



Gender equality as sustainable development goal

Anita Sahay

Assistant Professor, Satyug Darshan Institute of Education and Research, Faridabad, Haryana, India

Abstract

Gender is a social concept which is connected to biology. Gender is a wide set of characteristics that are seen to distinguish between male and female. It can extend from sex to social role or gender identity. Gender is an integral dimension of social stratification. It is right to say that Gender is “The State of being male or female, typically used with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones.” Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right but also essential for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Gender equality is when people of all gender have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities. Men and women both have equal rights and equal opportunities related to financial independence, personal development, education and social development. Gender Equality is the state of equal ease of access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender, including economic participation and decision-making; and the state of valuing different behaviours, aspirations and needs equally, regardless of gender. In it, roles and responsibilities should not be pre decided for males or females to establish gender equality. Gender equality is the outcome. Equality is applied and distributed equally. It helps in eliminating gender disparities in all levels of education and achieving gender equality in education. It focuses on girls' full access to and achievement in basic education of good quality. Gender equality is also known as sex equality, gender egalitarianism, sexual equality or equality of the genders is the view that both men and women should receive equal treatment and not to be discriminated against based on their gender. It helps in elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private sphere, including trafficking and other types of exploitations. Various Institutions like family, caste, religion, culture, media, law and state play an important role in creating gender equality. Gender Equality is goal number 5 of Sustainable Development Goals, for which UN resolution has set some targets and which is decided to be achieved by 2030.

Keywords: gender, equality, sustainable development, goal, role of institutions, family, state, law, impact on women

Introduction

Gender is a social concept which is connected to biology. Gender is a wide set of characteristics that are seen to distinguish between male and female. It can extend from sex to social role or gender identity. Gender is an integral dimension of social stratification. It is right to say that Gender is “The State of being male or female, typically used with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones.”

According to Aristotle, the concept of gender was introduced by the Greek philosopher Protagoras. Protagoras said, "Gender is an integral component of every aspect of economic, social, daily and private life of individuals and societies and of the different roles ascribed by society to men and women."

World Health Organisation's view on Gender, "Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women". Therefore we can say that Gender is socially constructed roles and responsibilities appropriate for men and women in a particular society, whereas Equality means treating equally without any discrimination. Equality is applied and distributed equally. Article 14 to 18 of Indian Constitution is related to Equality:

Article 14: Equality before law

Article 15: Prohibition of discrimination on the basis of Caste, Class, Creed, Place of Birth, Gender and Religion

Article 16: Equality of opportunity on the matters of Public Employment

Article 17: Abolition of Untouchability

Article 18: Abolition of Titles

Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable development goals or global goals are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals. It is just like a blueprint designed to achieve better and sustainable future for all.



Fig 1

The SDGs were set up in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by 2030. In fact, UN resolution has set target for all goals and it should be achieved between 2020 to 2030. But some of the targets, no end date is given. Gender Equality is one of the Sustainable Development Goals, which is on number 5, for which it is said that a nation can progress and attain higher development goal only when men and women are provided equal opportunities in every sector of life like education, health, decision making and economical independence in terms of wages.

Gender Equality

Gender equality denotes that women have the same opportunities in life as men, including the ability to participate in the public sphere. Gender Equality is based on the premises that women and men should be treated in the same way. Gender Equality is the notion that men and women should have the same opportunities in life. So we can say that Gender Equality is "equality between men and women which entails the concept that all human being, both men and women, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles and prejudices". Gender equality is also known as Gender Egalitarianism or Sexual Equality. Gender equality is when women and men enjoy equal rights, opportunities and entitlements in Civil and political life.

Gender Equality is the state of equal ease of access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender, including economic participation and decision-making; and the state of valuing different behaviours, aspirations and needs equally, regardless of gender. In it, roles and responsibilities should not be pre decided for males or females, in order to establish gender equality. Gender equality is the outcome.

