on gender awareness through a process of:
  o Team building

  o Information sharing

  o Reflection on gender (ILO, 2007)

6.2.3. Participatory Gender Audit

A participatory gender audit exercise is similar to a gender audit. However, it also draws largely from the tenets of adult learning, which premises that adults learn best from and through experience. It enables organisations to assess, learn from, and improve their working practice on gender equality and women's empowerment. This learning cycle is also used as a guide in selecting relevant methods or exercises for the design and delivery of audit workshops. However, the reality of gender mainstreaming does not always match the organisation's policy on gender mainstreaming (ILO, 2007). It aims at a self-assessment of whether, and to what extent, the organisation has created the conditions and standards to promote gender equality. It examines strategies, activities, policies, programmes and organisational frameworks that constrain or promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming efforts within the workplace. The methods used in Participatory Gender Audit are designed to create a sense of ownership over the process (Walters, 2002).

The advantages of applying participatory methodologies and the principles of adult learning approach to the gender audit process are:

- Recommendations in the report are easier to follow-up with concrete actions, as they have been formulated in discussion with staff.
- Employees can reflect and develop ideas about improving their efforts towards gender equality.
- Good practices are identified and strengthened and/or scaled up.
- Organisational culture is analysed and renewed impetus from the process makes it more gender responsive.
- Team-building is accentuated and as a result teams gain collective learning experiences.
- Audit methods and exercises can be tested, modified or adapted by work units for other uses.
- Individuals/teams are challenged to assess themselves critically for effective learning.
- The information collected can be used as a benchmark for future improvement on gender mainstreaming (ILO, 2007).

There are several tools that can be used to collect information from individuals and the organisation. Primary data collection can be obtained through focused group discussions individual interviews and other participatory exercises, as given below.

i) Gender Reality Questionnaire/Interview: This tool is used to assess the gender sensitivity of the different aspects of the organisation related to its systems and policies. It also looks at, implementation of gender policy, perception of achievement on gender equality, public image of gender equality and reflection of equality in staffing and human resources. The questionnaire also gets information on available gender expertise and competence, tools of planning, monitoring and evaluation.

ii) Focused Group Discussions (FGDs): This tool is used to deepen the understanding of issues that have emerged from the Gender Reality Questionnaire. It will also be used as an opportunity to verify some of the findings of the questionnaire, which may be ambiguous.

iii) **Participatory Tools:** A combination of participatory tools is used to involve the staff in the process, create a learning environment, a space where individuals can share their opinions and perspectives in a non-threatening environment. Some of these tools include:

a) *Trend Analysis*: This involves a discussion on how things were in the organisation in the past (from a gender perspective), changes and trends within the policies and culture (from a historical perspective), the possible causes of these and the impact on the current structure and functioning of the organisation.

b) *Venn Diagram:* This is used to identify current gender issues, debates and relationships of the organisation. It also examines internal and external stakeholders in the organisation with national gender machinery and women's organisations in the context within which the programme is implemented.

c) *Hofstede's Onion:* This is used as a tool to reach the core of the organisation, its culture, and to identify the factors that hinder or promote gender equality within the structure.

Secondary sources of data collection include

- Organogram, with sex disaggregated data

- Human Resource Policy

- Service rules and policies

- Gender Policy and/or Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy

- Workshop or other reports on capacity building on gender issues and/or gender mainstreaming

6.2.4 Steps To Conduct Gender Audit

One of the very basic **principles** to be established before conducting a participatory gender audit is that the entire initiative is one of the first steps in a series of efforts that the organisation has to undertake, which focus on gender mainstreaming within the entire organisation. It must be clearly stated that while the audit may highlight several positive aspects of the organisation and it's functioning at the same time it may raise questions on some of the norms and values that form an integral part of the organisation's culture. Therefore, it is critical that the commitment of the top management is secured before initiating the process and reiterated in the presence of the staff in the first meeting where the gender audit is discussed.

Given below are a series of steps that need to be followed while conducting a gender audit. The sequencing of these steps is also critical to the process.

Step 1: *Commitment To Gender Equality And The Promotion Of Gender Sensitivity From The Top Management*

To authenticate and validate the process of gender audit, the management must openly make a commitment to the process. Acceptance of suggestions and modifications to the process will lend a feeling of ownership and commitment on the part of the entire staff.

