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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR)

Article DOI: 10.21474/IJAR01/11036

DOI URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/11036>



RESEARCH ARTICLE

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL

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Manuscript Info

Manuscript History

Received: 22 March 2020

Final Accepted: 25 April 2020

Published: May 2020

Key words:-

Sustainable Development,
Empowerment, Gender Equality, Equity,
Human Rights

Abstract

“Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development.” (Principle 20, Rio Declaration). Sustainable development depends on an equitable distribution of resources and it cannot be achieved without gender equality. Almost there is a dual rationale for prompting 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 development. Women empowerment is a key factor for achieving sustainability. Sustainable development and sustainability have various meaning. Sometimes it may be equitable distribution of resources and opportunities or sometimes it may be defined as understanding the interconnections among economy, development and society. Basically, it is based on the principle of democracy and the rule of law and respect for fundamental rights. It cannot exist without equality in the distributional process. UN member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, which includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end the poverty, fight inequality is a cross-cutting issue, and unless addressed in multi dimensional way, gender equality will not become a reality. Every woman's contribution to sustainable development must be recognized. They have a strong role in the education and most essential socializing their children, including teaching among them care and responsibility. The present paper is an attempt to analyze the essentials of women contributions in sustainable development as shareholders and beneficiaries in India.

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Introduction:-

According to CIDA Report “Gender Equality means that women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to national, political, economic social and cultural development and benefit equally from the results.....

Attaining gender equality demands recognition that current social, economic, cultural, and political systems are gendered; that women's equal status is systematic and that is necessary to incorporate women's specificity priorities and values into all major social institutions.” (CIDA)

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In the last three decades, women who make up half of the world's population have benefited more than men from progress in social and economic development. But this is not true in India as India shows disproportionate sex ratio. Though India is marching forward to the status of developed nation, it is shocking to find that population of females has been comparatively lower than males. In spite of, they continue to be over represented among the world's most vulnerable groups, as access to some resources and power remains highly skewed towards men. There are always a number of components in the society which are disregarded of their basic rights in every society, state and nation, but these components lack in the awareness of their rights. If we enlist such components from the society, then women would must be top this list. In fact, all women are the important factor of every society.

Gender equality is the process of being fair to women and men. It is a goal in its own right but also a key factor for sustainable social development, economic growth and environmental sustainability. A sustainable path of development can be achieved to ensure that women's and men's interests are both taken into account in the allocation of resources through providing the same opportunities to men and women. Basically, equality between women and men should be promoted in ways that are appropriate to each particular context. Both men and women have a stake building a more just society where all people are equally valued for their contributions. In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environmental Development (UNCED) made important provisions for the recognition of women's contribution and their full participation in sustainable development. The United Nations has accepted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with specific targets to achieve within stipulated time. The common goal of SDGs that no one will be left behind is a move towards equitable and inclusive society for all. It is only for to end the poverty and ensure that people enjoy with fruitful peace and prosper.

The Concept of Sustainable Development and Goals:

In the late 1980s the report of Our Common Future by the World Commission on Environment and Development defined the concept of "Sustainable Development" as development which "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". The concept of sustainable development goal was born at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20 in 2012. The SDGs are built on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets decided at the UN headquarters in Newyork from 25-27 September 2015, which came into force on the 1st of January 2016. The specific targets of each SDGs are to be achieved by 2030. Sustainable Development Goals are built on the Millennium Development Goals. However, contrarily to the MDGs those were intended for action in developing countries only; the SDGs apply to all countries.

The SDGs cover the three interrelated dimensions of sustainable development which are economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection which shows in figure 1.



Figure 1:-

Source:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.html>

It is not important to conceptualize women's empowerment and the gender equality as a question of social development alone, but as a cross-cutting issue in economic and socio cultural development and environmental protections.

United Nations has also put forward the idea of six essential elements that help frame and reinforce the universal integrated and transformative nature of the Sustainable Development Agenda which shows by the figure 2.



Figure 2:-

Source:

“The Road to Dignity by2030 – Synthesis Report of the Secretary General On the Post-2015 Agenda”, UN
https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/reports/SG_Synthesis_Report_Road_to_Dignity_by_2030.pdf

Empowerment, Women's Empowerment and Human Rights

Empowerment:

Empowerment is a multi-dimensional process which should enable individuals or a group of individuals to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of life. According to Webster dictionary the word empowerment indicates the situation of authority or to be authorized or to be powerful.

