



Performance & Initiatives of India in Achieving SDG5 i.e. Gender Equality

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ABSTRACT

According to the UDHR, which is a document of the United Nations, all people, regardless of gender, should be free from discrimination and treated with respect. A happy, affluent, and sustainable society cannot be built upon anything less than gender equality, which is a basic human right. There is half the world's potential because of women and girls, who make up half of the population. Nevertheless, societal progress is halted by the pervasiveness of gender inequity.

The United Nations published the SDGs in 2015 as part of its "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to promote long-term prosperity by addressing pressing social and environmental issues and fostering intellectual and professional development. This set of seventeen objectives with one hundred and ninety-nine subgoals represents the cutting edge of global government action. Ending poverty, delivering adequate education, mitigating climate change, resolving gender imbalances and inequities, and many more essential areas are covered by these aims. Achieving gender equality is one of the most significant SDGs (SDG 5).

The globe has not made enough headway in the last few decades to guarantee gender parity by the year 2030. The primary goal of this research is to assess gender inequality in India's individual states using the Gender Inequality Index (GII) and the Gender Development Index (GDI), as well as to look at the steps the Indian government has done to reach SDG5, which is gender parity.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Gender Inequality, Gender Imbalance, Educational Political Empowerment

Introduction:

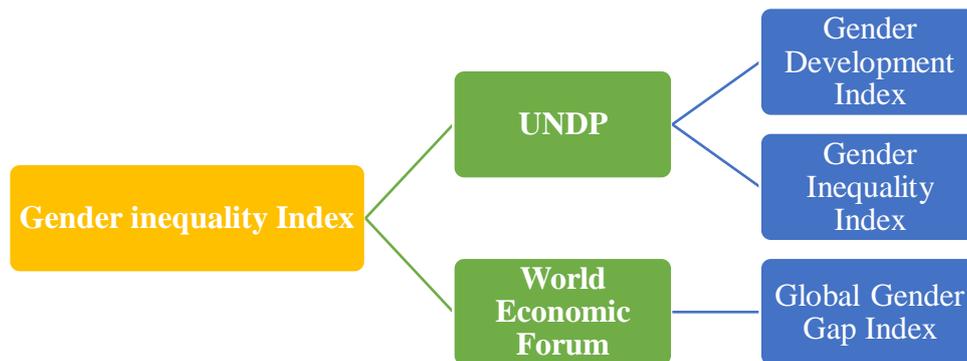
With an impact that will likely continue throughout the next decade, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) stand as the most noteworthy worldwide development project of the current one. "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" was the working title given to the United Nations' 2015 introduction of the SDGs, which aim to guide development up until 2030. There are seventeen objectives and one hundred and ninety-nine targets that make up these global goals, which are the spearhead of government activities. These goals cover important ground, including fighting climate change, reducing poverty, delivering adequate education, and addressing gender imbalances and inequities.

Achieving gender equality is one of the most significant SDGs (SDG 5). With the elimination of violence and other harmful practices and the full engagement of women in leadership positions across all spheres of public, political, and economic life, SDG5 seeks to eradicate all types of discrimination against girls and women worldwide. Global peace, prosperity, and sustainable development can only be achieved on the basis of gender equality. "Nothing, arguably, is as important today in the political economy of development as an adequate recognition of the political, economic, and social participation and leadership of women," says Nobel laureate Dr. Amartya Sen.

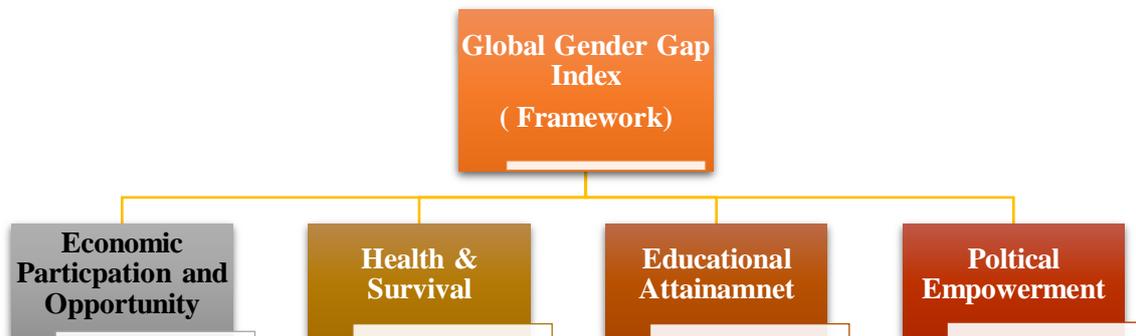
When people are empowered, "the enhancement of assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups to engage, influence, and hold accountable the institutions which affect them" (Bennett, 2002). According to Malhotra et al. (2009), women's empowerment is when they are given the authority to make strategic decisions in areas where they were previously unable to. Furthermore, they assert that empowering women is essential for preserving the advantages they have on personal, familial, communal, and larger scales. Similarly,

