

Gender Equality for Sustainable Development in India- An Analytical Study

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Abstract: Sustainable Development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs. In this paper, we will examine one of the goals of sustainable development set out in United States 2030 Agenda. Gender Equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. The objectives of the paper is to study the importance of gender equality for sustainable development, the role of women at present, role of education for empowering women. Since Indian society is patriarchal in nature so in almost every sector women are tried to discriminate and dominated by the male counterparts. Therefore, it is very important to know about gender issues and how those issues can be solved. Education is one of the key element to empower women and girls and to bring parity in the society. For achieving sustainability of the nation the government must take initiatives in policy formulation, interaction and awareness programme should be organized, health care services etc. should be provided for the benefits of the society and humanity at large.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Gender Equality, Women Empowerment

Date of Submission: 18-11-2018

Date of acceptance: xx-xx-xxxx

I. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable Development is the organizing principle for meeting the human development goals while at the same time sustaining the ability of natural systems to provide the natural resources and ecosystem services upon which the economy and society depends. Sustainable Development can also be defined as- Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is about equipping individuals, communities, groups, business and government to live and act sustainably as well as giving them an understanding of the environment, social and economic success. It is about preparing for the world in which we will live in the next century and making sure that we are not found wanting. The following diagram shows the different dimensions of Sustainable Development-

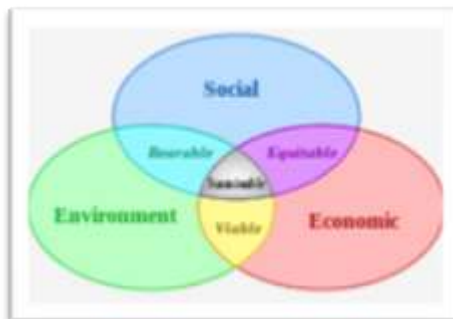


Fig. Venn diagram representing the three dimensions of sustainable development

From the above diagram we understand the three aspects which sustainable development depends on. They are Social Development, Economic Development and Environmental Development.

Social Development-

Social Development involves learning the values, knowledge and skills that enable children to relate other effectively and to contribute in positive ways to family, school and the community. As children develop socially, their relationship with others grow and create awareness of social values and expectations and they build a sense of who they are and play an active role in the society.

Economic Development-

Economic Development is the process by which a nation improves the economic status of the people from low income to high income economy. It aims at economic and social well being of the people by raising their standard of living.

Environmental Development-

Environment is the sum total of all the living and non- living things that surround us. Environmental Development aims at preserving and conserving and equitable use of the natural resources of the environment without compromising the needs of the present and future generation.

Thus, sustainable development consists of all these three spheres of sustainability.

Sustainable Development comprises of 17 goals which are known as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG was set out in United Nation 2030 Agenda. These are as follows:-

Goal 1: No Poverty

Goal 2: Zero Hunger

Goal 3: Good Health and Well Being for People

Goal 4: Quality Education

Goal 5: Gender Equality

Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Goal 10: Reducing Inequalities

Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

Goal 13: Climate Action

Goal 14: Life Below Water

Goal 15: Life on Land

Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals

In this paper we will study about Goal 5(Gender Equality). Gender equality states equal opportunity for all regardless of sex. Gender equality means fairness of treatment for all people, according to their respective needs. It also indicates that people are free to make their choices without the limitations set by stereotypes and that their various contributions and needs are valued equally. Although gender includes male, female and transgender(LGBT) but here we will focus mainly on female and how education plays an important role in empowering them for sustainable development.

II. OBJECTIVES

The prime objectives of the study are as follows-

- a) To study the importance of Gender Equality for sustainable development.
- b) To examine the role of women in present scenario in India.
- c) To understand the role of education for empowering women and girls in India.

III. SIGNIFICANCE

Gender inequality is one of the important issues in present society which can be seen in different sectors of the society. Women are bullied and tried to dominate by their male counterparts in every aspects. Even the women are unaware of their own rights so it is only education which can make them aware of their rights and duties and provide opportunities to fight against the evil practices prevailing in the society. This paper will help us to understand the gender issues and how can we tackle the issues to achieve sustainable development.

IV. METHODOLOGY

For the study of this paper we use descriptive and analytical method. In this paper the data are collected through secondary sources like journals, articles, books and internet.

V. DISCUSSION

Objective 1: To study the importance of Gender Equality for sustainable development.

