


**GOVERNMENT OF MANIPUR
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE**

N O T I F I C A T I O N
Imphal, the 2nd January, 2024

No.7/15/2022-SW(MSCW-Policy): It is hereby notified for information to all concerned that a "Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Policy 2023" has been drafted by Manipur State Commission for Women after Series of studies and consultation with different stakeholders. The draft policy is hereby published in the Department's Website www.socialwelfare.mn.gov.in for information to all persons and stakeholders who are likely to be affected.

As such objections, rectifications and suggestions, if any, may be submitted to the Chairperson, Manipur State Commission For Women, DC Complex, Lamphelpat or to Director(Social Welfare), Government of Manipur, Directorate Complex, Near 2nd M.R Gate, A.T.Line, Imphal -795001 or submit via email at - wcdprog@gmail.com or mscw2k17@gmail.com.

The objections, rectifications and suggestions, if any, received from any person or stakeholder with respect to this draft policy before the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication will be considered by the Core Committee for further omission, addition, rectification and modification of the draft.


(Ngangom Uttam Singh)
Director(Social Welfare)
Manipur

Copy to:-

1. The Chairperson, Manipur State Commission for Women, Lamphelpat.
2. The A.P.S to the Commissioner(Social Welfare), Govt. of Manipur.
3. Guard File.



Government of Manipur

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT POLICY, 2023



Submitted by:



Manipur State Commission for Women

DRAFT GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT POLICY

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Introduction and Background

Gender Inequality is an important form of disparity that exists today and is faced by every country, in different magnitude. The UN Human Development Report “Gender Inequality Index (GII) — a measure of women’s empowerment in health, education and economic status” shows that the overall progress in minimising the gender inequality gap has been slowing down in the recent years. Thus, it is mandatorily required to take up measures which can merge (mitigate) the existing disparities through appropriate (proactive) policies and programs; as it has a direct correlation to the loss of human growth and development. Investing in women’s equality to lift their living standards and empowering them (have) thus become (the) core component of the human development agenda and also to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution - in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. Upholding and safeguarding rights of all citizens irrespective of caste, creed, religion, gender or any other identity is the core responsibility of the government. Both Union and state governments are empowered to develop and implement laws, policies and programmes promoting gender equality.

India is a signatory of various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights for all. Key among them is the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). It is mandatory and requires every state in India to take into consideration and pay utmost attention to this universal and constitutional mandates in governance and administration. It requires the State Government to formulate policies, plans, programs and strategies to ensure that there is no discrimination. Effort must be put in to advance women in the various field of development in the state. As a signatory to several international conventions and human rights instruments aimed at securing equal rights for all, both state and national governments are bound by legal obligations to ensure safety, security and substantive equality for women, girls and other diverse genders and sexualities.

In Manipur, even as women are proactively engaged in socio-economic activities, their equal participations in all spheres of development and decision making are minimal. While women are key economic players and back bone of the economy their equal participations in development affairs are limited only to welfare activities. Moreover, the state of Manipur popularly known for its women uprising against injustice, such as the historic *Nupilan*, and in recent years women coming out for various social

causes, and against security forces', there have been no gender policy or gender budgeting. Paradoxically, women in Manipur in Manipur- both in the hills and valley are known world-wide as proactively engaged in social issues – the Meira Paibis, Tangkhul Shanao Long, Naga Women Union, Manipur, the various Mothers Associations from the Kuki groups. They were in the fore-front in resistance against injustices and were actively involved in peace initiatives. But at the same time, it is found that women lag behind in terms of electoral participations, the state assembly and local self-governing bodies are classic examples of unequal representations. The State of Manipur has a long history of participation of women in the social reforms, political uprisings but successive governments have failed to develop policies and programmes to enhance women's role and participation in social, economic and political development.

Gender equality denotes the absence of discrimination on the basis of gender as being socially constructed and classified. As gender being a social construct, inequality shouldn't (should not) be created and promoted on the basis of such constructs. Gender analysis identifies the areas and informs the actions required to address the inequalities that results from different roles of gender, or the unequal power relationships that exist between them. The inequalities that women faces in most of the society makes them in having less access to and control over resources and are also not facilitate to involve in the decision-making processes. Gender analysis in health often highlights how inequalities disadvantages women's health and often made them to suffer extensively. Thus, the concept of Gender Equity which refers to fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between genders are very much crucial as it recognises that women, men and third gender have different needs and abilities. Such differences need to be recognised and a fair balance can be achieved, as per the existing context, through the process of Gender Mainstreaming supported adequately by a proper gender budget.

Gender inequality, like poverty is a structural issue reinforced and perpetuated by informal and formal norms and practices through a range of social and political institutions. Although policy initiatives are aimed at empowerment of women and girls, gender disparities continue to impede their development in almost every spheres of life. Intersectional vulnerabilities especially of women and girls belonging to weaker sections further impinge upon access to rights, entitlements and equal opportunities. A disproportionately higher number of women are forced to remain in the informal, unorganized sector, depriving them access to basic services of health, nutrition and education, productive assets, financial services, career advancement or an enabling work environment which ensures dignity, safety and security. Additionally, exclusion of people who identify as LGBTQIA+ has meant deeper systemic deprivations across the lifecycle resulting in lower incomes, worse health, less education, among others. The

spiral of poverty is intertwined with gender discrimination and has intergenerational consequences that call for urgent, concerted and long-term actions guided by a comprehensive policy.

There is a very popular argument mooted in defence of the customs and traditions of our society as a whole and it is that we are far better off than our counterparts in the mainland India where women are not even allowed to be born, where female infanticide and bride burning is a regular feature. On top of it our women are very visible. As mentioned above, we have women's organizations in every community. They are very visible. They are sitting in protests and carrying on peace efforts. The subtle codes in the garb of rigid social norms extending to the political sphere, denying them to live their lives with dignity are more difficult to handle than the stark and bold discriminatory practices in other parts of India. So therefore, first and foremost, gender has to become an issue. The essence of this policy is the shift from a focus on women to one on gender equality and rights.

The policy will address (inter alia) certain emerging issues like Anaemia, decreasing child sex ratio and reproductive health issues. It will address women from various walks of life including the women vendors, Maibis (traditional healers and priestess), artists from both contemporary and folk, weavers, craftswomen etc. Women have been a strong force in the realm of sports, nationally and internationally and so there's a need to address the myriad issues that challenges them. Women forms a large part of the unorganised sector and their vulnerability to a sustained livelihood needs to be reduced by appropriate policy measures.

The Covid pandemic induced lockdown exacerbated these inequities resulting in loss of livelihoods, increased incidence of domestic violence, intimate partner violence and child marriage, adolescent girls dropping out of school, and the increased burden of unpaid care work - exposing further the deep-rooted nature and complexities of gender discrimination. The road to post-pandemic recovery will be long and complex, and efforts will have to be targeted to make it gender responsive. Women constitute the largest in healthcare activities both in government and private institutions and they were most vulnerable as Covid warriors. This policy is being presented at a critical juncture in time whereby urgent and strategic policy response would be paramount to ensure immediate, medium term and long-term recovery in an equitable manner. The challenges of the increasing number of women street vendors needs to be addressed over and above the remaining challenges of the Nupi Keithel which is historic space on its own. Loan sharks operate upon the vulnerabilities of the women vendors and this needs to be addressed at the earliest to enable the women to earn a decent livelihood.

Above all, the recent violent incidents that have paralysed the state since May 2023 needs a strategic and practical solution for the people to relocate and rehabilitate that may take years to even complete. The Policy has to be sensitive to the needs of the people who are directly affected and also indirectly affected, particularly women and children. The policy needs to take a step beyond any previous initiative to lay out and emphasize a strategic action plan with measurable indicators of progress, suggest strategic institutional mechanisms to both steer and drive the action plan, and propose a resource management plan fostering convergence and interdepartmental coordination for effective implementation of policy directives.

