

Sambhali Women Empowerment Policy



Goals and Objectives

The goals of the Sambhali Women Empowerment Policy are to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. The objectives include creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for the development of women to enable them to realize their full potential; help asset less and marginalized women become economically self-reliant; and access to health care, quality education, employment, equal compensation and social security. They also include elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and girls, and changing societal attitudes towards women and girls. The Policy also aims at providing training for improvement of skills, development of entrepreneurial skills, asset creation, and mobilization into small viable groups to enable beneficiaries to take up employment through income generating activities, and empower vulnerable groups of women in a holistic and sustainable manner. This will be achieved by addressing this group's social, political, legal, health-related, and economic problems through vigorous capacity-building and organizing them into Self-Help Groups (SHGs).

Implementation Outline - Creating a Responsive Legal & Institutional Mechanism

In order to create a non-discriminatory, as well as gender sensitive legal environment, and strengthen the institutional mechanism to elevate the status of women, the Sambhali Trust will take the following measures:

Legal Measures

- Adopt, enact, review and revise wherever necessary policies to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women
- Ensure land rights to women and encourage co-ownership of property by women to other productive assets like house, shop, etc.
- Ensure effective enforcement of all relevant legal provisions including Equal Remuneration Act, Minimum Wages Act, Child Marriage Restraint Act, etc.
- Ensure the enforcement of Dowry Prevention Act and effective legal action against domestic violence and harassment of women at place of work
- Public advocacy in cases where women are deprived of rights that are already secured under law
- Create mass consciousness and provide legal awareness about women's rights
- Implement laws regarding prenatal sex selection, practices of female infanticide, child marriage, etc., to eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child

Institutional Capacity Building

- Earmark a percentage of the social sector spending for supporting women's income generating activities
- Provision to interest free, easy installment credit to women groups through Sambhali. Sambhali would also make special efforts to enhance the outreach of such credit to women especially those below the poverty line.
- Encourage participation of women in seminars and schemes organized by the Department of Women and Child Development
- Set up a resource centre for women within the existing administrative structure for collection of information about women's empowerment and Women's Rights
- Encourage the formation of Self Help Groups. The Self Help Groups would be encouraged to act as effective forums to promote women's interests especially at grassroots levels
- Undertake gender sensitization in Women Cells in Police Stations. In view of the important role of women in the labor force and their contribution to the economic development of the society, Sambhali will make concentrated efforts to ensure incorporation of the women's development dimension in to the various sectors. Accordingly, Sambhali would take the following measures:-

Agriculture & Allied Sectors

- Encouragement and recognition of women as farmers
- Encourage women farmers to practice mixed farming including cereals, pulses, oil seeds, roots, tubers, etc., and their preservation to enhance the role of women in food security. Sambhali would also encourage women in villages to take up organic farming.
- Promote the development of dairy under the management of active women's groups. To enable the women to work effectively in this area, training programs for women and women's groups will be organized in the processing, value addition and marketing aspects of this activity.
- Encourage the use of common lands in rural areas by women groups to cater to the fuel and fodder needs of the villages.
- Encourage women to pursue higher studies in agriculture and dairy techniques
- Facilitate special training programs for women in modern and developed farming techniques

Water & Sanitation

- Provision of potable water to all villages would be the immediate priority of the Sambhali Rural Centre thereby reducing the burden on women in terms of carrying heavy headloads of water.

- Facilitate the access to safe drinking water resources by facilitating access to traditional water resources, etc., within accessible reach of households especially in rural areas. Women groups will be encouraged to take up the management and maintenance of these conventional water resources
- Generate awareness among women groups in rural areas regarding the problem of waste disposal, especially in rural areas. Sambhali will make the rural as well as urban community aware of waste disposal separately for bio-degradable and non-bio-degradable wastes in coordination with civic authorities for their timely disposal. Sambhali would encourage women groups to come forward to claim responsibility for management of sanitation units. Sambhali shall also make efforts to encourage sanitation programs in rural and urban areas.
- Encourage training in coordination with other NGOs and other organizations on watershed and water conservation activities, rain water harvesting and the use of conventional sources of water.