Step 2: *Choosing Facilitators*

The organisation has to consider a variety of factors while taking a decision on who should facilitate the process of gender audit within the organisation. There are three different options, which could be exercised in the choice of a facilitator:

- A team of persons from within the organisation.

- An external team of facilitators

- A combination of people from within and from outside the organisation.

While selecting facilitators, the following factors should be kept in mind:

- The individuals' experience of, and commitment to, working on gender issues

- Status within the organisation –formal and informal

- Sensitivity and skill in dealing with wide range of individuals

- Established reputation of confidentiality and trust within the organisation

- Biased and non-judgmental approach

- Objectivity and an ability to confront the management with hard facts and unpleasant realities

- Understanding of organisational framework and analytical skills and abilities

- An overall understanding of the organisation and the cultural specificities within which it operates

- A balance of men and women in the facilitating team

Step 3: *Secondary Review*

This requires review of materials/documents of the organisation such as vision/mission statements, annual reports, service/administrative rules etc. in order to unfold the history and culture of the organisation itself and of the gender perspective within it. For example, the review will consider whether:

- The vision/mission statement is gender sensitive
- The annual report has reported on programmes with a focus on women's participation
- Data is presented in a gender disaggregated manner the service rules and policies are gender sensitive
- The interview panel is representative of both men and women
- Women are given preference for posts,
- There are provisions for paternity leave etc.

Step 4: *Individual Interviews*

This process focuses on human data collection and is one of the most crucial sources of information available to the facilitator. Individual interviews should take place with representatives from different levels and programmes of the organisation. The people who most definitely need to be included for individual interviews are:

- Members from the Governing Body
- The head of the organisation
- Senior Staff – representing support and programmes
- Staff who have been with the organisation for a long period
- Members of gender committee (if one exists in the organisation)

Step 5: *Group Discussions*

The basic objective behind the group discussion is to create space for open sharing and explore different viewpoints and perspectives of the staff. Cultural specificities (both external and organisational), which influence opinions, also need to be taken into account during such a process. The facilitator/s must ensure that a non-judgmental, unbiased approach is maintained throughout the discussion.

Step 6*: Confidential Questionnaire*

This will be based on the review of the organisational documents, group discussions and individual interviews. A questionnaire may be developed to gain additional insights from staff on various processes, norms and policies, both formal and informal. For example paternity leave may be a facility provided for in the rules and to assess how often it is availed of, or the supporting environment for availing such a facility, a question could be included in the questionnaire or even in the interview schedule.

Step 7*: Analysis*

Once the information has been obtained it is necessary that it be analysed from a gender perspective. The analysis should include aspects of the organisation which both facilitate and constrain gender mainstreaming.

Step 8*: Preparation Of The Report*

The report of the audit should include the following:

   i.   Objectives and the scope of the audit
   ii. Outcomes of the analysis of the different components of the organisation
   iii. Insights into factors that facilitate, as well as those which constrain gender
        mainstreaming

iv.   Gender fair practices existing within the organisation and recommendatory steps for the improvement and institutionalisation of these practices

v.   Recommendations towards promoting and strengthening the gender mainstreaming   initiatives of the organisation

