

AU - WOMEN'S STUDIES ANNUAL BULLETIN - 2022



THEME – GENDER EQUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



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Editorial desk

Ending all discrimination against women and girls is not only a basic human right, it's crucial for sustainable future. It's proven that empowering women and girls, helps for economic growth and development. We have seen remarkable progress in the past 20 years. There are more girls in schools now compared to 15 years ago, and most regions have reached gender parity in primary education. But although there are more women than ever in the labour market, there are still large inequalities in some regions, with women systematically denied the same work rights as men. Sexual violence and exploitation, the unequal division of labour, unpaid care and domestic work, and discrimination in public office all remain huge barriers. Climate change and disasters continue to have a disproportionate effect on women and children, as do conflict and migration. It is vital to give women equal rights over land and property, sexual and reproductive health, and to technology and the internet. Today there are more women in public office than ever before, but encouraging more women leaders will help achieve greater gender equality and sustainable future. This bulletin puts forward the initiatives initiated by the UN agencies and Indian Government, in addressing the dimensions of gender equality and of sustainability. It

also focuses on that how the progress in gender equality helps to achieve in the 17 sustainable goals.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable Development was a gender –neutral concept from its very inception. The Brundtland Report 1987 stated that sustainable development was development that met the needs of the current generation while not jeopardizing the needs of future generations established the standard definition of the term.

In 1987, the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development defines: sustainable development should “meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”, which involves integrating the three pillars of sustainability: economic, social and environmental.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as an universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS) VS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

Let’s have a quick look on why we need SDGs

- MDGs were too narrow.
- MDGs failed to consider the root causes of poverty.
- The millennium development goals have not focused on human rights.
- In reality MDGs were considered targets for poor countries to achieve from the finance of wealthy countries.
- In SDGs, Every country will be expected to work towards achieving the SDGs.
- Goal 16 has a target to promote the rule of law and equal access to justice.
- MDGs were drawn up by a group of men in the basement of UN headquarters.
- Establishing post-2015 goals was an outcome of the Rio+20 summit in 2012, which mandated the creation of an open working group to come up with a draft agenda. Alongside the open working group discussions, the UN conducted a series of “global conversations”.

GENDER EQUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Can there be sustainable development without gender equality? No.... Too often sustainable development is still seen primarily as environmental sustainability. This narrow approach overlooks some complex social, economic and ecological dimensions without adequately acknowledging gender concerns. The post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals included a gender perspective in the conceptualisation of the term sustainable development. All the 17 goals are interlinked with gender equality.




Moreover for any development effort to be sustainable and effective, it must consider the needs of all people, including those who don't typically have a voice in decision making. That's why gender equality is a critical ingredient in achieving sustainable development. Gender equality is not just the concern of half of the world's population; it is a human right, a concern for us all, because no society can develop – economically, politically, or socially – when half of its population is marginalized. We must leave no one behind.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



THE LINKAGE BETWEEN GENDER EQUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Gender equality is intrinsically linked to all sustainable development goals