Industry

- Provide training to women to promote skills for income generating activities like traditional arts, handicrafts, sewing, sale of dairy products, disposal of waste, etc.
- Encourage development of cottage and handicraft industries where an increased role is envisaged for women
- Encourage part time jobs with flexible timings for increased women participation. Sambhali will draw up women friendly personnel policies and provision of social security benefits, support services for women i.e. crèches at work places, security, welfare programs, transportation, etc.
- Facilitate rural women's access to capital, technology know-how and other productive resources for increased work opportunities
- Provide startup fund as 5000 as one time funding to the SHG, additional incentives in form of the capital investment at no interest easy installment would be provided to individuals. This incentive will be in the form of credit of Rs. 500 – 15000 depending on the priority of needs. Credit to women is given to set up their own business as a micro finance. One-time credit will provided after monitoring the SHG.
- Encourage development of managerial and entrepreneurial skills to encourage self-employment
- To promote women's participation in conservation of environment by rendering them the knowledge of solar energy, biogas, smokeless chulahs, rain water harvesting, waste disposal techniques, etc.
- Provide necessary mechanisms for marketing of goods produced by women
- Technical assistance for enhancing the skills of women engaged in traditional work and availability of raw material at reasonable prices

Health Care and Nutrition

- Ensure women have access to affordable and proper health care, information and related services
- Increased investment in women's education and health which have direct impact in reducing fertility and mortality rates and increased social returns.
- Ensure implementation of laws regarding registration of marriages, births and deaths to effectively meet the problems of early marriage and infant and maternal mortality
- Provide health training (particularly in reproductive and child health) to women. The Sambhali would undertake special efforts to meet the nutrient needs especially amongst pregnant and lactating women through education and encouraging participation of women in the planning and delivery of the system
- Expand and intensify access to safe, effective and affordable methods of Family Planning especially in rural areas
- Increase women's knowledge related to her power to exercise choice with respect to conception or abortion of a child
- Encourage local women organizations/Self Help Groups to participate in primary health care activities including traditional medicine and measures to promote self-care and increased community care
- Undertake gender sensitive initiatives that address issues related to sexually transmitted diseases (like AIDS etc)

Education

- Promote societal awareness of gender issues and women's rights as part of the course curriculum
- Formulate special measures to increase enrollment and retention rate of girls
- Get Sponsorship for education of Children belonging to Dalits communities specially below the poverty line
- Encourage women / girls to get trained in self defense
- Organize vocational and job oriented counseling and training especially for women to enable them to opt for courses relevant to their talents and interests
- Make efforts to promote functional literacy with special emphasis on viable economic skills
- Facilitate provisions of assistance / loan through various agencies for professional courses to needy women
- Special Action Plan to provide education and health care for adolescent girls
- Incorporate moral education (value based) in the course curriculum of the educational institutions

- Encourage girls towards technical and scientific education

Housing & Shelter

- Encourage inclusion of women's perspectives in planning of housing and provision of shelter in rural and urban areas to ensure that the benefits of housing, essential services and community facilities are directed towards women in general
- Encourage preferential allotment of plots and houses to women by public agencies

Social Welfare & Cultural Aspects

- Discourage the role of media and advertising, which affect consumer ideology adversely and contribute to the growth of culture of violence against women. The media would be encouraged to develop codes of conduct, guidelines to combat negative images of women, portray successful women as role models and act as a catalyst to promote the human dignity of women.
- Discourage domestic violence through awareness campaigns and make it a culpable offence
- Formulate special protective measures including social security for vulnerable sections of women including widows, handicapped women, women in distress and particularly below the poverty line, etc.

Signature of Authorized Officer: _____

(Position in NGO): _____

Date: ____/____/____

Signature of Witness: _____

Name of Witness: _____

Date: ____/____/____