vi.   An executive summary of the findings and recommendations

vii.   A section on the institutionalisation of a committee to address issues of Sexual Harassment within the organisation, as mandated in India by the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013
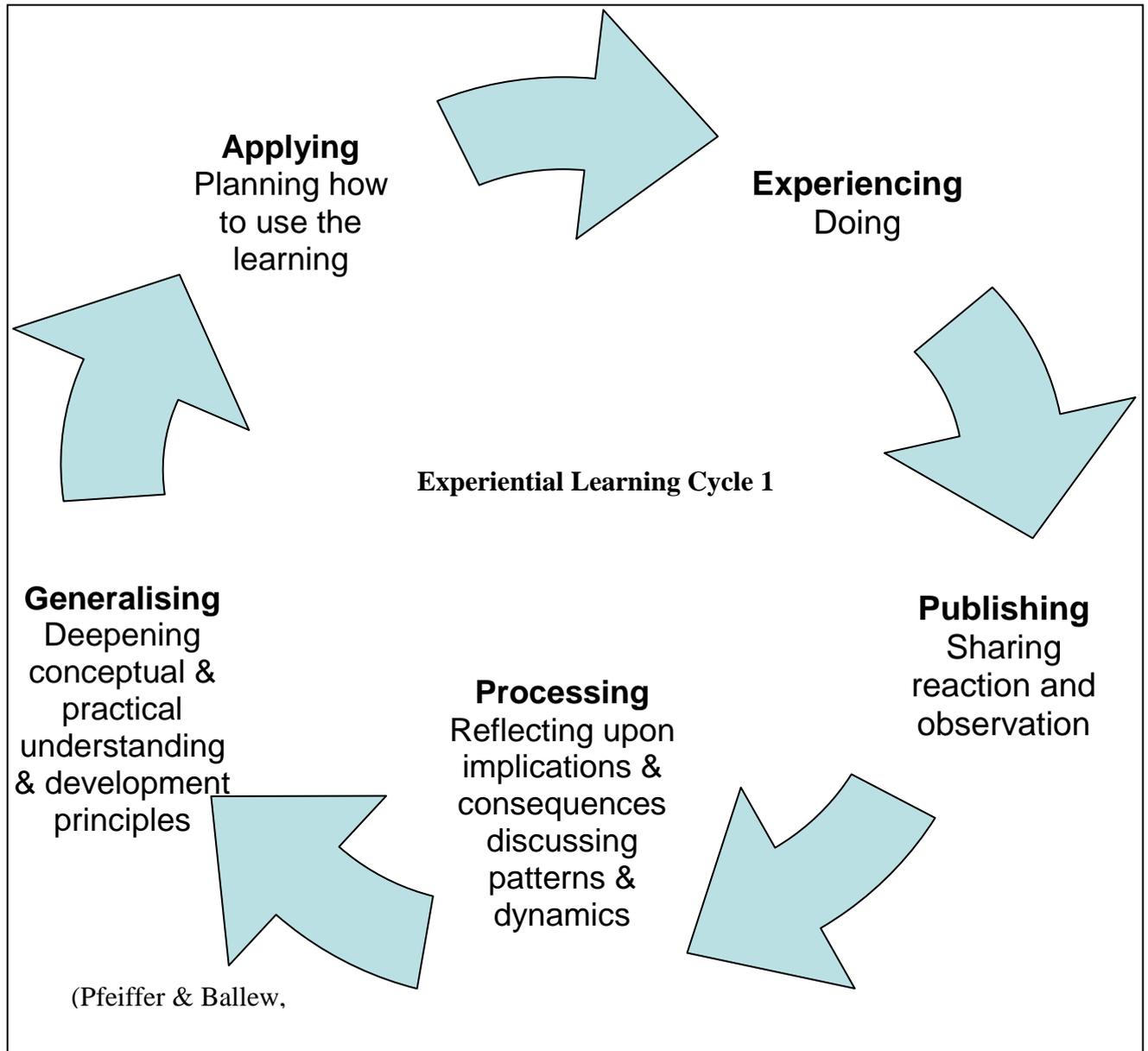
Step 9: *Sharing Of The Report*

The first draft of the report must be shared and discussed with the head of the organisation and/or senior staff to validate the authenticity of facts and other information. The discussion will also clarify and prioritise areas for action – immediate and long term. The report may also be shared with the Governing Body for their suggestions and recommendations.

It is suggested that highlights of the report be prepared for the purpose of sharing with the general staff. Suggestions, recommendations, action areas, key issues can be culled out of this process, which can then be formulated as part of the overall strategy of the organisation.

Step 10: *Follow-up*

Based on the suggestions and recommendations, a proper follow up will have to be undertaken in stages.

Applying
Planning how
to use the
learning

Experiencing
Doing

Experiential Learning Cycle 1

Generalising
Deepening
conceptual &
practical
understanding
& development
principles

Processing
Reflecting upon
implications &
consequences
discussing
patterns &
dynamics

Publishing
Sharing
reaction and
observation

(Pfeiffer & Ballew,

6.2.5 Challenges In Conducting A Gender Audit

- **Lack Of Experiences Related To Gender Mainstreaming Initiatives**

Most organisations do not have a well-defined gender policy, even if gender equality is reflected in the practices at formal or informal levels. For example, CSOs have been, by and large, actively promoting gender equality in society paying little attention to the means—the instruments of their own organisations—in achieving those normative ends. Therefore, the optimum utility of a gender audit will emerge in organisations that already have a history of experiences and practices related to gender mainstreaming.

Great skill and care will have to be exercised in the preparation of the report, which highlights positive aspects and recommends steps and measures which have immediate impact so as to retain the interest, motivation and morale of the staff.

