

Chapter 1

Sustainable Development- in Gender Equality

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Introduction

Gender inequality exists in Indian economy and prevails in all walks of life like education, economics and politics. Men always had an upper hand in these fields, and easy to trace out that how deeply patriarchy is entrenched in India. In spite of we have seen gender equality soars to great heights in post-independent era, lots of steps have been taken in numerous sectors of life to bridge the gap between men and women and to bring them up to the same level.

Gender inequalities persist all over the world today. However, the nature and the size of inequalities between men and women are not universal. Women facing gender inequalities in various fields also differ between countries. In India and China gender Inequalities are most obvious in skewed sex ratios resulting by form of son preference. Gender gap or the gender inequality continues to be a huge issue of concern In India, in spite of achieving higher rates of economic growth in recent times. The orthodox patriarchal customs and the norms have relegated women to a secondary status within the workplace and household. The position of India's low ranking on the world economic Forum's gender gap index (GDI), 2014, due to gender inequalities, which scores below average on parameters based on economic participation, educational attainment and health and survival.

Even though there is active participation of women in economic activities, and labor force in contemporary times, for instance in agricultural sector, 74% of labor force consists of women, yet the wage gap between men and women across the Indian economy in spite of active participation of reformists and feminists who is been fighting for equal pay. There is also discrimination of women in terms of credit lending and property ownership. This situation can be drawn back to patriarchal system prevalent in Indian economy. IT is

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believed that men are the ones who carry the generation forward earn bread and butter to family, and the role of women is portrayed as they just sustain upon the money earned by men, these are the reasons why women have always been disbanded from their share in the properties

"Lack of gender equality not only limits women's access to resources and opportunities, but also imperils the life prospects of the future generation"

The inequality between men and women is just not intrinsically but also instrumentally important. Over past decades policy makers and scholars have begun to view gender equality as smart economics. This plays a key role in a wide range of development outcomes. By improving women's access to resources and legal standing improves children's education reduces corruption in government and increases in economic growth

"I do not wish them (women) to have power over men; but over themselves."

- Mary Wollstonecraft *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792)

In 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft set out her emancipation of women, education of girls same as footing as boys an end to prejudice against women and women should be evaluated on their own one of the sustainable development goals, set out in United Nations 2030 agenda, seeks to achieve gender equality and to empower all girls and women.

The reason why it's important is, Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful and sustainable world the exclusion of women from opportunities places half of world's population outside realm of prosperous society and economies. By investing empowerment of women, we not only make progress of goal 5 of sustainable development goals, we could be able to make gains on alleviation of poverty and fuel sustainable economic growth.

Hassles

Gender discrimination is one of the prevailing forms of injustice in the record of our world history where many mass movements had taken place in our pre-historical era. Women and girl children are the foremost affected people in gender inequality where many outbreaks are done through violence. Discrimination is done in every sector of employment and education. A pathetic situation is that among 155 countries there exists only one law which impedes better economic opportunities. Around the globe only 23.7% of political seats in national parliament have been allocated and given. Still one among three women are been exploited either physically or mentally in their lifespan.

Eureka

Two decades ago, the adoption made by 189 governments of the BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION marked a turning point in the history of women's rights. The progressive blueprint remains a powerful source of inspiration to realize equal opportunities for women and girls.

Much progress has been made in the intervening decades still more remains to be done for ensuring women and children for guaranteed healthy lives, education, and full social inclusion. Around 42 countries, women hold more than 30% seats in national legislature; still girls have no equal educational opportunities as boys in Sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania, and western Asia.

. This is a year of global action where governments will adopt a new set of Sustainable Development Goals, which layout to provide financial stability and a process of being independent women. We share a common ideology which can protect and ensure the development of a world where all people – regardless of their gender, race, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation – have an equal opportunity to achieve their aspirations.

Critics that continue to engage men are actively vibrant in the fight against gender-based discrimination and violence. Indeed, we should make an opportunity to secure a better future to rise new generation of girls and boys who respect one another and work together to protect the rights of all people. The implications of not providing girls with equal voices, choices, and opportunities affect not just their lives, but the future of the planet. Efforts to promote inclusive sustainable development in inequality are inextricably linked.⁵

Importance of Equality

Gender equality is intrinsically linked to sustainable development because it's vital to realize the human rights. The overall objective of gender equality is that a society in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all spheres of life. Equality between men and women exists when both sexes are able to share equally in

- The distribution of influence of power
- Have equal opportunities for financial independence
- Setting up own business
- Enjoy equal access to education

⁵<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/03/why-gender-equality-is-integral-to-sustainable-development/>

- The opportunity to develop personal ambitions, interests and talents
- Share responsibility at home and
- Completely free from coercion, intimidation and gender-based violence both at work and at home.

