

Anonymous Safe Disclosure Report

Subject: Concerns Regarding Recruitment, Promotions, and Leadership Conduct within Outreach Division

To Whom It May Concern.

I am submitting this report in line with the Aga Khan Development Network's (AKDN) longstanding values of integrity, fairness, accountability, and its commitment to being an ethical and equitable employer. The AKDN has always upheld principles of meritocracy, due process, and respect for the dignity of its staff. It is with deep concern, therefore, that I bring to your attention serious issues within the Outreach Division that appear to contradict these values.

1. Rapid and Unusual Career Advancement

Dr. Jyoti Bhayani's progression within the Outreach Division has been unusually rapid and raises critical questions:

Initially employed as a Pharmacy Officer, she was soon elevated to Allied Health Manager (covering pharmacy, lab, dental, radiology, and later optical).

Shortly thereafter, she was promoted to Senior Manager, Clinical Operations.

Within months, she was appointed Head of Outreach. The last three promotions are within a year or so! I have worked in this institution for very long and even staff who belong to the Ismaili Jamat community don't fly so high so fast!!

Each of these positions, once vacated, has remained unfilled—suggesting they may have been created as stepping stones for personal career advancement rather than strategically essential roles. This practice undermines the principles of organizational planning and raises concerns about whether resources are being misused. These positions were never even advertised transparently and competed for prior to her occupying them! We are just notified of her success ad hoc.

2. Creation and Allocation of Strategic Roles

The Head of Outreach position itself appears to have been created specifically for her, replacing the conventional Chief Operating Officer (COO) role historically held by professionals with strong financial acumen. Not only was this post neither transparently advertised nor openly competed for, but the individual appointed has had to rely heavily on finance colleagues for basic oversight. This does not align with AKDN's commitment to appointing experienced individuals based on merit and institutional needs. COO position advertised for Pakistan's Outreach last year also required 15 years of senior management experience. Is Kenya subpar?

3. Leadership Conduct and Workplace Culture

Serious concerns exist about Dr. Bhayani's leadership style:

She has consistently exhibited oppressive and authoritarian behavior towards managers and staff.

Decision-making authority has become centralized, with even routine managerial decisions requiring her approval. This has slowed operations, disempowered managers, and created an unhealthy culture of fear.

Staff have been humiliated, reprimanded harshly, and discouraged from contributing constructively. Many now perform only the bare minimum to avoid confrontation. I remember days when our former COO of Outreach was around and he would walk past and tell Dr. Jyoti to stop bashing employees verbally. Yet she was the choice to succeed him? Leadership is more than just certificates.. It is how you treat people as well.

Former employees, if consulted confidentially, may corroborate these accounts.

Unfortunately, current employees still need a job and therefore we will not speak up.

The environment has become so toxic that employees—including myself—are experiencing physical and psychological distress. It is not unusual to approach the workplace with dread, tears, and feelings of worthlessness. This is incompatible with AKDN's values of compassion, respect, and human dignity. I sometimes cry in my car before climbing up to the office! There are days I would rather fate have me encounter a car accident on the way to the office instead of having to work in this toxic environment. My spouse and children can see how I am suffering but there is nothing they can do.

4. Request for Independent Audit and Urgent Action

I respectfully urge the AKDN senior leadership and governance structures, including Jamat community, to:

Conduct a thorough and independent audit/review of the recruitment and promotion processes that led to these appointments.

Assess the conduct, management style, and impact of the current Head of Outreach on staff welfare, retention, and institutional performance.

Reaffirm AKDN's reputation as an institution that values fairness, transparency, and ethical leadership.

This issue is of utmost urgency. Failure to address it risks damaging the credibility of the Outreach Division, a program of critical importance to His Highness the Aga Khan and the global Ismaili Jamat community. I suggest the institution not cover this issue by retrospectively creating adverts for these positions. Let the inquiry process be fair! AKDN has never been a body that upholds this kind of favoritism!

5. Closing Appeal

I submit this disclosure anonymously out of genuine fear of retaliation, but also with hope. The AKDN has always stood for higher principles—justice, compassion, respect, and excellence. I trust that the senior leadership will take this matter seriously, uphold the values of the Network, and restore integrity and fairness to the management of the Outreach

Division. I am not of the Jamati Ismaili community but I know how dear they hold the institution. Let us do justice to this legacy.

Respectfully submitted,

A Broken Outreach Admin Staff