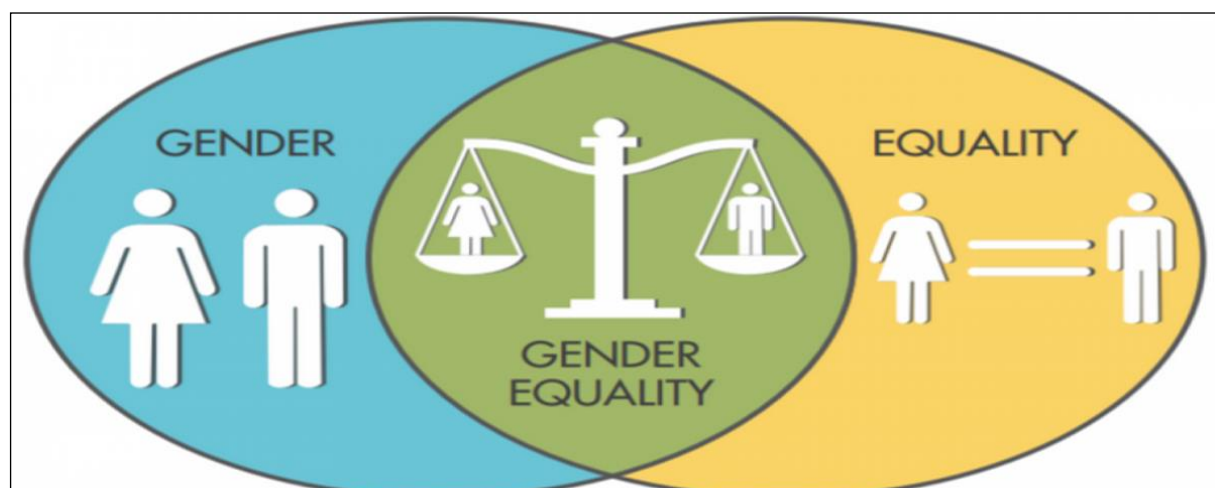


Fig 2

Targets of Gender Equality

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

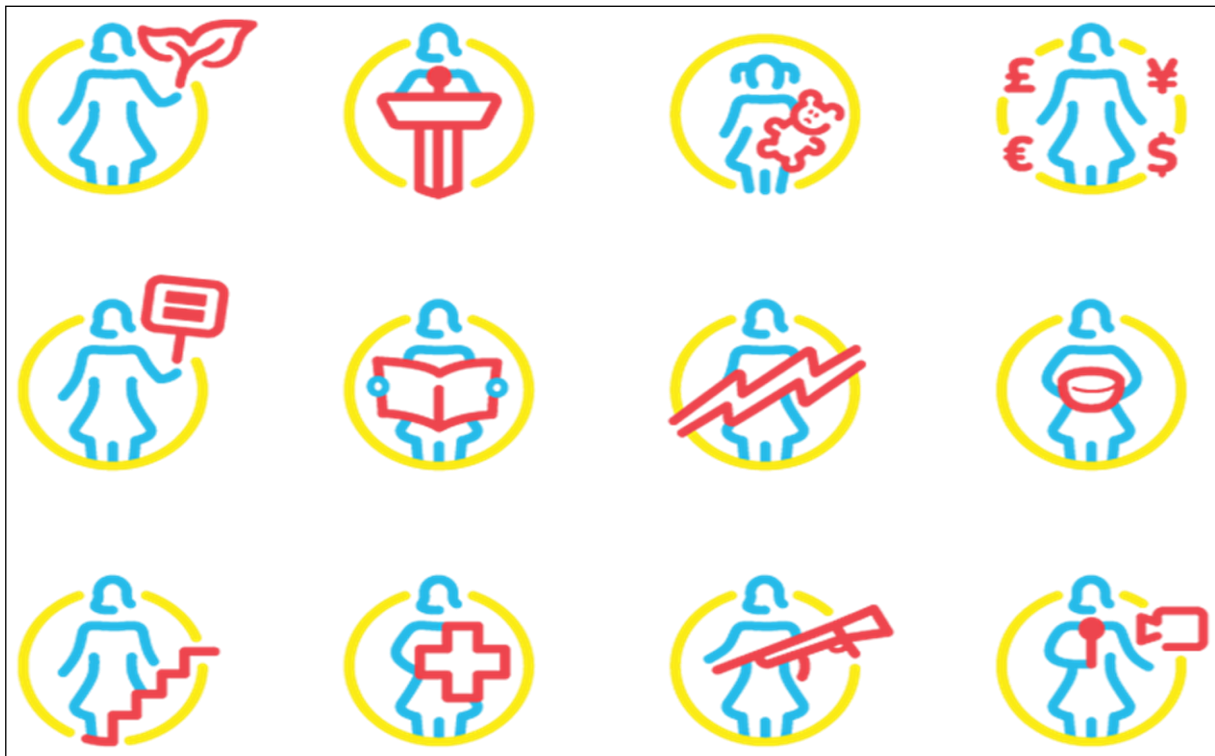


Fig 3

The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action flagged 12 key areas where urgent action was needed to ensure greater equality and opportunities for women and men, girls and boys. It also laid out concrete ways for countries to bring about change.

- 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.

Roles of Various Institutions in Creating Gender Equality

Education for all is a fundamental human right. So as equality of women and men. Achieving Gender Equality in Education, Occupation and life concept, requires systematic changes in policies and modes of social interaction at all level of society, i.e., home, workplace, school, Public Services, media and so on. Those who play a crucial role in creating gender equality in education and other areas of life are as follows:

Role of Parents

Parents have a great responsibility to create a sense of equality among the children of both the gender. Equal share with regard to food, dress, play material, independent space for studies and sleep need to be provided. Children of both gender need to be listened and heard carefully. Their opinion and views should be appreciated.

Role of Teacher

In order to create right concept of equality in the mind of both the gender, teachers need to observe that all the aspects of the process of socialization be further, polished, refined right perspective of equality is conceptually established. In fact, teacher is to play the role of guardian, protector and even a substitute of mother and father at school. Fair dealing with both the girls and boys. Questions be addressed equitably the stage of the lesson and the type or mode of question. Both gender need to be equally involved in demonstration in the class. All students must be given equal and fair chance to participate.