The policy shall apply to all departments, agencies, enterprise, Boards or any units that receives public funds. It aims to do so within a framework of mutual respect, for the equal access of all genders to economic, social and political opportunities, resources and benefits and for a society where all gender may participate in and benefit as equal partners in the development process of the community, the state and the country.

Objectives of State Gender Policy

- i) Strengthen, advocate and inspire gender equality and women's empowerment in the state of Manipur across all sectors, institutions and its functionaries.
- ii) Mainstreaming a gender equality and women's empowerment perspective in development planning and implementation across all levels of governance.
- iii) To empower women and third gender through proper education and skill development program with appropriate gender sensitive curriculum and education system
- iv) To ensure their equal reach to social security opportunities and services for their political, social and economic empowerment.
- v) To increase the participation of women workforce in the economy and ensure employment and self-employment opportunities, skill development, financial literacy, equal remuneration, and health and safety at workplace for them.
- vi) To improve health and welfare for women, children and third gender
- vii) To strengthen the legal systems and institutional mechanisms towards ending all kinds of violence and discrimination against women and girls.
- viii) To create a gender sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system

Guiding Principles to Gender Policy and its Implementation

1. GENDER EQUALITY AND EQUITY

The policy is based on the principle that women, men and third gender are all equal as a human. So, there should be no inequality and discrimination based on any social construct. Hence, fairness and justice must be achieved in distribution of benefits and responsibilities between all.

2. RIGHTS BASED APPROACH

It is a right for every human to live a life with full dignity and conviction; and it is also a right for an individual to participate in deciding one's own path and future. Social constraints and constructs must not curtail one's right.

3. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

For the systematic suppressions and sufferings as it has continued existing against women and third gender, measures to reconstruct and supportive actions are required and justified. So, appropriate programmes to merge the existing gaps and correct the inequalities are very important.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

The policy and its associated program would be fruitful only when it is implemented and reaches the needy person for whom it is meant for; and when the outcomes are visible only through an open system of communication.

5. ACTION BASED ON EVIDENCE

The policies and programmes need modifications and changes with the passage of time and phases. However, all the changes and recommendations to be incorporated must be based on the evidences created and collected from the grassroots level.

6. INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION

The policy is committed to include all gender who are vulnerable and historically marginalised. The policy encourages the participation of all the population to translate the vision into reality. It recognises the regional diversity based on caste, class, ethnicity and geographical locations. It calls upon the knowledge, expertise and resources of civil society organisations and other stakeholders

including public, private and the corporate sector on all issues pertaining to all genders.

Survival health and Nutrition

Health is defined as ‘a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’ by World Health Organisation (WHO). The definition which conceptualised health, human rights explicitly link with wellbeing, and has components not only physiological but also psychological and social. Thus, mental health is also an integral part of being in the state of good health. In the general healthcare system, gender component is very important considering the existing gender inequalities, not only for girls and women but also for the third gender. Achieving a gender responsive healthcare system requires strategic interventions and collaborations between departments and also need a proper redistribution and management of the resources available. Not to make gender as the causes for poor health and development among girls, women and third gender, there is also a need for life cycle/stage approach as the health demands and biological requirements varies according to different stages in life of an individual.

1.1 Policy Directives:

To ensure survival, health and nutritional support to empower girls, women and third gender to lead a healthy life, physically as well as mentally, by ensuring an access to appropriate, affordable and quality healthcare services

2.1 Measures to achieve the stated directives:

2.1.1 Reproductive, ante-natal and child health care

1. Adequate healthcare services including free health checkups, medicines and care facilities to pregnant and lactating women through PHCs sub-PHCs by ensuring timely registration and ante-natal check ups
2. Free health check-up camps in underserved, remote and hard-to-reach areas across urban, rural and hill areas using VHSND
3. Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) campaigns on 1000 days of breastfeeding and Josh talks at the community level through SHGs under MSRLM with ASHAs and Anganwadis.
4. Promote institutional delivery and complete immunisation. Referral Transport System (RTS) for safe deliveries as well as emergency

obstetric care must be made available in all areas especially in remote and isolated locations. So, based on the population and coverage area, adequate number of ambulance vehicles must be stationed at the PHCs.

5. All registered pregnant women belonging to BPL households must be provided with additional food grains and nutritious supplements for 90 days starting from the 9th month of pregnancy. The process must be coordinated by ASHA and village level VOs in association with CAF&PD through local PDS agents.
6. A system to remind and make compulsory hospital visit by pregnant and lactating women for Anti Natal and Post Natal services must be developed through automatic mobile reminder message
7. A gender transformative health strategy that recognises women's reproductive rights with shifts such as family planning focus from female sterilisation to male sterilisation must be developed and implemented through Reproductive healthcare and counselling centre located at each hospital.

2.1.2 Survival of young girls

- 1 Increase Child Sex ratio by changing the mindset of society towards girls especially in the districts that has child sex ratio lower than 850
- 2 Effective implementation of Pre-Conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPDNT) Act 1994 including periodic and systematic monitoring of adherence to the Act
- 3 Effective implementation of schemes related to improvement in child sex ratio
- 4 Vaccination and Nutrition of Girl Child: Details of vaccination specific record for girls (and boys) must be made available online and the assignment has to be coordinated and managed by ASHA of the specific locality.
- 5 Aadhaar Enrolment for each girl child must be done within the age of 02 years and it is to be coordinated and managed by ASHA.
- 6 ICDS program as the preparatory stage for school also has health and nutrition component.

- 7 Research, monitoring and evaluation team must be separately created at district level to locate, visit, meet and check the functioning of - ANMs, AWWs, AWHs, ASHAs etc. Base on the data created and updated an appropriate management and actions must be taken to manage the existing rural-urban divides in the availability, functioning and requirement of the services adequately.

2.1.3 General Healthcare Program for Adolescent Girls & Third Gender

- i) School based special program integrating appropriate sex education including adolescent health, menstrual hygiene management (MHM) and care should be made as a compulsory part of school curriculum (in Std. VI, VII & VIII) through demonstration and practical know-how knowledge
- ii) For out-of-school girls, ASHA should organised awareness program on adolescent health, menstrual hygiene management and care on the first Sunday of every month
- iii) Menstrual hygiene must be made sensitised to all the boys and girls in school; Upgrading and maintaining quality sanitation facilities across institutions to include adequate privacy, quality construction, adequate lighting, running water, soap, sanitary pad vending machines and safe disposal

Conducting regular trainings for ASHA, Anganwadi workers and teachers on MHM

Teen pregnancy and its impact must be made aware through school based special program, ASHA and hospital counselling. Also, the cases of Teen pregnancy must be address by special unit and reported to the concern District Child Protection Unit (DCPU).