Decision-making with regard to issues such as marriage, timing of birth, use of contraception, and recourse to harmful practices (female genital mutilation) stands to be improved with the achievement of gender equality. It is important to acknowledge that wherever gender inequality exists, it is generally women who are excluded in relation to decision-making and access to economic and social resources. Therefore, a critical aspect of promoting gender equality is the empowerment of women, with a focus on identifying and redressing power imbalances and giving women more autonomy to manage their own lives.

Gender equality and women's empowerment do not mean that men and women become the same only that access to opportunities and life changes is neither dependent on, nor constrained by, their sex. It is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful and sustainable world. Equal access to education, decent work and representation in political and economic decision-making processes are not only rights women should have, they benefit humanity at large.

Addressing of Inequality

Goal 5 aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women in the public and private spheres and to undertake reforms to give women equal rights to access ownership of property and economic resources in the up liftmen of women to form a better society.⁶

Targets

- Elimination of discrimination against all women and girls in every aspect of life.
- Eradication of violence against women in public and private spheres which includes trafficking, sexual exploitation etc.
- Exclude all harmful practices such as child marriage, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

⁶<https://www.sdgfund.org/goal-5-gender-equality>

- To find and value unpaid and domestic work through public services, infrastructure and social protection policies for the promotion of shared responsibility within the household.
- To make effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.
- To educate universal access to sexual reproductive health and reproductive rights.
- To initiate certain measures to give equal rights to economic resources, ownership and control over land property, financial services, inheritance in accordance with national laws.
- Enhancing the use of technology, in particular information and communications, to promote the empowerment of women.
- Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.⁷

“It is time that we all see gender as a spectrum instead of two sets of opposing ideals”

Goal 5 and India

India has reached partially gender equality at the primary education level and on its path track to achieve parity at all education levels, as of June 2019, the proportion of seats in the Lok Sabha held by women has reached 11% but 46% in the Panchayat Raj Institutions. India is also confronting the challenge of violence against women. Most of total crimes reported against women in India were cruelty or physical violence by her husband or his relative. They had identified ending violence against women as a key national priority, which resonates with the Sustainable Development targets of the United Nations on gender equality.

The prime minister’s plans subsequently, specific interventions on female employment, programs on the empowerment of adolescent girls such as

⁷<https://in.one.un.org/page/sustainable-development-goals/sdg-5/>

1. “Beti Bachao Beti Padhao”

This initiative aims at prevention of gender biased sex selective elimination

Ensure survival and protection of girl child

Promote educational and participation of girl child in all sectors

2. “Sukanya Samridhi Yojana “

Ensure the financial independence of women by promoting them to invest in saving schemes that ensures that they achieve their life-long desires like education, employment and marriage to be fulfilled and to attain financial stability in life.

3. “Janani Suraksha Yojana “

This initiative is taken for a safe motherhood under the National Rural Health Mission. They mainly reduce maternal and infant mortality by ensuring institutional delivery among pregnant women.

Gender Gap Report

On December 2018, the world economic forum released the global gender gap report, on the basis of their progress towards gender parity reviewing 149 countries, in its global gender gap index.

All these countries are ranked on the basis of four thematic dimensions - that is economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment.

This year Iceland tops GGI with a score of 0.858, it holds the top spot for past 10 consecutive years.

Highlights of Global Gender Gap Report

As per the report, 68% of gender gap is closed in the world, and it states that it would take 108 more years to close the overall gender gap and 202 years to bring parity in the workplace.

Iceland having closed more than 85.8% of its overall gender gap, it tops the gender gap index 2018.

Gender Gap Index in India

India has got 108th position in the report released by world economic forum. India even got the same position in 2017 as well.

India has improved the wage quality for similar work sub index of the gender gap index 2018

Tertiary education gender gap has been able to close for fully the first time.

In economic participation sub index, out of 149 countries. India has been ranked 142.

In India, it needs more women into senior and professional roles to make more improvement in ranking as per the WEF report

India has widened the gap in health and survival sub index. it continues to rank third lowest in this sub index

India has closed 66% of gender gap and slightly ahead of south Asian region⁸

Measures to Achieve Gender Equality

Discrimination against women and girls is long running and pervasive phenomenon which characterizes Indian society at each and every level. In the past decade, there has been a large decline in female labor force participation from 34% to 27%, while the Indian GDP has grown around 6%. The male female wage gap has been stagnated at 50%. The ranking of India towards gender equality such as gender development index is not that much satisfactory, in spite of fairly raising rates of economic growth.