SDGs	The Progress on Gender Equality Support to Deliver the Transformative Vision of the 2030 Agenda
 <p>1 NO POVERTY</p>	Research shows that more cash in the hands of women contributes not only to eliminating poverty but also to better education, nutrition and health outcomes for children and other members of the household.
 <p>2 ZERO HUNGER</p>	Women play a critical role in food production, processing and distribution and are therefore essential to meeting the agricultural productivity and nutrition targets of Goal 2.
 <p>3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p>	Gender equality in health is one of the most direct and potent ways to reduce health inequities overall and to achieve Goal 3.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION 	Achieving equality in education will boost women's employment and empowerment, add to economic growth and contribute positively to child well-being and development.
5 GENDER EQUALITY 	Gender equality is central to the SDGs, and if it is not achieved, the implementation of all the goals will be compromised.
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION 	Women and girls play a central role in the provision, management and safeguarding of household water and sanitation. Addressing the water and sanitation needs of women benefits the health and well-being of entire communities.
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY 	As primary energy managers in households, women can play a powerful role in the successful transition to sustainable energy for all.
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 	Women's access to decent work is an essential measure of inclusive and sustainable growth.
9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 	Increasing women's participation in technology, science and innovation is critical for meeting the global challenges ahead.
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES 	Gender equality is crucially linked with overall equality in society.
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	Women have equal rights to the city, and their safety in public spaces is crucial for sustainable urbanization.
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 	Unsustainable production and consumption patterns are gendered, with women suffering disproportionately from resource scarcity and natural disasters resulting from climate change
13 CLIMATE ACTION 	Gender equality is critical to mitigate climate impacts: Women's inclusion in climate discussions leads to improved outcomes of climate-related projects and policies
14 LIFE BELOW WATER 	Empowering women in local fisheries decision-making leads to better resource governance and conservation.
15 LIFE ON LAND 	Women's specific knowledge of and dependence on forests makes them key Contributions to forest conservation and regeneration.
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 	Women play a vital role in preventing conflict and forging and maintaining peace. By fully protecting women's rights, peaceful and inclusive societies will be within reach.
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS 	Mobilizing sufficient resources will be critical for meeting the gender equality commitments of the 2030 Agenda.

THE INITIATIVES INITIATED BY THE UNDP ON GENDER EQUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In Europe and Central Asia, inequalities persist between women and men in access to decent work and income. Women perform more than twice as much unpaid care and domestic work as men, reducing their ability to work for income. On average, the gender gap in labour force participation

around 20 percent in the region. Women face multiple challenges as they try to advance their careers, while women earn on average 30 percent less than men.

In addition, women entrepreneurs encounter more difficulties than men in accessing the finance, credit, skills, technology and networks they need to be successful in employment. To tackle this, the joint UNDP and UNICEF digital platform STEM4ALL has been created to accelerate the representation and leadership of women and girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and increase job security, financial stability and inclusive innovation.

UNDP works to promote gender equality in sustainable development and economic growth by:

- Implementing programmes aimed at creating jobs for women and men; and supporting their transition to digital-enabled and related jobs;
- Advocating for national legal frameworks and development strategies for women's economic empowerment;
- Supporting governments and partners in the public and private sectors to recognize, redistribute and reduce women's unpaid care and domestic work;
- Providing women-led enterprises with grants, business development and mentoring support;
- Supporting research on public policy initiatives to promote gender equality in decent work;
- Proposing measures and policies that promote gender equality in the green economy.
- Creating a multi-sectoral, global community of practice called the STEM insists Network where members can share insights, create spaces for dialogues, learn from one another and find partners for collaboration;
- Providing resources for statistical data, policy briefs, guides and inspirational journeys of women who are breaking down gender barriers in STEM

THE CHALLENGES IN ACHIEVING IN THE SDGs



Instability

Another issue is the ability of a nation to implement sustainable development programmes in their country. It is common for developed nations to suggest to developing nations that the process they use in their own countries should be future proofed and sustainable, but this raises the question whether this is firstly possible and secondarily pragmatic. This is why developing countries need subsidies and support from the developed world to help them reduce their liabilities towards non-sustainable enterprises