Early marriage must be stopped in any case. To ensure appropriate legal age for marriage, every marriage must be registered and get approval from respective Registrar office of the concern district and the information must be shared with the concern District Child Protection Unit (DCPU). If not, the case must be deal by DCPU in association with the women police station under the jurisdiction

2.1.4 Gender transformative health services and family planning

1. Strengthen health services from sub-centres to medical colleges including LGBTQIA+ persons

2. Availability of contraceptives in health care centres and ensuring access without gender discrimination
3. Improved diagnostic services at all government facilities up to PHC level for PCOS, endocrine, cancer, UTIs, menopausal issues, etc., with improved referral systems
4. Promoting health insurance for women and transgender persons under state insurance schemes

2.1.5 Healthcare for Menopause and Old Age Women

1. Special unit must be open in all government hospital to check, deal and provide appropriate healthcare services to women in their menopausal age. Also, ASHA and SHGs should play an active role in creating awareness and leading women to the unit for health check-up and appropriate healthcare interventions.
2. Embedding palliative care for women and LGBTQIA+ persons across appropriate health facilities
3. Geriatric health care unit must be created in every district hospital with expertise in Geriatric healthcare system. Women suffer largely at this stage with lack of resources and supports as required in comparison with their male counterparts. Geriatric services includes preventive, curative, and rehabilitative healthcare and it needs to give special focus and strengthened with appropriate government and public-private participation.
4. Training frontline health workers on gender responsive palliative and geriatric care needs Targeted programmes/interventions for women and girls covering prevention, treatment, counselling, aftercare and rehabilitation focusing on cancer
5. Implementation of a special scheme for subsidizing treatment and care of cancer for women, girls and transgender persons
6. Conducting awareness campaigns on palliative and geriatric needs of women

2.1.6 Mental Health for Women and Third Gender

1. a systematic approach to provide requisite screening, care and treatment especially at primary level must be made available at each district hospital for mental Health Care.
2. The cost of treatment for mental health must be covered largely in the proposing Women Health Card as Mental health issues and illness generally takes time in its treatment and turns out to be costly. They also need personal care and supervision which is lacking in case of most of the women and third gender.
3. Gender sensitisation of all medical and paramedical staff on mental health counselling and care
4. Awareness and sensitisation campaigns promoting help seeking behaviour and eliminating stigma around mental health issues
5. Adequate emphasis on mental health in medical education

2.1.7 Addressing Growing Prevalence of HIV and AIDS

1. Strengthen awareness raising and include a focus on the disease in the delivery of comprehensive SRH programs and services.
2. Adopt Strategies indicated in the 6th AIDS Medium Term Plan, including a focus on the LGBTQIA+ community particularly transgender people and non-conforming individuals.
3. Strengthen mechanism for information dissemination on HIV and Hepatitis
4. Enhance advocacy campaigns to openly/publicly talk about the issue (e.g., counselling, rehabilitation, therapy, including partnership with private organizations in undertaking relevant activities, etc.)
5. Reach key populations for HIV awareness, promotion of HIV testing, condom education and distribution.
6. Screen key populations for Hepatitis HIV by trained and supervised member of community-based organizations.
7. Test key populations for free at Social Hygiene Clinics, TB facilities and antenatal care facilities.

8. Enroll PLHIV to free antiretroviral therapy (ART) at designated treatment hubs /primary HIV care facilities. Adhere to ART for PLHIV on ART and monitor response to treatment through viral load testing.
9. Immediately identify actions or policies to generate data for indicators without baseline and targets Improve the delivery of comprehensive SRH services particularly to transgender and gender conforming individuals. Intensify information and education campaigns for health care providers

2.1.8 Addressing Nutritional Support to girls and women

1. Monitoring mechanisms such as BMI charts for girls in the age group of 6-18 years to be maintained and displayed prominently at primary and secondary schools and PHCs.
2. This will include weighing, providing food and nutritional supplements and SBCC for girls with BMI below the 5th percentile for age, gender, and height. Nutrition levels assessments of girls from socially and economically marginalised communities, especially ST groups, will be prioritised.
3. Monitoring mechanisms such as BMI charts for women in the age-group 19-49 years to be maintained. This will include weighing, providing food and nutritional supplements and SBCC for women with BMI below 18.5 kg/m². Nutrition levels assessments of women from socially and economically marginalised communities, especially ST groups, will be prioritised.
4. Ensuring full coverage under the Public Distribution System for all eligible households
5. Proactively facilitating inclusion of women and girls from other vulnerable groups in national and state sponsored nutritional and food security programmes

2.1.9 Preventing anemia among women and children

1. Regular screening and monitoring of women for anaemia with emphasis on pregnant and lactating women, Severe Acute Malnourished, Severe Underweight children among others, including follow up care and treatment

2. Promoting consumption of balanced diet including adequate intake of protein and iron rich food
3. Promoting consumption of Iron Folic Acid and deworming as per the national Anaemia Mukht Bharat Guidelines
4. Promoting kitchen gardens with nutritious varieties and necessary advisory. This may be linked with MSRLM

2.1.10 Providing health facilities to the most vulnerable

1. Access to disabled friendly health infrastructure for women, girls and transgender persons across public and private health facilities
2. Awareness campaigns highlighting targeted health programmes and schemes for vulnerable women girls and LGBTQIA+ persons including persons with disabilities, TB, leprosy, cancer patients, HIV/AIDS, sex workers and others.
3. Providing gender responsive health facilities and SOP on counselling services for women in and out of custody

2.1.11 Access to quality health services for LGBTQIA+

Providing comprehensive health services at all health facilities to LGBTQIA+ persons

2.1.12 Women Health Card and Health Insurance

Women Health Card must be introduced with conditions based on the economic condition of beneficiaries. Since women, in general, does not own movable and non-movable properties in their name and also lack decision making power in our society, they are not empowered and financially independent to deal with illness. So, cases of morbidity are comparatively very high among women. Thus, Women Health Card is very essential to provide coverage on the cost of treatment at various levels. Work conditions, remuneration and social protection benefits of frontline workers and health functionaries including ANMs, AWWs, ASHAs should be institutionalised.

Special attention needs to be given to the expansion of health insurance schemes such as RSBY and the same linked to programmes like NHM, ICDS, JSY, MSRLM, NREGS benefitting women particularly the vulnerable and marginalised.

2.1.13 Women Health Research and Data Management Cell

To improve the health services and overall healthcare system, a complete, accurate, and timely gender-based data is required. So, research in healthcare system and services must be promoted and also a data management cell must be established at the state level linking gender-based data collected by the public and private organizations and individual. Timely modifications, interventions and innovations must be made based on the data thus collected.

Education

1.1 Policy Directives:

- To provide and ensure Universal access to affordable and quality education compulsorily till secondary level for girls, women and transgender persons, in accordance with the Right To Education Act 2009 and the New Education Policy 2020
- To make education Gender responsive in all aspects across curricula, sensitisation of staff and infrastructure
- To promote an education system with adequate and appropriate skills development program for girls, women and third gender

2.1. Measures to achieve the stated directives:

2.1.1 Universal Access to education

1. Make compulsory enrolment of every girl child to an Anganwadi centres or to any other pre-schooling system according to the choice of the child's parents/guardians.
2. 100% enrolment and retention of adolescent girls in schools at secondary and senior secondary levels in remote and underserved pockets across rural, urban and tribal areas
3. Developing strategies to increase enrolment and improve retention of adolescent girls in secondary and senior secondary grades in schools, especially those from ST, SC, OBC communities, children of deserted women, migrant women (including women seasonal workers), and survivors of all forms of violence

4. Providing reservation, scholarships for children of folk artistes, street vendors, survivors of violence, internally displaced persons/ project affected persons among others for school education
5. Setting up additional special schools and learning centres, along with transport facilities, for girls with physical and mental disabilities with focus on underserved areas
6. Strengthening residential schools, bridge courses, open schools, mobile schools, hostels and develop related programmes to promote education of girls and women who are deprived of regular schooling

2.1.2 Higher and technical education for women and transgender

1. Implementing special programmes for higher education of women, girls and transgender persons from vulnerable categories with strategies to support transition into higher education
2. Provide scholarships, bank loans, hostels, transport and other services to help women and transgender and other special focus groups to attain higher and technical education
3. Reserving 30% seats for women, girls and transgender persons in STEM, sports, vocational education, fine and performing arts among others
4. Setting up additional special units and training centres, along with transport facilities, for women, girls and transgender persons with physical and mental disabilities with focus on underserved areas
5. Ensuring availability of career counselling facilities in schools and all institutions of higher education

2.1.3. Gender responsive education

1. Developing gender sensitive curriculum and pedagogy across all levels and modes of education.
2. Ensuring inclusive infrastructure for all educational institutions focusing on needs of PWDs, LGBTQIA+, pregnant and lactating women, among others.