- **Lack Of Understanding On 'Gender'**

A lack of a common understanding on gender is a major inhibiting factor when conducting a gender audit. Very often the inputs on gender are erratic and have not been internalised and therefore have no direct linkages with the programmes or the processes of the institution. Due to the marginalized position of women in society, only those issues get highlighted which are directly related to women. Such a situation leads to myths and misconceptions, as well as resentment against what is perceived as "favouritism to women" and allowing them to get concessions and privileges. For example there are sometimes protests that women have special security measures when they have to return home late at night from field trips, or when they stay back late to finish tasks. In such situations the rationale for taking such a decision that is based on the safety and security of women staff must be emphasised.

- **Internalisation Of Gender Mainstreaming In Organisations**

If there is to be any true change in the context of gender equality in an organisation, then its results will show in the culture of the organisation. No matter how radically or how often structures and procedures are changed, or new targets are set, it is only when individuals question their own deep rooted attitudes and belief systems that the process of change will begin. An analysis of the organisational culture involves collective questioning of the values, commitment and attitudes at an individual level, and not only of the formally laid down systems and procedures of the organisation. Changes planned for at this level require an understanding of the cultural context of individuals; commitment, as well as patience, from the head of the organisation. It must be emphasised that gender discrimination does not exist in formal structures and procedures, nor will it be tolerated at the level of individuals. An aberrations or oversights of the institution will be immediately rectified.

- **Individual Resistance**

As highlighted above, organisational change implies change at the level of individuals who comprise the organisation. Individual change requires self-reflection and unlearning of value systems and deep-rooted beliefs and attitudes. This process is linked to strong emotions, which often emerges as resistance to new trend-systems. It is not only men who fear change and perceive it as relinquishing of power, but many women fear change as it involves shouldering many new and sometimes threatening roles and responsibilities.

There is a need, therefore, to stress the positive aspects and benefits to all of gender equity and to avoid unproductive arguments. The head of the organisation will once again have to play a supportive role in facilitating this process by highlighting positive aspects of the gender audit towards promoting an environment conducive to co-operation and openness.

- **Restrictive Policies**

It is important to take into account cultural specifications and contexts while formulating gender related policies. What could be appropriate to one workplace need not apply or even be suitable to another. If organisations pronounce codes of behaviour and establish norms, which are restrictive or suppressive in their context, they may prove counterproductive to the process. All norms and policies should be carefully adapted to each organisation's culture after open and thorough discussion amongst the staff.

6.3 Engendering Workplace Through A Gender Policy

A gender policy inclusive of intersecting identities of race, class, caste, ethnicity, age, ability, and geographical location is a public statement of an organisation's commitment to taking gender issues seriously, and a framework for what this means in the context of the organisation's work.

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Steps To Be Taken To Sensitise The Workplace To Needs Of Pregnant Women And Young Mothers

Rest during the day for pregnant woman: It is medically advised that during pregnancy, women take a short break of approximately one hour during the day to rest and lie down. Such provisions should be provided by the organisation

Relaxation from travel: Capacities to travel are different for pregnant women and therefore travel must be avoided and restricted to only when it's high priority meetings etc.

Special care if attending meetings outside of the office: If the woman is attending a workshop or residential training programme, the organisers must be informed of her condition as well as her special dietary needs.

Warm & caring environment: Organisation cannot look at a woman's decision to have a child as a burden on the organisation. It must provide the required help and care to the woman to make her feel comfortable in the workplace during pregnancy

Breast-feeding breaks: Organisations need to think of providing adequate facilities so that women can breastfeed their child. This could be in the form of breaks in case the mother brings the infant to the office or the option of going home to breastfeed the child.

Flexible hours: The options of flexible timings, part time or even the facility to work from home can be of great help to a new mother.

(Farrell, Saxena, Thekkudan, & Pathak, 2008)

The existence of an organisation, its focus of intervention, and its culture is reflected through the profile of the organisation, which should clearly state and define gender mainstreaming as a policy of the organisation. The development of a gender policy is a necessary and common starting point for focusing attention on gender issues in an

organisation and its programmes. For organisations which have already taken some steps towards promoting gender sensitivity (for example, through providing staff with training and guidelines), development of a gender policy is an opportunity to consolidate and formalise the steps that have been taken, and think strategically about the future.