according to Alvarez and Lopez (2013), empowering women means elevating their standing via literacy, education, training, and awareness-raising. According to Tamuli and Mishra (2023), women will not be able to have a big impact in the political, social, economic, and environmental arenas unless gender equality is realised and women are given the authority to do so. Sustainable development cannot be attained by just acknowledging the efforts of men.

To have a healthy society, gender equality must first be achieved, which is a basic human right in and of itself. In order to promote sustainable economies and bring about considerable societal benefits, it is crucial to ensure that women and girls have equal access to healthcare, education, employment, and participation in decision-making processes. The globe has not made enough headway in the previous few decades to guarantee gender parity by the year 2030. Both the World Economic Forum and the United Nations Development Programme report on gender inequality and gender empowerment on a global scale.



Global Gender Gap Index: The following figure shows the four sub-indexes that make up the Global Gender Gap Index, which was created by the World Economic Forum to measure the degree to which women are disadvantaged relative to men in four areas: economic opportunities, education, health, and political leadership.



Source: Global Gender Gap Report, 2024

The Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) measures the advancement of gender parity in four important areas: economic participation and opportunity, educational achievement, health and survival, and political empowerment. This index was established by the World Economic Forum. Index scores may be anywhere from 0 to 1, with 0 indicating total gender inequality and 1 indicating full gender parity. It began monitoring the rate of progress towards eliminating gender inequalities in 2006 and has been doing so ever since.

- 1. Economic Participation and Opportunity:** Rates of labor force participation, salary equality for comparable work, projected earned income, and availability of high-skilled jobs are all evaluated along this dimension. With just 36.7% gender parity achieved, India's development in this area is still hard. According to the Gender Gap Report (2023), while there has been progress in salary equality and income, the proportion of women in senior positions and technical tasks has somewhat decreased.
- 2. Health and Survival:** The sex ratio at birth is compared to the healthy life expectancy ratio in this dimension. The sex ratio at birth in India has improved by 1.9% after a lengthy period of modest development. In spite of this, skewed sex ratios cause India, Vietnam, China, and Azerbaijan to maintain low scores in this sub-index.
- 3. Educational Attainment:** This metric assesses the proportion of results related to elementary, secondary, and tertiary education enrolment as well as literacy rates. A major step forward in India's educational system is the fact that enrolment is now equal at all grade levels.
- 4. Political Empowerment:** The percentage of women in parliament, cabinet posts, and the length of time a country has had a female head of state are all factors that make up this dimension, which measures the participation of women in decision-making organizations. With 25.3% parity, India has come a long way in

the realm of political empowerment. At 15.1%, the percentage of female lawmakers is at an all-time high since the index began tracking this data. Women now make up more than 40% of municipal government in nations like Bolivia (50.4%), India (44.4%), and France (42.3%).

Policymakers and stakeholders seeking to reduce gender inequalities may benefit greatly from the data provided by the Global Gender Gap Index, which is still an essential instrument for this purpose.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To discuss the status of India in case of Gender Inequality and Gender Development index in measured by UNDP in world.
2. To analyse the performance of SDG5 in case of India.
3. To investigate the performance of SDG5 in case of states of India .