3. Ensuring gender sensitisation of teaching and non-teaching and staff focusing on intersectional needs of women, girls and transgender persons at all educational institutions.
4. Ensuring zero tolerance to sexual harassment in all educational institutions. Grievances redressal cell must be compulsorily open in each school to observe, complain, response and address the cases of bullying and sexual harassment where Counsellor serves as the person-in-charge.
5. Provide mandatory separate usable Girls and Neutral toilets (for Third Gender) in each institution whether government, private or others with clean running water. Neutral toilet may not be necessary in pre- and primary schools.
6. Implementing adult literacy programmes for women, girls and transgender persons from vulnerable categories in association with existing government/private schemes, programs and bodies like MSRLM, MGNREGS, women groups, associations, organizations etc

2.1.4 Enabling and safe environment for education

1. Encourage Monitoring and evaluation by the School Management Committee, Civil Society Organizations, Student Organization, Community based organizations, Mothers groups, SHGs etc
2. **All academic institutions and training centers must have a separate and clean Emergency rest room for girls equipped with menstrual kits, first aid and some extra pair of institutional uniform.**
3. Ensuring availability of psychological counselling facilities at all educational institutions
4. Ensure effectiveness of the implementations of the provisions of POCSO Act, 2012 in schools
5. Strengthen School Management Committees and Parent Teacher Associations and increase the participation of women and other special focus groups in these Committees.
6. Developing strategies for equitable access to digital platforms for women, girls and transgender persons from remote and underserved areas.

Specific ICT programmes by collaborating with government as well as private institutes at rural and urban locations

7. Create a separate unit at district level for a strategic monitoring and evaluation of the program in its grassroots level.
8. Revise the incentives and subsidies that are being offered to promote education and skill development for women and third gender.

3. Economic Empowerment by Expanding Livelihoods opportunities

The COVID-19 pandemic has long-term economic repercussions that are likely to disproportionately affect the productive lives of women compared to men. The specific needs and contributions of women as workers, business owners and entrepreneurs must be better understood and addressed when developing measures to reactivate the economy.

Women are more exposed to informal employment in most low-and lower-middle income countries and are more often found in the most vulnerable situations. They are the street vendors, unregistered domestic workers, unpaid contributing family workers, construction workers, capture fishing. As women, they face, more particularly, some of the factors of informality including discrimination, lack of access to economic resources, to property, to financial and other business services, as well as the greater need to combine family and work responsibilities. Special measures will be taken to support women headed households, especially women bereaved as a result of agriculture/climate crisis, COVID or those affected by the current crisis.

Much of the economy in the state is based on informality and much of this is women. Women in agriculture and fishery is largely informal and the role of women is key. There is a great need to comprehensively make an assessment of women and their role in the different sectors of the economy. Included in this assessment must be the role of the famous Nupi Keithel or women market and how it is linked to the whole network of production and marketing.

Women also plays a key role in capture fishery sector whereby women (and men) takes key role in fish catch from wetlands and rivers and disposing them in the networks of markets spread across the state. Their role in meeting the protein requirements of the state cannot be understated. With dwindling and worsening of wetlands and rivers these women are affected in many ways.

3.1 Policy Directives:

- Facilitating gender mainstreaming in state economic policies to advance economic empowerment of women and transgender persons to promote entrepreneurship by prioritising access to credit, technology, market and allied services.
- Promoting women's labour force participation through appropriate policy measures and effective implementation of labour laws around decent work conditions, equal opportunities, fair and equal wages, safeguards, occupational safety and health measures including the informal sector
- Enabling access to banking and institutionalised financial services for women and transgender persons to address the significant gender gap
- Recognising women's occupational identity in agriculture, fishery, forestry and value chain development – 'as farmers', facilitating access to, control over and ownership of land and other productive assets and access to entitlements
- Extending structured support in the areas of institution building and gender mainstreaming for women's collectives, federations and SHGs any women led groups for economic growth
- Effective implementation of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act 2013, ensuring constitution and functioning of the Internal Complaints Committees at the organisational and district level

3.2 Measures to achieve the stated directives

3.2.1. Facilitating gender mainstreaming

- Implementing a comprehensive policy on informal labour prioritising decent work conditions and safeguards for women and transgender persons covering maternal/ parental leave, child and elder care, leave policy, healthcare, pension, insurance, etc.
- Providing adequate hygiene and quality sanitation facilities for women and transgender persons engaged in informal work covering construction workers, domestic workers, agricultural labourers, street vendors/hawkers, brick kiln workers and small traders

- Formally recognising occupational identities of women and transgender persons who are sex workers, folk artistes, maibis, etc. and ensuring access to social safety nets
- Organising awareness campaigns and running community based legal clinics targeting women and transgender persons in the informal sector, focusing on labour rights and social protection schemes.

3.2.2 Promoting women's labour force participation

- Removing wage gap across rural-urban, agriculture and non-agriculture sectors.
- Offering financial and non-financial incentives for women owned assets
- Ensuring affordable and accessible transport systems
- Implementing gender sensitive recruitment policies
- Adopt special measures to facilitate equal access and opportunities for women from marginalized social groups and incentivize women to participate in the labor force
- Address gender bias and gender role stereotype in basic education curriculum materials; and promote entrepreneurship and advance economic opportunities for women through the use of digital technology
- Implementing special measures to promote labour force participation of women and LGBTQIA+ persons with disabilities and vulnerable backgrounds
- Implementing gender sensitive social safeguards policy covering flexible work hours, transportation, creche, washrooms, appropriate leave policies among others
- Strengthen regulatory and legal frameworks for maternity protection such as prohibiting pregnancy testing during the hiring process and as a requirement for continued work; ensuring equal promotion opportunities for pregnant women; ensuring that women returning from maternity leave return to the same job level

- Create awareness among employers about women's rights and responsibilities under Occupational Safety and Health laws.

3.2.3 Enabling access to banking and institutionalised financial services

- Promote loan facilities, employment opportunities and means of marketing for special focus group, and promote their SHGs.
- Launching new schemes and programmes targeting women and transgender persons with disabilities and vulnerable backgrounds in MSMEs across rural and urban areas.
- Enact and adopt laws and policies that ensure equal rights of women and men to access natural resources and other productive resources, especially land.
- Raise public awareness particularly among private institutions like banks and other financial institutions to remove biases and other procedural constraints to women's access to capital
- Promoting women and transgender persons in the start-up ecosystem(SVEP) with emphasis on mentorship and customized financing
- Implementing a diversified financial model for women and transgender entrepreneurs covering capital expenditure, expansion costs, risk cover among others
- Raise public awareness particularly among private institutions like banks and other financial institutions to remove biases and other procedural constraints to women's access to capital

3.2.4 Recognising women's occupational identity

- Recognizing women's specific vulnerability as food producers, processors, and vendors, secure for women in the fish and other food value chains adequate access to government support during the pandemic and in the recovery stage
- Ensuring substantive participation of women and transgender persons in agriculture value chains including fisheries, livestock and dairy, horticulture, sericulture, floriculture, non-timber forest produce and food grain value chain
- Ensure participation of women in local councils including agriculture-related organizations or associations so that they may have access to information on programs and in order for their voices to be heard

- End gender-based stereotypes in agriculture, mining, construction, forestry, pisciculture, soil conservation, dairy farming, gardening, permaculture and similar fields. Promoting capacity building of women, increase their access to technology and livelihood options. Ensure capacity building of extension workers at village/block level to fulfill special needs of women farmers
- Operating special windows for issuing licenses to women and transgenders for street vendors, drivers and entrepreneurs etc
- Training women in various soil conservation, horticulture, dairy, livestock, animal husbandry etc; Climate change mitigation, environment preservation and conservations should be imparted to women to enhance their knowledge and skills.
- Enhance the capacity of women in Agriculture, Fishery and Forestry to adopt new and better technologies to improve productivity and resilience to climate and disaster risks