6.3.1 Objectives Of Gender Policy

The gender policy needs to become a guiding resource through which people in the organisation are inspired to make changes in the structure and environment of their workplace. Effective implementation will assure the staff that all change and reform towards building a gender conducive workplace are sensitive to the needs of both men and women. This will ensure that each employee actively works to make the policy a success as it is in their own interest to do so.

The objectives of a gender policy are to:

- Explicitly state organisational commitment towards gender
- Provide a direction towards building gender related agendas
- Provide a framework for effectively integrating gender concerns into the organisational agenda and policy domain
- Create equal opportunities and a conducive environment for women and men at workplace
- Promote equal representation and participation of women in decision making at the professional/ programmatic and administrative levels (Gender and Water Alliance, 2003).

There are a few steps that an organisation needs to take as a prelude to the actual framing of a gender policy. These are:

i.   *Creating the need:* An organisation must create the need for a gender policy, which addresses such concerns in the organisation, including within the Governing Board, the management and staff at all levels. Very often, the need for such a policy is raised either by the leadership, or persons working on gender issues within an organisation, including a gender focal point. To

build up this need, there have to be discussions around the issue of creating a gender sensitive workplace out of which a list of issues, concerns and ideas may be developed and prioritised, both in terms of their importance and the ease with which they may be implemented.

ii.   *Setting up of a task force*: Once the need for the policy has been generated and there is an interest in its development, a task force should be formed. This should comprise of people from the organisation who can best represent the needs of every section. These could be senior persons, including women, gender persons, representatives of the management, administrative staff, and programme staff. An external resource person, who is familiar with the structure and the functioning of the organisation, can also be invited to provide inputs and advice.

iii. *Inviting inputs*: The task force must ensure that all processes in the developing of the policy are participatory in nature, instilling a sense of ownership in all proceedings, as well as in the final output – the gender policy. Inputs can be invited by organising small group discussions, focused group discussions, with men and women (jointly and separately), questionnaires, small surveys, brainstorming at different levels to achieve this. Apart from inviting suggestions and ideas, the task force must also share the draft document with the staff. (Farrell M. , Saxena, Thekkudan, & Pathak, 2008)

6.3.2 The Components Of Gender Policy

A gender policy has four main components:

- Policy statement
- Organisational component
- Programme component
- Concluding statement

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Has your organisation/institution taken any step towards mainstreaming gender in the workplace?

If so, how has it affected to workings of the organisation?

Policy Statement

The opening statement of a gender policy is its policy statement which usually comprises of a few paragraphs, including an introductory statement that puts forth the rationale and the purpose of the gender policy.

Organisational Component

This section of the policy reflects on the goals that the organisation intends to achieve within its structural components, through the engendering process. It will also indicate the inequalities in the organisation that it intends to address and the steps towards changing the equation.

Vision/Mission Statements

The organisation's vision/mission statements should be gender specific and not gender-neutral.

Building A Gender Sensitive Work Environment

If the organisation is committed to promoting and supporting a gender-sensitive work environment within its head office and its various branch/field offices, the organisation will organise workshops/seminars, educational events, as well as encourage exposure to a variety of other inputs that lead to a gender conducive work environment.

Institutional Leadership

If the organisation is committed to ensuring gender equality at all levels of its workforce, including the Governing Board, the representation will include a balance not only in numbers but also in positions that reflect the status and authority that an individual holds within the society.

The table below summarises some of the organisational pressure points important for implementing a gender-sensitive policy.

Table: Organisational Points for Gender Mainstreaming Institutions		
Category of inquiry	**Issues to consider**	**Steps to be taken for organisational change**
WORK PROGRAMME		
Policy And Action Plans Gender policies: Attention to gender in all policies.	• Is there a gender policy? • When was it developed and who was involved? • Does it use sex-disaggregated data? • Is its implementation being monitored?	If there is no gender policy but a desire to address inequalities between men and women, then follow steps outlined in the above section.
Policy Influencing	• Who are formal and informal opinion leaders? • What is the attitude of senior management staff to gender issues? • Which external agencies or people have an influence on the organisation? • Which are the decision-making bodies?	• Assess who are the champions for gender equality and equity • Engage all relevant and potential staff and management • Create a participatory and inclusive environment for policy development
Human Resources - Gender Focal Staff - All staff	• Is there a designated gender unit/focal person? • What do they do? What resources do they have and how do they use them? • Have they initiated gender sensitivity programmes with other staff members? • Is sensitivity to gender included in job descriptions and assessed at job evaluations?	• Have clear TORs for the unit/focal persons • Establish training in gender mainstreaming and advocacy as an on-going process with action targets • Have professional backstopping support • Involve gender focal persons as an integral part of existing processes and programmes