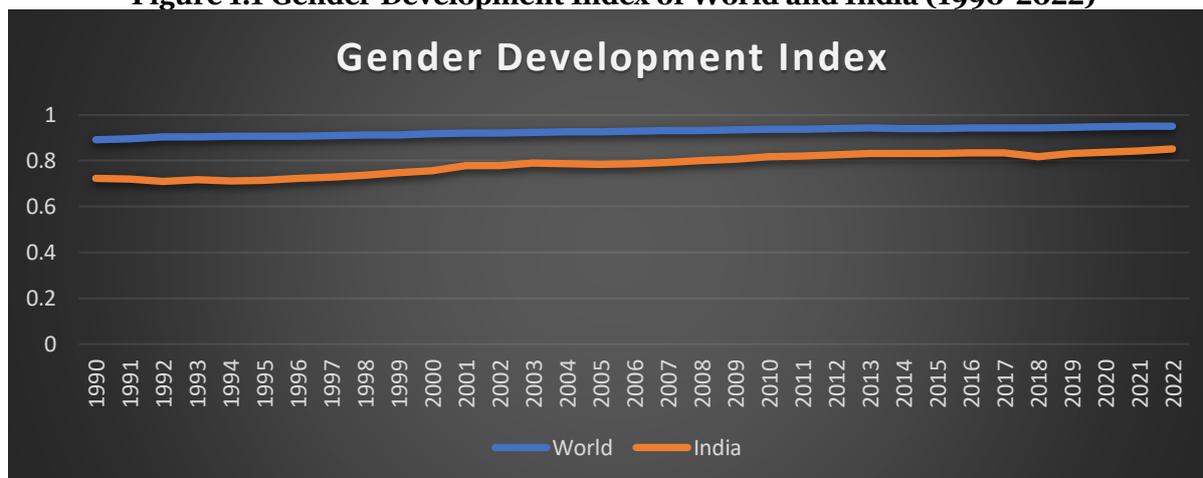
There are a total of four parts to this article. Earlier, we looked at how India stacks up against the rest of the globe on the Gender Development Index and the Gender Inequality Index. Performance of SDG5 in India and its individual states was covered in Section II. Along with the conclusion, Section-III covers the government actions to achieve SDG5.

Section – I

India's Performance in Gender Inequality & Gender Development Index

Gender Development Index: Gender Disparity in Education (GDI) tracks the degree to which men and women differ in their access to and success within three key areas of human development: health (life expectancy at birth), education (expected years of schooling for children and adults ages 25 and older), and economic power (estimated earned income).

Figure 1.1 Gender Development Index of World and India (1990-2022)



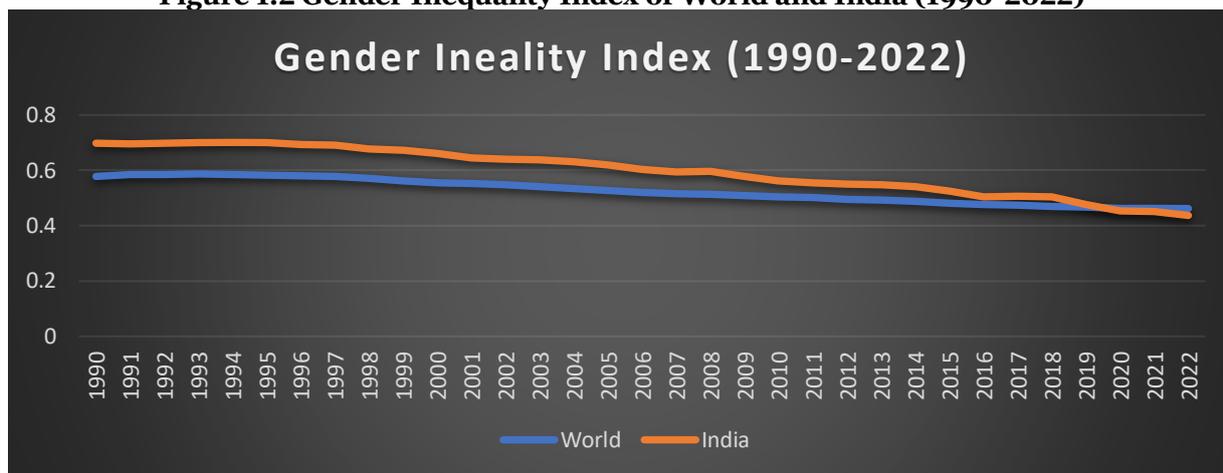
Source: UNDP Human Development Report (Various Issues)

Over the research period (from 1990 to 2022), as shown in figure 1.1, India's Gender Development index performed better than expected. There is still a large gender disparity in India as compared to many other countries on a worldwide scale, while the GDI average is approximately 0.941. Developed nations often have GDI values close to 1.000, indicating that men's and women's HDI scores are almost equal. The most current assessment (2022) classified India as having "Medium Human Development" GDI, with a rating of 0.849. While India is making progress in terms of gender equality as compared to the global index, a few of our bordering nations are outperforming us. Sri Lanka (GDI = 0.933) and Bangladesh (GDI = 0.879) both show greater performance than India.