3.2.5 Promoting women led groups for economic growth and skill building

- Ensuring full coverage of women and transgender persons in skills development and placement programmes
- Promote capacity building and skill development for formation of self-help groups (SHGs) of women and those belonging to special focus group.
- Promote standardization, packaging and online & offline marketing of SHG-made products for their brand building.
- Utilize vacant or unused government/community centres for SHG activities by allotting them to Government Departments.
- Development of a unified integrated platform by Manipur State Rural Livelihood Mission, National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM), for executing tasks related to SHGs to strengthen them.
- Prioritizing participation of women and transgender person in MSMEs across rural and urban areas including cottage industries, beekeeping, food processing (herbs, spices, fruit pulping, meat processing), bamboo, *kauna* grass, apparels, rural energy, rural crafts, bio processing and herbal products, waste recycling, packaging among others

- Introduce policies that would ensure equal access of women to leadership and decision-making positions
- Ensure participation of women in local councils including agriculture-related organizations or associations so that they may have access to information on programs and in order for their voices to be heard

3.2.6 Safeguards and protection

- Ensuring effective functioning of committees under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act.
- Ensuring gender responsive grievance redressal mechanisms at all workplaces
- Intensify awareness raising of men workers not only on Sexual Harassment but the expanded framework of the law.
- Effective implementation of labour laws to provide safety mechanisms and services for women labourers and migrant workers.
- Ensure equal wages for working women in all fields.
- Review land laws and laws related to economic empowerment and make relevant amendments for ensuring equal economic opportunities for girls and women.
- Institute regular training for workers, inspectors, union leaders, workplace safety officers, and human resource personnel on gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, and support systems for women victims
- Provide accessible support services for women victims and/or referral system to professionals

Special Focus on Women in Keithel/market-place

This market, which we call Nupi Keithel is situated in Imphal, the capital of Manipur. It is the largest market exclusively run by women in Asia. The women did not have to strive to come out of boundaries of their homes. They have been socially visible outside the home front since a very long time. Historically, women had no choice but to become the bread earners of the family. This tradition has carried on so much so that today Nupi Keithel is fully a women's domain. They actually believe that rather than the financial reasons, the Keithel helps them spend their time productively which helps them live longer. Their strong bond

with each other gives strength to their collectivity and security. It has also given them a unique status vis-à-vis their society. Now it is imperative need to see women in market place beyond just the space and their specific economic activities alone.

There is a need to understand their role in their families as agent of change and support in their families and their community. We need to see the market linkages that these women provide in the whole value chain. How women in the whole value chain are involved in strengthening each step of productions by knowing that they are all part of the same value chain. It is critical that women (and men) knows that they all need to support each other to further their relationship and that there is some sharing and growth for those involved.

For example, those in the business of selling clothes of every use, rituals, crafts, basketry etc can have regular interactions all along the chain so that they begin to understand each other better and that they begin to act on building mutual strengths. The state will conduct research as well as organize coordinated meetings all stakeholders in the value chain.

Women spaces for economic activities shall be protected and preserved from all external forces that tries to take away economic and political powers. Market/Keithel spaces will be preserved as a women domain with the state acting only as a mediator role to uplift their cause.

The network of women market across the state, from the small women spaces to the bigger ones in districts, towns and key Nupi Keithel will be preserved as a sole domain for women. The infrastructures of these spaces must be built or rebuilt based on full consultations with the women involved of that spaces.

Institutional Building

- A. Create a Map of all women run Keithels or markets across the state. The map will indicate the locations with 5-10, 10-20, 20-50, 50-100 + or more women in the market.
- B. Create a state Directory of all women run keithels in the state. The Directory can contain information like what is available and sold. Types of vending – like those permanent vendors and those street vending. Wherever possible information on women who are involved in the business.

- C. Create a value chain map of production to market and the role of women in this chain.
- D. Keithels/market must have women specific spaces including toilets and spaces for children. A must for all women market for above 20 and above women include Toilets, storage room, resting place that can act as safe place for children (creche), drinking water facility, sanitation and waste management.
- E. Health Facilities and health insurances should be ensured amongst the registered vendors initially. Though there are more than 7000 women gathering everyday in Nupi Keithel and around, there is no single hospital/primary health centre in the market area.
- F. Transportation constraints (increasing fares, unavailability of transportation means) needs to be immediately addressed. Since the state government has not its own public transport, the distribution of the transport facilities and means in different regions/areas around Imphal. The private transport co-operation also frequently calls bandh for increasing fares. This finally affects the women who come to Imphal for daily trade.
- G. A Rest House for Keithel women which may be in the upper storeys of the present three buildings for emergencies, sudden unrest or conflict situation.
- H. There should be immediate mechanisms to address lack of Capital support which normally results in borrowings at high interest from Private Commercial banks operating in Imphal. SHGs under MSRLM may be formed in the rural areas or establish necessary Cooperative Banks for Keithel Women.

Street Vending and Women

Women Street Vendors are also an integral part of Women in Market Place. Post Covid, there has been increasing number of street vendors in most towns and in Imphal. Sometimes there has been contestations with those inside formal market place/Keithel. Vending space has been an issue with local administration. However this policy views that women in all market places must be understood within their context and that all efforts must be in place to understand their situation and find ways to improve their conditions.

The Government must urgently conduct a comprehensive study along with all the women markets in the state. This study must help understand history, socio-economic profiles, market linkages in the whole value chain, facilities and infrastructures available. Grievances of the vendors etc.

This study must also include street vending, the women involved and their circumstances leading to street vending. This indicates that women are not only taking care of their households within a patriarchal household setup but also takes up additional role in the market place, both those in formal and street vending. In Manipur, women takes the role of selling their own produces or in retail of traditionally produced goods. And this explains why women are not only pushed to do both household work but also economic activities thus more burden that can impact her well being.

It is pertinent to understand the spurt of women vendors in Imphal in particular. We need to trace where they come from and why they have been pushed to street vending despite the fact that it is a harsh space with protection whatsoever. We need to make assessment if some of these women are in distress condition needed state support to ameliorate their condition including their family and children.

If required they must be supported for livelihood and skill training so that they not only earn more in a more formal economy then just mere street vending. If possible these street vendors can be collectivized in Cooperatives or Associations so that they have better bargaining power in their produces. This will ensure that we develop better families and thus the state. We need to address rural poverty as well as urban and hidden poverty. The government must pro-actively support such initiatives.

Other Actions Required

- Ensure that vending spaces are demarcated and that there is full cooperation with state administration so that vending is legalized without creating problems with other activities.
- Street vending requires proper toilets and sanitation which has health implications. Well located toilets, drinking water facilities etc must be ensured in public spaces where there is street vending. This can be used by both commuters and women in the market.
- Ensure that Municipalities and Police should be made better informed of women

in market places. This is to address and minimize police Harassment of women market vendors over space as the main victims are those who do not occupied permanent and licensed plot. Their earnings due to such disturbance should not be affected

We have to ensure that spaces meant for women must be in the sole domain for women. This means to say that both in planning and implementation of work plan, infrastructure building, welfare activities must be in full consultation and consent of women groups/cooperatives/associations of that specific market spaces.

4. Gender based Violence and the Judicial system

Gender-based violence is rooted in gender inequalities at the societal level, as well as harmful social norms that discriminate against women and girls. Gender inequalities are exacerbated by emergencies, exposing women and girls to unique risks and vulnerabilities as experienced in the recent bouts of violence from early May 2023. Violence/ Crime against women is increasing at various levels and forms. This is both in private space within the confines of the homes as well as in public spaces.

