

RURAL DEVELOPMENT TRUST (RDT) GENDER POLICY – 2025

Promoting Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Across All Levels

1. Background & Vision

Rural Development Trust (RDT) recognizes that gender inequalities are among the root causes of poverty and social exclusion. Since 1978, RDT has worked to promote gender equity and justice across its organizational structures, programs, and community initiatives.

Vision:

RDT envisions a world where every individual—regardless of gender, community, or economic status—lives with dignity, equal opportunity, and the ability to participate meaningfully in shaping their future. Gender justice is central to healthy families, communities, and societies.

Objectives:

- Mainstream gender justice and equity across all organizational and programmatic levels.
- Eliminate all forms of gender-based discrimination, violence, and harassment.
- Create a safe, inclusive, and supportive work environment for all staff and community members.
- Recognize intersectional discrimination (caste, class, disability, sexuality, age, ethnicity, etc.).
- Promote gender equity within RDT's workforce, programs, and partner communities.

2. Core Principles

- **Gender Justice & Equity:** Embedded across all organizational systems, policies, and programs.
- **Equity Across All Genders:** Inclusion of men, women, transgender, and all genders.

- **Institutional & Programmatic Integration:** Gender considerations mainstreamed across all activities.
- **Intersectional Approach:** Address overlapping factors such as caste, class, disability, sexuality, age, ethnicity, etc.
- **Accountability & Transparency:** Shared responsibility for sustaining gender equity across all sectors.
- **Zero Tolerance:** For sexual harassment, gender-based violence, or discrimination.

3. Institutional Commitments

- **Staff Representation:** Achieve and maintain at least 50% women staff across all levels.
- **Leadership Development:** Capacity-building and mentorship for women as leaders.
- **Gender-Sensitive HR Policies:** Regularly review recruitment, promotions, pay, incentives and training.
- **Health & Wellbeing:** Regular health camps and mental health support.
- **Equal HR Benefits:** Maternity, paternity leave for all genders.
- **Monitoring & Accountability:** Time to time gender audits.

• 4. Programmatic Commitments

Gender equality is central to all RDT programs — including Women Empowerment, Ecology, Habitat, Education, Health, Disability, and Sports.

Key Actions:

- Integrate gender and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion goals into project design, planning, and evaluation.
- Use disaggregated data (sex, age, disability, identity) to measure impact.

- Promote women's and gender-diverse leadership in community programs.
- Engage men and boys as allies in gender justice.
- Address gender-based violence and provide survivor support (e.g., shelter homes).

5. Recruitment & Induction

- **Gender-Sensitive Recruitment:** Inclusive, bias-free processes with gender-balanced panels.
- **Affirmative Action:** Work towards achieving 50% women in leadership positions.
- **Induction & Training:** Mandatory gender sensitization during onboarding.
- **Equal Benefits:** Maternity, paternity, and gender transition.
- **Continuous Learning:** Regular workshops on gender equity and unconscious bias.
- **Audits:** Gender and Inclusion Audits to track progress.

6. Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) & Safeguarding

- **Internal Committee (IC):** Fully compliant with The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013 (amended 2023).
- **Reporting & Redressal:** Confidential, safe, and timely grievance resolution (within 90 days).
- **Preventive Measures:** Awareness programs, training, and safe reporting channels.
- **Safeguarding Beyond POSH:**
 - Protection of children, vulnerable adults, and communities.
 - Mandatory reporting of any safeguarding concerns.

7. Work–Life Balance & Family Support

- **Parental Leave:** For both women and men, promoting shared caregiving.
- **Childcare Support:** On-site or subsidized day-care facilities.
- **Health Benefits:**
 - Maternity Leave – 6 months paid.
 - Caretaker allowance – monthly for one year post-delivery.
 - Health check-ups and medical reimbursements according to health policies.
 - Family counselling and mental health services for all staff.
 - Compassionate leave.

8. Implementation & Accountability

- Internal and external gender audits.
- Gender-responsive budgeting across all programs.
- Integration of gender-sensitized measures into staff performance appraisals.
- Women's Core Team and Internal Committee to oversee compliance.
- Program Directors to ensure gender integration in sectoral plans.

9. New Additions (2025)

- Inclusion of **LGBTQIA+** and non-binary identities across all major policy areas.
- Mental health and wellbeing are recognized as a component of gender justice.
- Emphasis on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) frameworks.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

Entity	Responsibility
Governing Board	Oversight and policy review
Senior Core Team	Strategic leadership and compliance monitoring

Women's Core Team	Advocacy, awareness, and policy guidance
Internal Committee (IC)	Grievance redressal and staff training
All Staff Members	Practicing gender-equitable behaviour and reporting violations

11. Review and Continuous Improvement

- Policy reviewed every two years to align with national laws and global frameworks (CEDAW, SDG 5, ILO Standards).
- Continuous improvement through training, learning exchanges, and community feedback.
- Incorporation of emerging themes such as LGBTQIA+ inclusion, digital workplace safety, and mental health.

12. Conclusion

RDT reaffirms its commitment to gender equality, diversity, and inclusion as core principles of sustainable rural development.

Through conscious leadership, transparent practices, and community engagement, RDT aims to create a world where everyone—regardless of gender or identity—lives with dignity, equality, and opportunity.

Glossary of Key Terms

Term	Meaning
Gender Equity	Fair treatment, opportunities, and resources for all genders.

Intersectional	Considering overlapping factors like gender, disability, and class.
Programmatic Commitments	Actions to make programs fair and inclusive.
Unconscious Bias	Automatic attitudes that affect how we treat others.
Supporting Others Fairly	Helping colleagues or communities equitably.
Gender-Sensitive Planning	Designing activities that consider gender-specific needs.