Women's Empowerment:

Women empowerment means emancipation of women from the vicious grips of social, economic, political, caste and gender based discrimination. It means granting women freedom to make life choices. It can also be seen as an important process in reaching gender equality, which means “rights, responsibilities and opportunities of individuals will not depend on whether they are born male or female”. Women empowerment itself elaborates the social rights, political rights, economic stability and all other rights should be also equal to women. Basically empowerment is an essential which can help women to achieve equality with men or to reduce gender gap considerably (P.K.B Nayar).

Specifically the concept of empowerment for women flows from the power. Indeed empowerment of women focuses on enabling women to be economically independent and self reliant. According to United Nations would survey (2014) on the “Role of Women in Development 2014” there are proven synergies between women's empowerment and economic, social and environmental sustainability. The empowered women should be able to

take part in the process of decision making in every possible level. If women get recognition from the society for their latent talents, skills and leadership abilities, there will not be any conflict and violation of human rights.

Gender equality is both an essential element of any development process and a result of sustainable development process and a result of sustainable development. Development efforts should not only aim to advance equality between women and men as an outcome, but should also advance equality throughout by applying gender analysis in planning, consultations, design, implementations and assessment. It is one of the goals of Millennium Development (4), which proposes to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and all levels of education no later than 2015. The Indicators for Achievement of Millennium Development Goal 4 are Equality in:

1. Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary, and tertiary education.
2. Ratio of literate women to men ages 15 to 24.
3. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector.
4. Proportion of seats held by women in National Parliament.

Human Rights:

The “rights responsibilities and opportunities of individuals will not depend on whether they are born male or female”. Human rights are generally understood as being those rights that are intrinsic to all human beings. The concept of human rights acknowledges that each individual is entitled to exercise his or her rights without any forms of discrimination regarding areas such as caste, creed, race, gender, language, religion, political or property, birth, background and status. Nevertheless the Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 recognizes that gender equality is a matter of human rights, the foundation of democracy and good governance, sustainable development. It acknowledges the underpinnings of gender inequality, namely the unequal gender power relations and gender biased social norms that discriminate against women and girls, marginalizing them from the benefits of social, economic and political change.

Gender and Gender Equality vs. Gender Equity:

Gender:

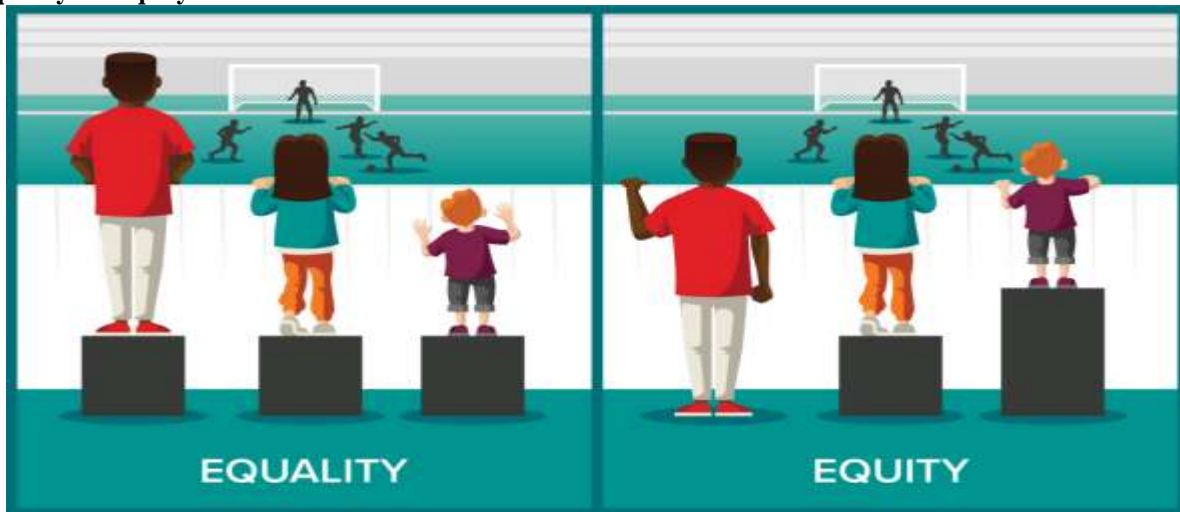
Gender is not something we are born with, and not something we have, but something we do (West and Zimmerman), but something we perform (Butler 1990). Basically gender refers to the social differences and relations between men and women. This refers to socially and culturally ascribed roles to men and women. Gender roles are learned behaviors. The term gender does not replace the term sex. Sex is a biological categorization based primarily on reproductive potential, whereas gender is the social elaboration of biological sex. So, gender roles are affected by age, class, race, ethnicity, religion and by economic and political environment.

