

## GENDER EQUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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*Women have a vital role to play in the overall development of the nation. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development” (Principle 20, Rio Declaration). There is a dual rationale for promoting gender equality. Firstly, that equality between women and men - equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities is a matter of human rights and social justice. And secondly, that greater equality between women and men is also a precondition for (and effective indicator of) sustainable people-centered development. The perceptions, interests, needs and priorities of both women and men must be taken into consideration not only as a matter of social justice but because they are necessary to enrich development processes” (OSAGI 2001). The research paper highlights on how sustainable development is possible if we achieve Gender Equality. This paper elaborate the role of government in achieving Gender Equality and Sustainable Development as put up by United Nations in Sustainable Development Goals - 5.*

**INTRODUCTION**

While the world is moving towards achieving and creating awareness about equality but still women and girls continue to suffer discrimination and violence in every part of the world. Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right but it's a way towards providing peaceful and sustainable world. Once the gender equality and equity is promoted in ones surrounding, one could instantly feel the changes not in the work environment, etc but also could see the changes in the mindset of the people, leading towards accepting the value of equality in true sense and thus honouring our Indian Constitution whose root stands on the value of EQUALITY w.r.t race, gender, education etc. In order to make it effective the UN has moved a step ahead in order to achieve it globally by incorporating it in SDG-5.

**NEED TO THE STUDY (objective)**

1. To address the intersection between gender equality and sustainable development, this paper analyses five sustainable development goals through a policy coherence and inclusiveness framework. The gender-sustainability nexus can be understood by gathering more evidence on the extent to which slow progress on sustainable development affects the condition of women and hampers gender equality (women as users) and also by recognising systematically women's positive impacts on sustainable development (women as contributors).
2. Bringing together gender and sustainability goals requires a holistic and coherent analysis and policy approach, taking into account trade-offs and complementarities, from an individual to a global level, including transboundary and intergenerational implications.
3. To address the gender-sustainability nexus, policy-makers should act at three levels simultaneously:
  - (i) **individual** - by taking into account differences in the needs and behaviors of women, and advancing women's well-being objectives with sustainability goals in mind;
  - (ii) **societal** – ensuring gender equality in public life, including labor markets, legislation, and all sectorial policies;
  - (iii) **global** - adding a gender and sustainability perspectives in all transboundary policies such as trade, investment, migration, development cooperation, and environment, including the private sector.

**GENDER EQUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – BY MARY ROBINSON**

According to the **Mary Robinson** - “Gender Equality can be achieved is not just the concern of half of the worlds population it is a human right, a concern for all, because no society can develop-economically, politically, or

socially-when half of its population is marginalised. We must leave no one behind”.

Through her opinion it can be said that GENDER EQUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT can be achieved when the whole of the population is raised above the poverty line leading to a healthy and sustainable development and this could be done when we teach and groom our future citizens of our country i.e,students to learn the value of and to respect the term EQUALITY. If the students are made aware of the rights that girls have this could even lead to a promotion of awareness among the parents as well if they are illiterate or if they are educated then this will lead to a new learning or additional information to them. This could also lead to the empowerment of the girls from the class itself leading to the awareness of their rights that they possess.

### **GENDER EQUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – the role of the government**

While talking about the role of the government, the GOI has come with end number of policies in order to achieve the target by 2030 i.e, SDG 5. These include Swachh Bharat mission, Beti Bacho Beti Padhao, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Smart Cities, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gram Jyoti Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, among others.

From the study of the government roles in achieving equality the following objectives can be seen –

- End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
- Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.
- Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
- Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.
- Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.
- Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.
- Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.
- Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, 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.

### **ALTHOUGH MANY GOVERNMENTS AND ORGANISATIONS CLAIM TO BE TACKLING THE GENDER EQUALITY ISSUE, APPROXIMATELY 1.4 BILLION WOMEN AND GIRLS ARE STILL VICTIMS OF DISCRIMINATION, VIOLENCE, AND SEXISM - BY NATASHA MUDHAR**

**Natasha Mudhar** took a survey regarding how much the government has taken a step in order to achieve its goals. The areas which were focused on were – Gender Equality, Hunger and Malnutrition, Women’s Health. According to the survey, India is still far behind towards achieving its goals. In order to do it, India need to not only make policies but need to make a policies which is effective and which could reach to the marginalised section of the people as well.

## CONCLUSION

From the above research it is clear that if there is no Gender Equality then it is difficult to achieve Sustainable Development till 2030. Effective policies need to be undertaken by the government so that atleast there would be an reduction in the percentage of inequality faced by Women in our country. If sustainable development is achieved then India would no wonder become one of the largest socio-economically sound country.

**Please note:** This paper has benefitted from an earlier draft, prepared for a National Seminar on ‘Indian Perspectives on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Gender equality. The views expressed in this paper are personal. The writer acknowledges references to/use of materials from online sources, such as global/regional women’s networks, UN bodies and UN Women, and other researchers.