Towards addressing the lack of sufficient knowledge and relevant capacity related to gender equality and women's rights among duty bearers in the delivery of justice services, the key agencies with responsibilities must ensure to conduct gender related training and research for effective implementation of any laws. The state has to strive to move towards a system where justice services are more responsive to the gender issues and particular needs of women and children clients, especially those who are in especially difficult circumstances (victims and survivors of sexual and physical abuse, illegal recruitment, prostitution, trafficking, armed conflict, women in detention, victims and survivors of rape and incest, and such other related circumstances which have incapacitated them).

Policy Measures and Actions

4.1 End the lifecycle of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

- Conducting mass awareness campaigns focusing on women's rights, laws against SGBV and institutional response mechanisms, covering:
 - o Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act
 - o Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act

o Pre Conception Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act

o IT Act (relevant sections)

o IPC, CrPC (relevant sections such as 375, 376, 377, etc.)

o Helpline numbers

Emergency support institution

- Using innovative media strategies including social media platforms to publicise information pertaining to response and support services and schemes.
- Developing appropriate mobilisation strategies to influence and involve men and boys in SGBV Prevention
- Ensuring sensitization and training of all teaching and non-teaching staff on prevention of and response to SGBV across all educational institutions
- Creating spaces for adolescents and youth in schools and communities to engage on SGBV (including social norms, gender equality, sexuality, laws, cybercrime etc)
- Constituting the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) as stipulated in the POSH Act at all public and private organisations/ institutions.
- Establishing anonymous complaints systems for women and girls who work in the informal sector/ establishments, under the POSH Act

Gender sensitization of media professionals

- Ensuring codes of practice and ethical guidelines are followed for representation of women and diverse genders in media.
- Training diverse media professionals across print and electronic media and film, fashion and advertisement industries on responsive reporting and gender sensitive representation

Strengthening women related services

- Ensuring availability of adequate and trained staff at all service providers as per scheme guidelines
- Ensuring availability of adequate shelter homes as per SwadharGreh guidelines

- Developing SOPs for crisis response covering medical and legal support, and safety and security of survivors
- Ensuring adequate allocations and timely fund flow for running shelter homes
- Strengthening One-Stop Crisis Centers (OSCCs) with adequate allocations and timely fund flow
- Strengthening Special Cells for Women and Children (SCWC) with adequate allocations and timely fund flow
- Ensuring all helplines, including 181, are functional 24x7 and initiate immediate response
- Providing first aid and emergency medical care at all response nodes including shelter homes, One-stop crisis centres, police stations, courts, detention centres, primary health centres, etc.
- Developing SOPs for survivors' access to free psycho-socio-legal aid, referrals
- Building capacity of Anganwadi Workers, SHGs on social norms and laws, prevention of and primary response to SGBV
- Mandating certified refresher courses on gender sensitization for all police staff.

Strengthening institutional mechanisms for speedy justice delivery

- Ensuring presence of female police personnel at the complaints and help desks at all police stations with Adequate facilities and infrastructure in the police stations (friendly reception area, toilets and space to ensure privacy and dignity)
- Enforcing a gender sensitive protocol for medico-legal documentation
- Establishing and strengthening Legal Aid Clinics (LAC) in all district
- Establishing district level task force (DTF) for periodic review of the implementation of all existing legislations pertaining to GBV
- Developing SOPs with timelines for disposing of SGBV related cases
- Mandatory gender trainings for all staff of the judiciary

Protection, support and rehabilitation of women, girls and transgender persons

- Adequately publicising information on compensation and rehabilitative programmes at all shelter homes, OSCCs, police stations, prisons, courts, among other relevant institutions.
- Coordination and convergence between overlapping national and state victim compensation schemes and services
- Developing redressal mechanisms to assist victims/ survivors in cases of denial or delay of compensation
- Long-term rehabilitation of SGBV survivors by ensuring access to continued education and skilling opportunities
- Ensuring response and rehabilitation measures for elderly women and women with disabilities who face violence
- Ensuring access to public services and entitlements
- Ensuring rescue and rehabilitation of women, girls and transgender persons from bonded labour/ human trafficking

A robust MIS and M&E system will be established including qualitative and quantitative indicators pertaining to SGBV. Periodic data analysis and research will be conducted to understand the prevalence of SGBV, effective response and impact of rehabilitation. The M&E will focus on women, girls and transgender persons from vulnerable categories such as migrants, school drop outs, survivors of human trafficking, child marriage and other sexual offences, as well as missing women and girls. A common database will be developed to identify repeat offenders and high incidence zones of SGBV.

Women, Peace and Security

Manipur is a state that witnesses and is continuously experiencing socio-political conflicts. Insurgency and armed conflict remains un-resolved. Manipur is a state that comprise several communities / and ethnic groups, with diverse issues, claims and counter-claims. This has a devastating effect and impact on women and the population at large. It also widens the gap between women and men. Women often have fewer resources to protect themselves and with children, frequently make up the majority of displaced and refugee populations. War tactics such as sexual violence specifically

target them. People are still in the refugee camps in many districts in the valley as well as in the hills. A consolidated effort is required for relocation and rehabilitation. So there is an urgent need for collective and concerted multi-dimensional and multi-pronged action by all stakeholders so that girls and women get to lead a safe, secure and dignified life.

Women in Manipur were popularly known to have led peace movements and driven community recovery after conflict, but they were completely missing from peace negotiations. They are excluded from reconstruction limits access to opportunities to recover, to gain justice for human rights abuses, and to participate in shaping reformed laws and public institutions.

In Manipur it is also observed and found that insecurity and fear is increasing particularly among women. This hinders their mobility- both physical and social mobility.

UNSC 1325 aims to ensuring women's active participation in peacebuilding and post conflict reconstruction processes with efforts towards achieving gender equality. The resolution called for incorporating the needs and concerns of women in relief and recovery efforts. State government must adopt and implement the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. It calls for women to participate in peacebuilding, be better protected from human rights violations, and have access to justice and services to eliminate discrimination.

Policy directives

Prevent violence, strengthen rehabilitation services for women and girls affected by violence and ensure effective implementation of related laws and schemes to develop a safe, secure and enabling environment for women and girls and end discrimination and violence against them. It also calls to:

- promote women's participation in formal and informal decision-making structures and governance processes related to natural resource management in peacebuilding.
- adopt proactive measures to protect women from resource-related physical violence and other security risks early in the peacebuilding period.
- remove barriers and create enabling conditions to build women's capacity for productive and sustainable use of natural resources

- increase inter-agency cooperation to pursue women's empowerment and sustainable natural resource management together in support of more effective peacebuilding

Policy Measures:

Gender sensitisation and awareness generation

- Sensitise officials and personnel of Home Department, especially Jail department, criminal justice system, institutions offering rehabilitation services towards the needs of women and girls affected by violence.
- Increase awareness among various stakeholders and society on issues, laws and services related to safety and security of women, girls and special focus group. Utilise various media platforms for the same.
- Sensitise men and boys on violence and harmful practices against women and girls, also include them as equal partners in the prevention of violence and discrimination

Participation of women in peace processes

- Adopt a policy to promote the appointment of women to key leadership positions in peace panels, peace agreement implementation, and other peace mechanisms.
- Build the capacity of women and create a more enabling environment for women to participate as key actors in the peace and security sector.
- Intensify actions that include women's participation in preventing violent extremism as women's participation is crucial to building communities that are resilient to radicalization and recruitment by non-state actors for armed movements as witnessed in the past five months
- Collect and analyze sex disaggregated data as basis for designing policies and programs for recovery and provide for inclusive processes by engaging women
- Ensure the proper profiling of disaster survivors, including home-based IDPs, to include the deliberate gathering of age- and sex-disaggregated data.