Gender Equality:

The concept of gender equality is since long established as the preferred working for equal rights, life prospects, opportunities and power for women and men, girls and boys. It is used in all key international agreements, from the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1979 to the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015. Gender equality is a concept with transformative connotation, covering women’s empowerment, non discrimination and equal rights regardless of gender. It embraces multi-dimensional view on inequalities between women and men, girls and boys.

Gender Equity:

Gender equity means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. Equity is used for example within the education, health and humanitarian sectors referring to the equal distribution of resources based on the needs of different groups of people. Gender equity in this context refers to the fact that a gender analysis of these needs is necessary, as they in many respects may be different for women and men, boys and girls. When used in this way the concept gender equity has opened up for a definition that only embraces part of the gender equality agenda. Thus it leaves the transformative and challenging aspects of gender equality out and makes it possible to avoid the necessary contestation of power relations and unequal social, economic and political structures.

Equality Vs Equity:

Gender Equality focuses on creating the same line for everyone

Gender Equity has the goal of providing everyone with the full range of opportunities And benefits- with the same finish line

Starting line for everyone everyone with the full range of opportunities and benefits the same finish line
Empowering women for Sustainable development

Sustainable development cannot achieve without gender equality. It also depends on an equitable distribution of resources. Women's empowerment is a multi-dimensional process and it is a key factor for achieving sustainable economic growth, social development and environmental sustainability. So far gender issues have been primarily dealt with as a social issue. Moreover, in all countries women are sharing the primary responsibility for nutrition and household management. In most developing countries, women play a vital role like farmers, water and fuel collectors. Women took much essential achieve part in the Rio Earth Summit process and succeeded in obtaining a chapter on women and sustainable development. The 1992 summit, together with the 1993 Human Rights Conference, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, the 1995 Social Summit and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, have focused the work of the United Nations on the environment, population, human rights, poverty and gender. UNDP coordinates global and national efforts to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into poverty reduction, crisis prevention and recovery, democratic governance and sustainable development. The Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995, emphasized that empowerment full participation and equality for women are the foundations for peace and sustainable development.

Role of Education for Sustainable Development:

The importance of gender equality in achieving the right to education for all has been recognized. A transformative education agenda should include 'inclusion and equity' in and through education. The Incheon Declaration (21st may 2015) at the World education Forum (WEF 2015) held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, recognize the importance of education as a main driver of sustainable development.

"The Incheon Declaration rightly commits us to non discriminatory education that recognizes the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment for sustainable development. This is a crucial opportunity for us to work together, across sectors, towards the fulfillment of the education for all promise of peaceful, just and equal societies. A world where people are equal can only be achieved if our education also university teacher this."

-Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Women Executive Director

Commitment had been shown to develop gender sensitive policies, mainstreaming gender issues in teacher training and eliminating gender based discrimination in schools. UN World Survey on "Role of Women in Development 2014" as female education level rise, child mortality rates fall and family health improves. So, education also

increases women's participation in the welfare society as decision maker, labor force in various work places and their contribution to household and national economic growth.

The 17 Proposed Sustainable Development:

In september2015, the General Assembly adopted 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development that includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. These 17 Goals build on the success of the Millennium Development Goals that emphasized only equality of opportunity and the 2030 (SDGs) agenda acknowledges that equality must be based on both opportunity and outcome. The 17 goals are:

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
14. Conserve and sustainability use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development



Source:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/envision2030.html>

Sustainable development Goal-5: Achieve Gender equality and Empower All Women and Girls

The following target has been included to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by UNDP:

1. End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere;
2. 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;
3. Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation;
4. Recognize 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;
5. Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life;
6. 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;
7. 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;
8. Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women;
9. 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.

Conclusion:-

Women need to be "empowered" in order to narrow the "gender gap" and to create an equal playing field between women and men before, then gender equality can be reached and maintained. The sustainable development goals are an inclusive agenda. They tackle the root causes of poverty and unite us together to make a positive change for both people and planet. "Supporting the 2030 Agenda is atop priority for UNDP", said UNDP Administrator Helen Clark. The contribution of women in all fields needs to be enhanced by ensuring their full economic growth. Gender bias is still deeply embedded in cultures, economies, political and social institution around the world. All 17 Sustainable Development Goals will collectively help to achieve gender equality through women empowerment and only the achievement of SDG-5 alone will not create a gender equal world. From a gender perspective, it is particularly important not to consider gender equality as a socio cultural issue alone but to give it due consideration in economic and environmental realms as well-treating gender equality as across cutting objective to attain sustainable development.

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