Gender equality is a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Gender equality is important so that discrimination against women and girls can be ended. Moreover violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres like trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation can be eliminated. It is also important to eliminate all harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage,

harassment and molestation, abuse etc. it is also necessary to recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work of women. Gender equality is important to encourage women for participating in various decision making and taking leadership in different political, economic and public level.

Gender Equality is crucial to sustainable development. The key to development is giving equal opportunities to the women and girls as they have the leadership in them to change the world. Only through equality we truly can tackle the gender based violence. Many girls drop out of school as they face a lot of problems and societal issues but there is need of encouragement and someone to empower them which would result in bridging change and betterment of our country. Women are the central actors in pathways to sustainable and green transformation.

Objective 2: To examine the role of women in present scenario in India.

“Women is an incarnation of ‘Shakti’-The Goddess of power. If she is bestowed with education, India’s strength will be doubled. Let the campaign of ‘Kanya Kelavni’ be spread in every home; let the lamp of educating daughters be lit up in every heart.” – Prime Minister, Narendra Modi

The role of women has changed in the present scenario. Today women play the leading role in developing the society. Society cannot be created without the active contribution of women. Now, in a developing country like India women is self-dependent, good manager and is making a balance between family responsibility and outside world. Women has gone beyond every profession which were traditionally considered good for them like nursing, librarian, teaching etc. today women are intellectually liberated and are becoming fighter pilots, architects, scientist, journalist, gym instructors etc.

But due to the deep rooted patriarchal mentality in many parts of Indian society, women are still victimized, humiliated, tortured and exploited. Even after almost seven decades of independence in some places of India women are still subjected to discrimination in the social, economic and educational field.

According to 2017, Global Gender Gap Index(World Economic Forum), India is positioned in 108th among 144 countries.

Objective 3: To understand the role of education for empowering women and girls in India.

Education and literacy empowers women. Women empowerment is a global issue and discussion on women and political right are at the fore front of many formal and informal campaigns worldwide. The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the international women conference at Naroibi in 1985. Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to response t the challenges , to confront their traditional role and changed their life. The only way a society or nation can move forward and aspire to growth and development is not just through education-but especially education among the women citizens. In order to provide equal status in the society women need to be empowered. Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom for development.

Education liberates the mind by opening up the mind to various sources of knowledge like places, people and possibilities. An educated women will also be a liberated women.

Education enables to break down all barriers – religious, linguistic, political, gender and geographical. An educated women will not discriminate others on the basis of these barriers and will treat everyone the same which ultimately helps to foster and integration.

Education helps to enlight the women and gives them the right and strength to fight against social evils like dowry, bride burning, marital rape, molestation and sexual harassment etc.

Today’s intellectually liberated and an emancipated woman does not have to depend on a man to give her the basic needs of life. Education is enabling women to go beyond every profession and earn her own keep, buy her own house and feed herself.

The contribution of women to the workforce will enhance the output and contribute greatly to the advancement of any society both culturally and economically and also help in its human development indicators. Through their work women can help to get rid of problems like higher maternal mortality rates, high rates of gender violence, child sex abuse, female feticide etc.

VI. SUGGESTION

Measures to reduce gender inequality in India for sustainable development are as follows:-

- While formulating new policies government has to consider the needs and interest of women because women constitute half of the population and they contribute equally with men for the development of the nation. For example: Through ‘Make in India’ Project government is trying to encourage women by preserving their personal integrity.

- Even today most women are not aware of their basic rights. So, in order to create awareness among women campaigning, free workshops and seminars should be organized. Moreover to motivate the rural meritorious women and girls towards higher education, educational scholarships should be announced by the government.
- For motivating women the government with collaboration with different NGOs should try to arrange interaction programmes with other empowered women of the society so that the unprivileged women can take active participation in the mainstream society.
- The curriculum for Gender Studies in every discipline should include such topics which emphasizes on reducing gender disparity and encourage women empowerment.
- 'Health is Wealth'- Government should provide women and girls better health care services and social services. Every girl child from their time of birth should be given proper nutritious food.

VII. CONCLUSION

From the above discussion we can conclude that gender equality plays an important role for sustainable development. Since women constitute half of the population therefore, it is important to emphasize the needs and interest of the women for the development of the society and nation at large. Empowering women through education is very essential to aware them about their rights and strengthen them to fight against the prevailing prejudices. Thus, gender equality is crucial to sustainable development and women are the central actors in pathways to sustainability and green transformation.

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Miss Karishma Sonowal. "Gender Equality for Sustainable Development in India- An Analytical Study" *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention (IJHSSI)*, vol. 08, no. 2, 2019, pp. 67-70