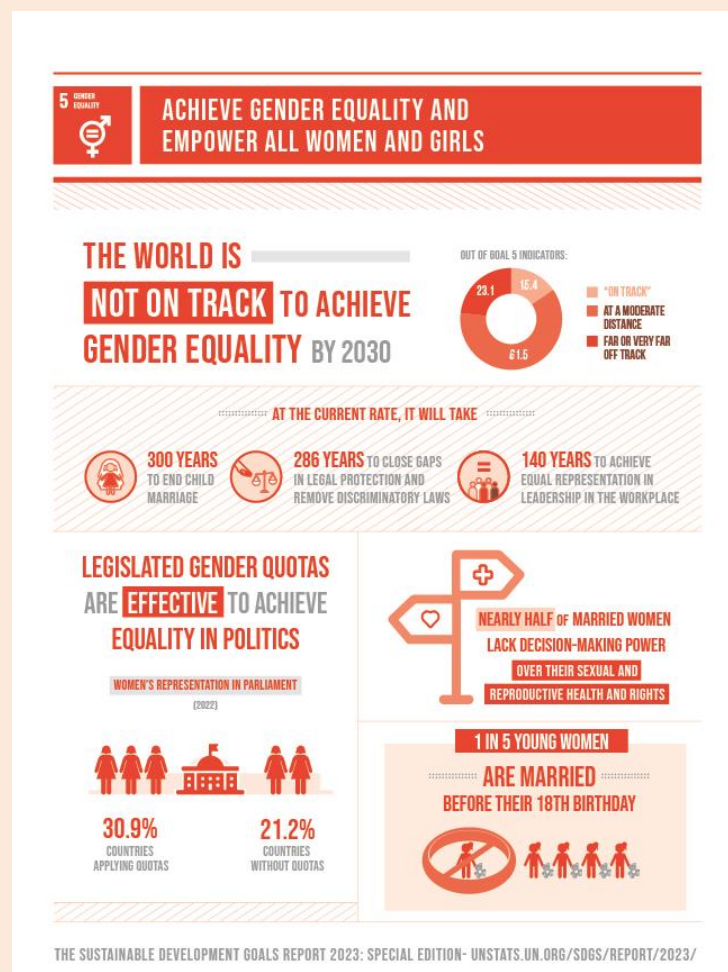
Implementation

Other issues relate to what initiatives Governments may want to sign-up to, and how keen they are on sustainable development. Most governments sign up to issues surrounding global warming and other climate issues, but not always. In some cases, there is a political initiative to reject environmental issues and sustainable development goals to instead address the immediate needs of their country or populous. For example – promoting and supporting legacy fossil fuel industries because they play a big part in supporting deprived local communities and areas. Closing certain industries without replacing them can lead to certain communities suffering job losses and poverty. In these locations many governments are resistant to change related to sustainable development programmes.

Governance

Sustainable development needs to take place within the right political climate for it to be successful and often sustainable development only works if it offers positive results for the government in question.

REALITIES – LOOKING BACK AND MOVING FORWARD



Source: UN Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2023

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN INDIA

- India is critical in determining the success of the SDGs, globally. NITI Aayog, the Government of India's premier think tank, has been entrusted with the task of coordinating the SDGs, mapping schemes related to the SDGs and their targets, and identifying lead and supporting ministries for each target. In addition, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has been leading discussions for developing national indicators for the SDGs. State governments are key to India's progress on the SDGs as they are best placed to 'put people first' and ensuring that 'no one is left behind'. The UN Country Team in India supports NITI Aayog, Union ministries and state governments in their efforts to address the interconnectedness of the goals, to ensure that no one is left behind and to advocate for adequate financing to achieve the SDGs.
- You can access the Government of India initiatives in achieving the SDGs [Mapping -SDGs V12 - 8 delinked schemes 110116_1_0.pdf \(niti.gov.in\)](#)

Through this bulletin, I would like to indicate that the gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is not only an explicit goal under the 2030 Agenda but also a driver of sustainable development in all its dimensions, from ending poverty and hunger, promoting prosperity and inclusive growth and building peaceful, just and inclusive societies to securing the protection of the planet and its natural resources. The systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is therefore crucial. It's also why all the organizations/institutions should use a gender lens in their work, whether it explores to replace unsustainable practices, helps governments to develop policies to address inequality and to tackle climate change and end poverty and hunger. Such type of work assists the communities to build resilience to climate-related events too.

Let us work together with gender perspective to enhance the gender equality which assist to achieve the 17 SDGs