Gender Inequality Index (GII): uses reproductive health, empowerment, and the labour market as its three aspects to create a composite measure of gender disparity. This disparity represents the unrealized potential for human growth as a result of the persistent gender difference in various domains. A GII score of 1 indicates severe inequality, whereas a value of 0 indicates equality. Gender inequality is low when the GII Value is low and high when it is high.

Figure 1.2 demonstrates that throughout the last few years, the average worldwide GII was approximately 0.450. Less gender disparity is indicated by lower GII values, which are typically between 0.100 and 0.300 in developed countries. Countries with GII ratings in the range of 0.040 to 0.060 include Switzerland and Norway, for instance. Although India has made strides in eliminating gender differences since 2016, there is still room for improvement in the country's Gender Inequality index.

Figure 1.2 Gender Inequality Index of World and India (1990-2022)



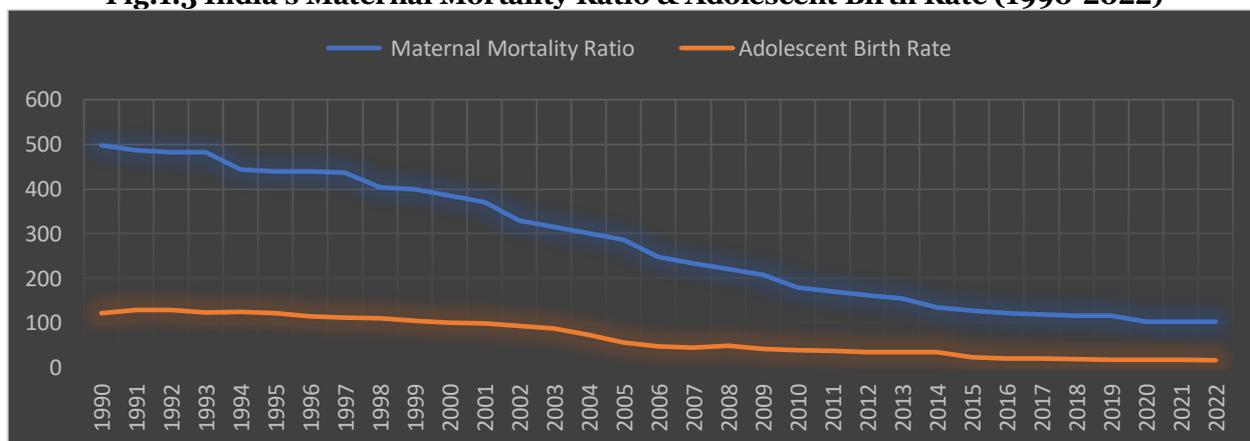
Source: UNDP Human Development Report (Various Issues)

Dimensions and Indicators of Gender Inequality Index:

Dimensions	Indicators
Health	1. Maternal Mortality Ratio
	2. Adolescent Birth Rate
Empowerment	1. Female and Male Population with at least secondary education
	2. Female and Male Shares of Parliament Seats
Labour Market	1. Female and Male labour force participation rates

The maternal mortality rate and the teen birth rate are two variables that make up the health dimension. Adolescent Birth Rate: The yearly number of births to girls aged 10–14 or 15–19 years per 1,000 females in the relevant age group, and Maternal Mortality Ratio: The number of deaths owing to pregnancy-related causes per 100,000 live births.