Building a safe environment

- Develop and implement rights based, culture-sensitive, peace-promoting, gender responsive, and child-friendly policies, programs, and projects for women and children affected by the violence.
- Design and operationalize a survivor protection scheme for girls and women victims/survivors of violence encompassing counselling, safe accommodation, rehabilitation and re-integration
- Incorporate features in urban and municipal planning that will complement efforts to ensure that public space are safe for women
- Establishing partnerships with media to encourage responsible reporting towards safeguarding the dignity of women
- Promote safe and conducive working environment for women who are engaged in duties of safety, security and protection and work in adverse conditions
- Involve women SHGs/Meira paibis as para-legal workers and promote community level for a to track, monitor and report instances of violence and trafficking of girls and women
- Integrate gender-related issues in Gram Panchayat and urban development plans and develop a safe environment for women and girls in Gram Panchayats, villages and cities through safety audit.
- Regulate the sale of alcohol and other harmful substances near residential colonies, schools and colleges

Prevention of harmful practices

- Develop and implement strategic action plan to end harmful practices such as child marriage, dowry practice, and gender-based sex selection. Include this plan in urban and Gram Panchayat development plan.
- Strengthen the role of PRIs, men and media for the prevention of harmful practices

Cyber security

- Promote strategic measures and strong internet governance for ensuring cyber security for women and girls.

- Spread awareness on the prevention of cyber-crime and include the subject of cyber security in school and college curriculum.
- Strengthen the institutional system to deal with cyber-crime.

Strengthening of basic services

- Increase women police force and strengthen women police stations in all the districts.
- Integrate gender budgeting and auditing in various fields, such as transport, housing, education, urban planning, design and infrastructure and others to ensure the safety of women, girls and special focus groups.
- Strengthen different forms of media, various applications, new technology and helpline services for prevention of violence and increasing the access to information and referral services for women and girls affected by violence.

MIS and evaluation

- Monitor and review laws, programmes and schemes related to security and safety of women and girls with equal support of government and CSOs.
- Strengthen MIS related to violence against women and girls and accordingly work towards prevention of violence

Decision making, Participation and political Representation

Policy Directives

Establish mechanisms to strengthen women and transgender persons' representation and participation in all the three branches of the government including the legislature, executive and judiciary.

Necessary provisions will be made to mandate inclusion of women and transgender persons in all governance and administrative institutions including in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and urban governance, statutory committees, missions, commissions, corporations, cooperative sector and political parties.

Creating an enabling environment for women and transgender persons' participation and representation in the political arena/ electoral politics through gender equitable reforms, advocacy and capacity building.

Women and transgender persons' representation and participation will be improved through greater capacity building covering areas such as local self-governance, decision making, rights and entitlements of citizens among others. Special attention will be given to enhance leadership and decision making capacities of elected women and transgender representatives from socially and economically marginalised communities including internally displaced persons and project affected persons.

Efforts will be made to promote convergence and collaboration between women and transgender persons' collectives (including self-help groups, cooperatives, federations, community-based organisations and NGOs) with PRIs and urban local bodies for accelerating gender responsive governance.

Special attention will be accorded to women and transgender persons belonging to Scheduled Tribes (ST), Scheduled Castes (SC), Other Backward Classes (OBC) in ensuring gender equitable governance and public administration.

Policy Measures:

Enhancing capacities of elected representatives in gender responsive governance

- Mandating gender training for all PRI functionaries across levels.
- Developing a comprehensive training module for elected women and transgender representatives covering leadership, planning, budgeting, programmes, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.
- Establishing district level gender resource centres with adequate allocations for gender mainstreaming in PRIs and capacity building of elected women and transgender representatives.
- Training women members from MSRLM, SHGs/VOs to participate in PRIs.
- Promoting participation and leadership of women and transgender persons from vulnerable categories aspiring for leadership roles in governance and political offices through customised or targeted training programmes
- Building capacities of transgender persons aspiring for leadership roles in governance and political offices through customised induction and targeted training programmes covering legal and financial literacy

Enhancing capacities of PRIs for gender responsive governance

- Gender mainstreaming in electoral policies Framing and implementing gender inclusive policies/rules/ guidelines to promote fair and equitable representation of women and transgender persons in the political arena.
- Appointing a state ombudsman to monitor gender equality, dignity, safety and security of women and transgender political leaders and elected representatives across parties

Empowering elected women and transgender representative

- Building partnerships with civil society organisations to support and enhance political acumen of elected women and transgender representatives.
- Ensuring safety, security and dignity of women and transgender representatives in PRIs by enforcing existing safety standards/protocols for elected representatives.
- Facilitating mentorship to women and transgender Sarpanches by erstwhile office bearers through civil society partnerships.

Women in Urban Governance

- Reservation seats for women and transgender persons in standing committees
- According statutory status to decisions and suggestions made by women in the ward level
- Ensuring adequate quorum of women and transgender persons and allocating exclusive time and space to them for representing local issues in Gram Sabhas

Gender sensitive Climate Change and Disaster risk Reduction

Policy measures

Enhancing women's decision making and leadership in sustainable natural resource management, climate change adaptation and disaster management. Innate knowledge and skills of women will be leveraged across planning, implementation and monitoring such initiatives.

Holistic gender specific strategies in natural resource management, climate change adaptation and disaster management will be formulated and implemented aiming at safety, well-being, health and rehabilitation of women and transgender persons.

Appropriate measures will be taken to enable equitable ownership control and use of natural resources and secure the asset base of marginalized poor women and transgender persons to counter poverty and climate shocks.

Recognizing the role of women from indigenous communities in conserving fragile ecosystems and natural resource management based sustainable livelihoods. Efforts will be made to recognize women's rights under the Forest Rights Act as individuals and communities and to strengthen their role in forest governance. Equal opportunities will be provided to transgender persons in forest-based livelihoods.

Measures will be taken to safeguard women and transgender persons' health and their surrounding environment through climate resilient agriculture recognizing the adverse implications of crop selection, use of chemicals and pesticides etc.

Women's critical role in use of clean energy will be leveraged to improve their quality of life as well as for sustainable development. Specific attention will be paid to promote entrepreneurship and employment for women and transgender persons in the energy sector.

Facilitating community-based disaster preparedness and planning in close coordination with Panchayati Raj Institutions (GPs and ULBs) prioritizing gender issues. In consonance with the National Disaster Management Act 2005 and provision of the State Disaster Management Authority, efforts will be made to create localized as well as state level gender inclusive disaster risk reduction plans and response focusing on disaster prone areas involving key departments and stakeholders.

Capacities of women and transgender persons' will be enhanced to promote their participation and leadership especially to mitigate and adapt to climate change, effective disaster response and risk reduction. Efforts will also be made to build capacities of the state administration across levels in effectively integrating gender into all aspects of natural resource management, climate change adaptation and disaster management.

This policy will make provisions for fair and proportional representation of women and transgender persons in constituting of Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) and Social Impact Assessment (SIA) teams for large infrastructure, industrial and development projects.

Concerted efforts will be made to converge key stakeholders in prevention, immediate response and longer-term rehabilitation of women, girls and transgender persons affected in industrial hazards, calamities and conflict situations such as political insurgency/ unrest, communal violence, other incidents of social unrest.

Special Focus Areas:**A. Women In Sports**

Sport holds enormous potential to multiply the impact of gender equality strategies. We know that sport can improve the physical, mental and emotional well-being of girls and women, and that it can boost their confidence and leadership skills. But we need to do more to ensure that women and girls across all social groups can practice sports safely and reap these benefits over a lifetime.

This policy recognizes that sports women in Manipur have brought laurels for the state and for India, however, women continue to face difficulties in many fronts in sports. In the recently conducted National games 2023, women brought in more medals than their male counterparts. The government shall strive to ensuring equitable access to sports facilities, infrastructure and development and excellence at all levels of participation. The government in order to stop all forms of discrimination and violence in sports shall ensure that any cases or complaints shall ensure justice. Additionally, there shall be regular awareness and trainings of people in the sports hierarchies on sports and women. The government shall continually document any abuses on women so that overtime better interventions and policy outcomes are achieved.