Steps to Achieve Gender Equality

1. Talk to Women and Girls

The basic reason why we have not achieved gender equality in every realm is that women's and girls' voices are often excluded from global and national decision making. When policies and programs are designed without women's needs central to their foundation, we're setting ourselves up to fail. So, taken women into account while deciding something is vital.

⁸ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/faq-page/gender-inequality-index-gii>

2. Let Girls Use Mobile Phones

Majority of girls in India don't have access to using basic technology such as computers and phones because of infrastructure related challenges and economic reasons. Increasingly we see bans on girls using mobile phones.

3. Stop Child Marriage and Sexual Harassment

If we want girls to be able to complete education, we have to end child marriage. We also have to seriously address sexual harassment of girls. It is one of the insecurities parents give for marrying their daughters.

4. Make Education Gender Sensitive

Even though there has been much progress in increasing access to education, but the progress is slow in improvising the gender sensitivity of education system.

5. Raise Aspirations of Girl's and Their Parents

It is one of the key strategies to change how girl's, families and society imagine what can be and can do. Girls must be given images and role models that expand their dreams

6. Empower Mothers

When mothers are educated and empowered to make choices in their lives, they enable their daughters to go to school and make their dreams come true.

7. Give Proper Value to Women's Work

The unpaid work women and girls do provide the foundation for global economy. We need to concentrate campaign for equal pay for equal work worldwide.

8. Get Women into Power

A global goal of equal representation of women is still a long way off, with only one woman for every four men in the parliamentary houses. A women's voice and her ability to become a leader in her community is fundamental to empowering women.

9. Encouraging Women into Non-Traditional Vocations

Supporting women in nontraditional jobs is crucial in not only making long lasting change in their lives but also help break social taboos...

10. Stop the Violence

Gender inequality allows violence against women to continue unabated. The UN has found that globally, one in three women will experience violence in their lifetime, with most violence against women perpetrated by current former intimate partner.

Areas of gender inequality

“Sustainable development always encourages, how to improve economy and society without compromising the natural environment for the well-being of future generations.”

The development effort for being sustainable and effective is to consider the needs of all people, including those who don't typically won't use it but still have a voice in decision making because of which the gender equality is a critical ingredient in achieving sustainable development. We always promote gender lens in work either explore how to replace unsustainable practices or helping governments develop policies to address inequality which may eradicate poverty and hunger.

IISD works on a number of initiatives to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are at the center of sustainable development policies and legislation.

- Voluntary sustainability standard
- Contract farming
- Audits

United Nation Agenda

The main Sustainable Development Goals, outburst in United Nations' 2030 Agenda, seeks to promote “gender equality and empower all women and girls”. According to UN report, 19% of women between 15 and 49 years-old say they had suffered physical or sexual violence by their partner. It not only arises through integrity but also concerns other aspects. Women still don't enjoy the same conditions in the workplace as men and worldwide earn an average 24% less. To address these questions such as forced marriages between adults and girls and adolescents who are still minors, genital mutilation, political under-representation, and guaranteed access to sexual education, UN decided to hold International Women's Day on 8 March every year since 1911.

The theme evolves around “Time is now rural and urban activists transforming women's lives”. The report, 'Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', published recently by UN Women, focuses on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from a gender perspective, in which women

assume a special role. If measures are not taken, it will take another 68 years for salary equality to be reached worldwide.⁹

- The global employability rate of men is 94%
- Employability rate for women it is 63%
- Women make up 23,7% of the members of national parliaments
- Women dedicate 2 to 6 times more hours than men to unpaid activities such as domestic work and caring for other people
- Just 13% of agricultural land in the world is managed by women.

Conclusion

Gender equality is not just the concern of half of the world's population it is a human right, because no society can develop economically, politically or socially when half of its population is marginalized. In homes around the world, women are at the heart of the household's nexus of water, food, and energy and thus often know firsthand about the challenges and potential solutions in these areas. In our conversations with women around the world, we hear about their struggles, but also their ideas, many of which if applied, could facilitate change. Women are the most convincing advocates for the solutions that they need, so they should be at the forefront of decision-making on sustainable development.

“When God Created Humans He Was Thinking, 'Who Shall I Give the Power To, To Give Birth to The Next Human Being?' And God Chose Woman. And This Is the Big Evidence That Women Are Powerful”

⁹<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>