Financial /Time Resources • Gender equality initiatives on the ground • Staff capacity building initiatives	• Is there funding for capacity building on gender? • Is there funding for gender actions on the ground?	• Allocate budgets for staff capacity building and for actions on the ground • Allocate time for actions at the operational level • Develop indicators to monitor progress
Systems Procedures And Tools	• Is attention to gender sensitivity included in routine systems and procedures?	• Include gender in systems and procedures • Develop sex-disaggregated data on all aspects of organisational functioning and programmatic interventions
WORK CULTURE		
Staffing Statistics	• What are the numbers of men and women at each level in the organisation and according to roles and sectors? • Check employment and hiring policies	• Have gender sensitive recruitment policies that are not discriminatory, even though gender is not about balancing numbers • Provide staff access to decision making processes
Women And Men's Practical And Strategic Needs	Does the organisation create a safe and practical environment for women and men e.g., transport, toilets, childcare, and flexibility of working hours?	• Analyse the organisation with respect to its sensitivity to the different needs of women and men • Look at organisational assets such as equipment, furniture, toilet, design and accessibility, etc. Are they suitable for women and men?

Organisational Culture	• How does information flow and to what extent are women and men included in the communication chain? • What are the main shared values? Do they relate to equality and more specifically to gender? • Is decision making centralised or decentralised? • What are the attitudes towards female/male staff?	• Adopt an organisational culture that values women and men's perspectives equally • Explicitly state the organisation's commitments to gender equality in all policies and programmes • Initiate a process of decentralised decision making to allow both women and men a voice in organisational decision making
Staff Perceptions	What are the male and female staff perceptions towards gender?	Conduct gender capacity building and awareness raising programmes, especially where gender is seen as just one of the donor requirements and not an organisational value
Policy and actions	Does the organisation have equal opportunity polices? What does the policy cover? How is it promoted and implemented?	• Pay attention to equality within the structure, culture and staffing of organisations, as well as in the programmes, policies and procedures • Assess and evaluate continuously using gender-sensitive indicators to enable a comprehensive review

(Derbyshire, 2003)

6.3.3 Implementation Of Gender Policy

A gender policy is implemented at two levels: A. Institutional and B. Programmatic.

A. The **institutional level** refers to the organisation's internal culture and staffing – issues affecting female and male staff at work; for example, recruitment, promotion and training opportunities for female and male staff, sexual discrimination and harassment, and issues such as child care, paternity or maternity leave, and safe travel arrangements

B. The **programmatic level** refers to organisation's programmatic work: - i.e. women's and men's involvement in the planning, construction, operation, maintenance and management of programmatic activities

(Gender and Water Alliance, 2003)

A. Institutional Level

- A clear policy on its commitment to gender equality and expressed in a written policy or mission statement
- Time-bound strategies to implement the policy, which are developed in broad consultation with staff. The strategy should include mechanisms to ensure that the staff understand the policy and its implications for their everyday work, and have the competencies and resources required to implement it effectively
- Human resource practices need to be sensitive to the gender needs and interests of both men and women on the organisation's staff, as well as in their constituency

i.   Staff Composition/Representation

- Recruiting adequate women staff and ensuring the gender balance at senior levels, with the objective of achieving a numerical gender balance in all posts and at all levels.

- Ensuring equal opportunities among male and female staff for personal growth, in promotion benefits, training and working conditions.

- Ensuring equitable representation and participation of men and women in the core group, Board of trustees and in various functional committees of the organisation.

ii.   Workplace

- Providing an enabling and friendly work environment, where both men and women enjoy and actively participate in work. This includes providing flexible working hours and allowing working from home, wherever possible.

- Extending work related concessions and relaxations for women staff depending upon the situations and requirements; e.g. providing secure transport facilities when they work late hours; giving relaxation over travel time for the next day for those in the field; ensuring security measures along with minimum basic facilities for women staff traveling in the field.

- Making efforts to develop infrastructure for childcare facilities in the office premises, in order to ensure that the parents can bring their children in circumstances in which the child needs to be taken care of.