The implementation of the policy will include the following components:

Program Improvement – alignment and refinement of programs and activities to enable sport organizations and other sport system stakeholders to deliver innovative quality sport experiences for women and girls;

Strategic Leadership – proactive promotion of complementary measures within other Canadian and international jurisdictions to strengthen quality sport experiences for women and girls through participation in multilateral and bilateral instruments and fora;

Awareness – promoting the benefits for individuals and organizations of meaningful involvement of women and girls; and

Knowledge Development – expansion, use and sharing of knowledge, practices and innovations concerning the sport experiences of women and girls through research and development.

Policy Directives:

1. Efforts will be made to provide equal opportunities and appropriate facilities for women, girls and transgender sportspersons such as sports equipment, coaching and counselling, medical and nutritional care, financial support, competition exposure and award and recognition across rural and urban areas.
2. Enforce substantive and equitable participation of men and women in non-traditional spheres, particularly in sports, by ensuring that the mechanisms aim to open up opportunities for women rather than exclude them.
3. Declaring an exclusive sports policy for women, girls and transgender sportspersons covering infrastructure, training, financial assistance and allied support.
4. Ensuring quality coaching and mentoring for women, girls and transgender sportspersons.
5. Enhancing access to existing institutional sports facilities for women, girls and transgender persons

The United Nations adopted the theme of “Sport for Development and Peace” in its Agenda in 2001, which demonstrated the close linkage between Sports development and Youth development, and Youth development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Following that taking the National Draft comprehensive Sports Policy 2007, the Gender policy of Manipur shall incorporate the following:

1. Equitable access to sport and physical education opportunities especially in rural areas and the poorer parts of urban areas to ensure the participation of girls and women in physical education and sports;
2. Government will make special efforts in promoting sports among women with disability by raising awareness, removing barriers to access, enhancing participation and developing specialized systems for identification and training of talent. To this end, the sports infrastructure at all levels shall be made disabled friendly in a phased manner.
3. Leadership and team-work: To highlight sports as a powerful tool for ice-breaking and engaging the whole of a community in a common activity; promoting personal development, leadership and team-work skills; fostering volunteering through coaching and sports administration; and developing community responsibility and involvement.

4. Ensuring fair and reasonable opportunities to all talented young sportswomen, irrespective of economic background, social origin, gender or regional location, to fully realize their potential, and win laurels for themselves and glory for the nation.

B. Women sex workers and their children: In order to achieve holistic development, it is important to focus on those groups and sections towards whom there is often absence of equality and respect in society. In that sense, women sex workers should also be looked at as a separate category. All the aspects related to their life and livelihood are full of risks; even their children are the victims of discriminatory behaviour at different levels. Accessing all the opportunities of health and education is a difficult task for them. Women sex workers, their children and those who come in their contact are at a higher risk of acquiring sexual diseases and HIV and recently Hepatitis. It is also important to take special care of such sections in terms of medical and health care. Thus, they are categorised as a special section. Improving access to health facilities and targeted interventions for Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs), Innovative and accessible systems using alternate pedagogies will be leveraged to bring sex workers and their children into the fold of formal education. Emphasis will be laid on skill development of marginalised women like sex workers and HIV/AIDS positive women among others.

Formally recognising occupational identities of women and transgender persons who are sex workers is the need of the hour for ensuring access to social safety nets.

INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

The Department of Social Welfare will play the role of the nodal Department in the implementation of Manipur State Gender Policy for Women duly titled Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE), 2023, and develop a coordinated and integrated action plan for the Policy. In addition to the nodal Department, the other Departments will also be equally and actively accountable. Generally, Departments related to social sector and health and nutrition are expected to play the lead role. However, as development is related to all the sectors, therefore, role of all the Departments is critical. They will be expected to consider Policy related points in the implementation and supervision of their schemes and programmes. In addition, the relevant role of Manipur State Women's Commission and Manipur State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Human Rights Commission, Minorities Commission, Scheduled Caste Commission and Scheduled Tribes Commission shall continue to exist.

New mechanisms will be developed while working with the related Departments and stakeholders along with the strengthening of the existing coordination and support mechanism to address the needs of women and ensure effective convergence and utilization of the existing resources. Budget provisions will be made as per need after consultations with Finance and Planning Departments. Gender Responsive Budgeting is an important tool for the monitoring of allocation of financial resources for the development of women and girls. The Standard Operating Procedures of gender-based budgeting should be set by the Finance Department, Government of Manipur, with the objective of having a gender-sensitive State budget. The Department of Social Welfare should be the nodal Department to compile all the data of gender-based budgeting and to ensure adherence to this process by all the Departments. The Department will coordinate with all the other Departments to ensure the process of gender responsive budgeting and it will also provide training to the Departments on this process from time to time.

- i. Existing institutional mechanisms in the state to promote the advancement of women will be strengthened through provision of adequate administrative, human and financial resources, SOPs, training and evidence based advocacy skills, apart from other support.
- ii. A State level High Power Committee (HPC) will be formed for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) to be chaired by the Chief Minister.

- a. The Minister of Social Welfare, along with other key Ministers and key representatives from the United Nations will be members of the HPC for GEWE. The secretariat for the HPC will be at the CMO.
- b. The HPC for GEWE will review the progress made in implementing the policy at least twice a year and issue necessary government orders.
- iii. A state level Special Task Force (STF) will be constituted under the HPC headed by the Minister of Social Welfare. The Chief Secretary along with District Commissioners, Principal Secretaries of allied departments and key representatives from civil society will be members of the STF. The secretariat for the STF will be located within the state department of Social Welfare, GoM.

- a. Representatives from the concerned/allied departments/ministries, State Commission for Women, Social Welfare Boards will be members of the STF.

Representatives of Non-Government Organizations, Women's Organisations, Corporate Sector, Trade Unions, financing institutions, academics/leading academic institutions, experts, acclaimed artistes, media professionals, social activists and grassroots leaders from women collectives, among others, will be invited as members of the STF.

- b. The STF will convene at least twice a year. Additional meetings can be called as required.
- c. Technical experts will be appointed to support the STF on a full time basis.
- d. The STF will be mandated to facilitate a state level convergent action plan for GEWE, support implementation at all levels – from state to Gram Panchayat level, engage in continuous monitoring, evaluation of the Action Plan, take remedial action where required and report into the HPC making recommendations for policy enhancement and accelerating the GEWE Action Plan implementation in the state.

A comprehensive, online monitoring, evaluation and learning system will be embedded within the STF secretariat/ WCD.

- iv. A district level implementation and steering committee will be formed to oversee and guide implementation of policy measures

- a. The committee will be chaired/headed by the Guardian Minister. Key officials at the district level including the District Collector, District Superintendent of Police, Chief Executive Officer – Zilla Parishad, HoDs, Line Departments, District Manager – MSRLM, and other officers will be members of the committee.
 - b. The district level committee will convene at least twice a year and could convene as many times as required.
- v. A State Gender Resource Centre (GRC) for GEWE will be established with mandates for collection and dissemination of information, undertaking research work, conducting surveys, implementing training and awareness generation programmes, etc. This GRC will actively partner with Women's Studies Centres and other research and academic institutions through a hub and spoke knowledge architecture.
- vi. While institutions at the district level will be strengthened, at the grass-roots, women's collectives and PRIs will be supported by their respective departments/ministries and the state resource centre where required through appropriate programmes, capacity building and handholding.
- vii. Women's groups and their federations at the Panchayat/Municipal levels will be partnered with to create a strong grassroots network for implementation, monitoring and advocacy of GEWE.
- viii. Convergent implementation of all social and economic development programmes will be facilitated to accelerate GEWE in the state. Additional resources will be mobilised through international organisations, CSR and other non-government channels, where required.