Role of School

School is a nursery or the institution where the both girls and boys are groomed and shaped under a fine and rich environment. A complete growth and development takes place. Proper use of space, furniture, material, and other conveniences provided in the school. All children must be involve in reading newspaper, magazines and books on personality development. Proper use of library and equipment in labs must be made available for both boys and girls. Debate, declamation and brain storming sessions be organized.

Role of Society

Society is an agency where social, economical, political and ethical parameters related to one's growth and socialization, are vital to be considered. Frequent views of social groups on equity can be invented to gender identify the gaps and lacunas. Affected gender may be listened by other gender to visualize and make the right assessment regarding unfair treatment rendered on them. A mechanism may be worked out in order to maintained equity among the genders. Governments with their concerned departments, may remove such anomalies and existing gaps.

Role of Religion

Indian society consists of people belonging to almost all kinds of religious belief. In every religion women are given a special place and every religion teaches us to treat women with respect and dignity. Religion helps in changing People's perception towards girl children. Various religions have set up schools at primary to tertiary levels to provide a equal and free education.

Role of Media

Media plays a very important role in our daily life. Media helps form our social values, partnering with the private sector organisation. Women have been promoting the use of media especially social media as a powerful tool to advocate for the elimination of violence against women and promote gender equality. Ensuring that women have the confidence and skill they need to move up in the job. While talent and on the job experience certainly help and mentoring to boost the career of women whose skills may not yet fully realised.

Role of Law and State

Law is the set of rules and forced to govern the behaviour of the people. From the very beginning of the world, women is treated as a weaker section of society and they are victim of the crimes like female infanticide, dowry, domestic violence, child marriage, acid throwing, eve teasing and rape. They are only allowed to live beneath the shoes of their husbands and fathers. Laws are being made to secure the lives of women from the violence of their family and societies and to provide them with their right of which they are the owners.

As education is linked with the totality of the development process, several articles in the constitution emphasize equality, like the Directive Principles contained in Article 45 - compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years.

Analysis of Current Condition

Women and girls, everywhere, must have equal rights and opportunity, and be able to live free of violence and discrimination. Women's equality and empowerment is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, but also integral to all dimensions of inclusive and sustainable development.

Discriminatory laws need to change and legislation adopted to proactively advance equality. Yet 49 countries still lack laws protecting women from domestic violence, while 39 bar equal inheritance rights for daughters and sons. Eliminating gender-based violence is a priority, given that this is one of the most pervasive human rights violations in the world today. Based on data from 87 countries, 1 in 5 women and girls under the age of 50 will have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner within the last 12 months. Harmful practices, such as child marriage, steal the childhood of 15 million girls under age 18 every year.

Women do 2.6 times more unpaid care and domestic work than men. While families, societies and economies depend on this work, for women, it leads lower earnings and less time to engage in non-work activities. In addition to equal distribution of economic resources, which is not only a right, but accelerates development in multiple areas, there needs to be a fair balance of responsibility for unpaid care work between men and women.

Conclusion

So Gender based Equality is essential not only for the development of female only but also for the development of humanity and for sustainability of this world. Kofi Annan has rightly said, "Gender Equality is more than a

goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance."

References

1. "WHO: World Health Organization". Who.int. Archived from the original on July 27, 2003. Retrieved 14 June, 2015.
2. Durbin Susan. "Gender inequality in employment: Editors' introduction". *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*, 2010;29(3):221-238.
3. Watts, Charlotte; Zimmerman, Cathy (6 April 2002). "Violence against women: global scope and magnitude". *The Lancet*. Elsevier, 359(9313):1232-1237.
4. "Rape and Sexual Violence: Human rights law and standards in the international criminal court" (PDF). Amnesty International. 1 March 2011. Archived (PDF) from the original on 13 June 2015. Retrieved 14 June 2015.
5. "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (PDF). Wwda.org. United Nations. December 16, 1948. Archived (PDF) from the original on March 28, 2019. Retrieved October 31, 2016.
6. *Sex and Reason*, by Richard A. Posner, 94.
7. *The Economics of Imperfect Labor Markets: Second Edition*, by Tito Boeri, Jan van Ours, 105.
8. World Bank (September 2006). "Gender Equality as Smart Economics: A World Bank Group Gender Action Plan (Fiscal years 2007–10)" (PDF). Archived from the original (PDF) on May 5, 2011. Retrieved April 25, 2021.
9. "Gender equality". United Nations Population Fund. UNFPA. Archived from the original on 20 May 2019. Retrieved 14 June 2015.
10. UN Economic and Social Council (2017). *Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2017/66)*.
11. "Sustainable Development Goal 5: Gender equality". UN Women. UN Women. Archived from the original on 26 November 2020. Retrieved 5 August 2017.