- Internal tracking and monitoring capability to ensure that strategic milestones are being reached, and to support both organisational learning and management accountability. These might include monitoring of staff recruitment and promotion, budgetary allocations, procurement from companies that implement ILO conventions (regarding female employees), and the performance of managers and supervisors in discussing and following up on gender equality initiatives.

- A central gender mainstreaming unit with policy responsibility and a mandate to guide the overall gender mainstreaming process. Some organisations also have specific units to support the incorporation of gender issues into their programmes, while others combine the policy and programme functions.

- A recognised network of staff responsible for gender equality issues in their respective work units, coordinated as a team by the policy unit (often called a Gender Focal Point Network). Ideally, this network takes the form of a community of practice that is self-organising, knowledge sharing, peer supporting and serves as an acknowledged channel for the integration of learning on gender equality into the organisation's functioning.

- Setting up enabling structures like CASH (Committee Against Sexual Harassment) to address complaints relating to sexual harassment made by staff members, guests, participants in the organisation. Staff members should feel safe to seek redressal of their complaints.

- Ensuring a detailed documentation of all processes related to the activities of organization on the issues of gender. These should be available to all those who wish to promote and strengthen gender equality within their work spheres. These should be reported in newsletter and websites regularly (Farrell M. , Saxena, Thekkudan, & Pathak, 2008; Gender and Water Alliance, 2003; WASSAN, 2014).

B. Programmatic Level

Within programmes, there are two key areas to address:

1. Adherence to gender-sensitive procedures in the programming actions of the organisations (gender analysis, planning, and resource allocation, monitoring systems)
2. Measuring the actual impacts of gender mainstreaming programmes on male and female beneficiaries

Other areas to address are:

- Furthering deliberate and intense efforts to promote participation of women and their collectives in various aspects of programme
- Facilitating representation of women in various institutional structures created as part of implementation of programmes e.g., in the management of natural resources like committees, user groups etc.
- Analysis of gender disaggregated roles and work patterns, and special efforts to reduce the work load of women
- Extending constant orientation of gender perspectives in programmatic interventions with other partners and stakeholders such as formal recognition of women's rights over resources like land, assets etc.
- Ensuring equal wages for equal work for both men and women in the works that are a part of the field programmes
- Making special efforts to constantly identify vulnerable women and provide them the necessary support and guidance
- Ensuring that gender equity forms part of all programme planning, implementation, monitoring with specific indicators to measure the progress that has taken place. All reports and evaluation should have a specific focus on gender component

(Gender and Water Alliance, 2003; Farrell M. , Saxena, Thekkudan, & Pathak, 2008)

Summary

We became familiar with the conceptual framework, rationale and underlying strategy of gender mainstreaming in institutions. The significance of a gender policy within an organization, its component and implementation strategies have helped in understanding the different facets in an organisation that promote gender mainstreaming. We became familiar with the concept and the process of participatory gender audit to examine strategies, activities, policies, programmes and organisational frameworks which either constrain or promote gender equality within the workplace.

Glossary

Gender Equality: Equality between women and men within organisations refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, opportunities, treatment and valuation of women and men in employment and in the relation between work and life.

Gender Proofing: A check carried out on a policy proposal to ensure that any potential gender discriminatory effects arising from that policy have been avoided and that gender equality is promoted.

Gender Impact Assessment: Examining policy proposals to see whether they will affect men and women differently, with a view to adapting these proposals to make sure that any discriminatory effects are neutralised and that gender equality is promoted

*Gender Planning: **Developing and implementing specific measures and organisational arrangements for the promotion of gender equality, identifying how to incorporate gender concerns into mainstream activities and ensuring that adequate resources are earmarked.***

*Gender Audits**: Analyse the income and expenditures of the government from a gender perspective. The basic assumption of gender audits is that public policy impacts differently on men and women.***

Required Readings

- **Gender Self-Assessment Reference Guide** (2004, SNV Netherlands Development Organisation) – provides methodology and materials for conducting a gender audit. http://www.snvworld.org/cds/rgGsa/

- **Gender Mainstreaming: Learning & Information Packs** (2001, UNDP) - 6 information packs designed for capacity building specialists and staff members with substantive responsibility for gender mainstreaming. http://www.undp.org/gender/infopack.htm

- **Training Manual – Gender and Development** ttp://www.cedpa.org/publications/pdf/gender.html

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