

For Comments Only

Draft Indian Standard

Guidelines for promotion and implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment

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NATIONAL FOREWORD

(Formal clauses to be added later on)

The text of the International Standard has been approved as suitable for publication as an Indian Standard without deviations. Certain conventions are, however, not identical to those used in Indian Standards. Attention is particularly drawn to the following:

- a) Wherever the words 'International Standard' appear referring to this standard, they should be read as 'Indian Standard'.

In this adopted standard, reference appears to an International Standard for which no Indian Standard exist. The technical committee have reviewed the provision of the following International standard referred in this standard and has decided that they are acceptable for use in conjunction with this standard:

<i>International Standard</i>	<i>Title</i>
ISO 53800	Guidelines for promotion and implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment

Annex A is informative only.

Note: The technical content of the document is not available on website. For details, please refer the corresponding ISO 53800: 2024 or kindly contact:

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Scope

This document gives guidance on how to promote and implement gender equality and women's empowerment. It provides guidelines for organizations to develop the capabilities to achieve a culture of gender equality and women's empowerment. The guidelines include the framework, resources, policies, tools and good practices for contextualizing, promoting and implementing gender equality.

This document focuses on the inequality resulting from the gender specific roles assigned to women, girls, men and boys and is applicable to all types of organizations (public or private), regardless of their size, location or field of activity.

This document does not address the specific aspects of relations with labour unions or work councils, nor the country-specific regulations and compliance relating to gender diversity.

Introduction

Despite real progress, gender inequalities and gender-based discrimination still remain widespread throughout the world in all areas.

Societal gender role expectations towards female and male behaviour are reflected in the very functioning of organizations, including their culture, processes, and hierarchies. The persistent gender inequalities within organizations mirror the structural discrimination faced by women and girls in society. For example, five out of ten women worldwide are integrated into the labour market, compared with nine out of ten men.[1] Still, once employed, women, worldwide, only make 77 cents for every dollar earned by men.[2] Women are still in the minority in governing bodies[3] and other positions of power. Concurrently, paid and unpaid labour is unequally distributed, with women and girls spending more time than men and boys on unpaid care and domestic work[4]. Finally, according to estimates by the World Health Organization, almost one in three women worldwide reports having been the victim of physical or sexual violence in her lifetime, not counting psychological, economic and social forms of violence.[5]

Every year, the World Economic Forum publishes the Global Gender Gap Report, an analysis that reveals the context of gender inequality in different regions of the world.[6]

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines, definitions, procedures and tools (including a framework, resources, policies, tools and good practices) to public and private organizations to encourage, support and guide them in making sustainable progress in promoting and achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, both internally and externally. It is intended to promote a common understanding on the issue of gender equality and to complement other instruments and initiatives on the subject. Additionally, this document has been developed in a manner consistent with other ISO initiatives and instruments such as ISO 30415. It aims to provide guidance to organizations in fulfilling their obligations in relation to gender equality and the UN's 2030 Agenda (in particular SDG5 on gender equality).[8] Beyond that, it addresses the underlying culture and behaviours, and proposes an approach, operational methods and tools for achieving an organization's stated objectives. Recognizing the differences in resources available, the intention of this document is to provide practical guidance for SMEs and small entities, as well as larger organizations, in line with their specific requirements.

While women are generally more disadvantaged in areas such as the labour market, unpaid care work and sexual and gender-based violence, gender-based discrimination can also affect men and boys in certain aspects of life, particularly when they do not conform to traditionally recognized perceptions of gender roles, which can have negative impacts on their lives and health, including their mental health. Therefore, in order to address gender inequality, it is important to identify how particular actions or omissions by the organization affect gender equality. It is only once this has been completed that the gender imbalance can be identified and the appropriate actions to remedy the imbalance be determined. This is an underlying principle of this document.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are not only women's issues but need to be addressed by everyone and every organization. It is seen both as a human rights issue, as well as a prerequisite and indicator of sustainable people-centred development. As such, addressing gender equality is a core pillar of any organization's social responsibility, including its environmental, social and governance (ESG) agenda. All organizations are in a position to take measures to promote gender equality, taking into account the maturity, nature, size and objectives of the organization.

The existence of a positive relationship between gender equality and economic and social development has already been demonstrated. It can be perceived as a lever and a source of better outcomes for the organization, and possibly be integrated in the organization's social responsibility policy (if it exists) or any other relevant policies.

Numerous studies[9]-[11] suggest that promoting gender equality has benefits for organizations: reduced employee turnover, quality recruitment, a stronger, more productive and innovative working environment, effective collaboration, leading to better performance and achieving more accurate results. Equitable leadership improves decision-making, and for-profit organizations can boost their profitability (e.g. by broadening their customer base, as well as by identifying new markets and reducing retention costs).

In this document, the objectives of gender equality are based on the understanding that gender is a social construct. The inequalities targeted are not based on biological criteria, but arise from social norms and constructs assimilated or projected onto every individual through socialization processes. However, the document also acknowledges and addresses those inequalities that are experienced as a result of biological criteria, such as sexual and reproductive health.

While recognizing the existence of other gender identities, this document specifically focuses on the inequality resulting from the hierarchical organization of the gender-specific roles assigned to women and men, girls and boys, due to their prominently structural character on a society-wide scale.