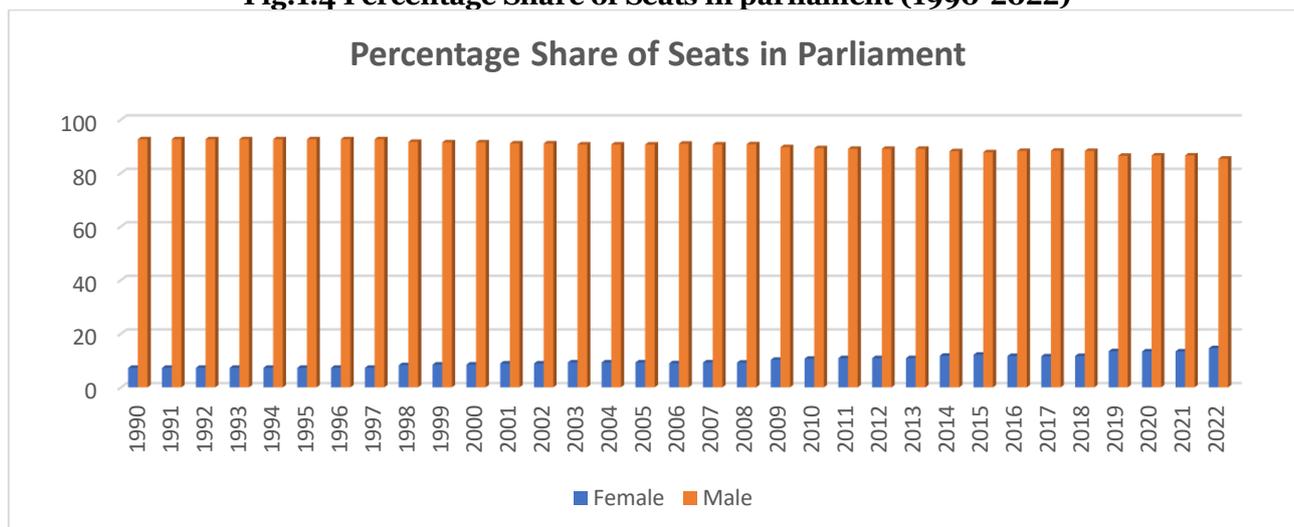
Fig:1.3 India’s Maternal Mortality Ratio & Adolescent Birth Rate (1990-2022)



Source: UNDP Human Development Report (Various Issues)

Figure 1.3 shows that from 1990 to 2022, the Maternal Mortality ratio and the Adolescent birth rate both declined, which is good news for the Indian economy. There has been substantial improvement in India's MMR within the last decade. Rising healthcare access, improved maternity services, and public health measures led to a significant improvement in India's MMR, which was around 200 after 2019. There are around 12–23 births per 1,000 females between the ages of 15 and 19. Births per 1,000 teenage girls and young women is the unit of measurement here. Factors including early marriage, inadequate reproductive health care, and a lack of educational opportunities contribute to India's concerning teen birth rate. Both the mother and the child's health are negatively impacted by having children at a young age, which contributes to the cycle of poverty and gender inequity.

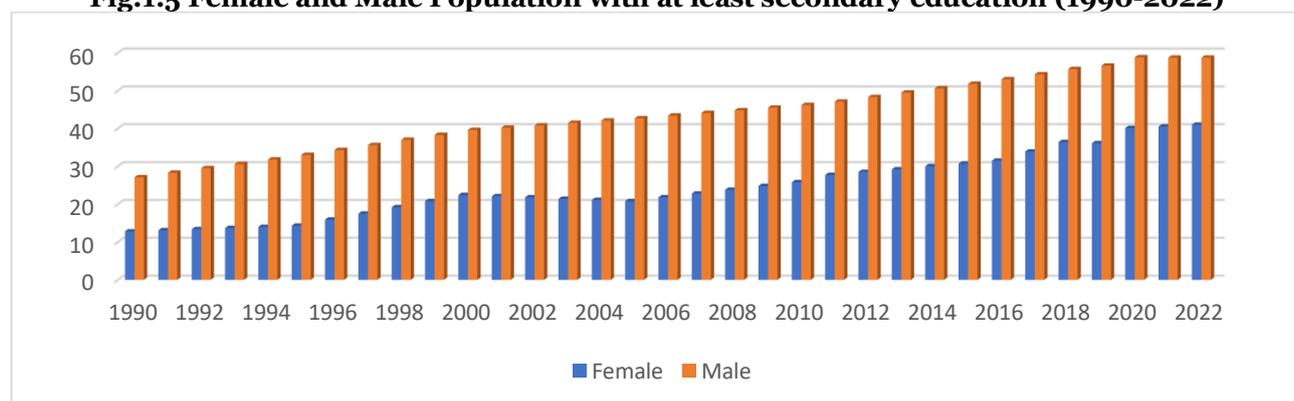
Fig:1.4 Percentage Share of Seats in parliament (1990-2022)



Source: UNDP Human Development Report (Various Issues)

Figure 1.4 shows that, from 1990 to 2022, the proportion of female lawmakers was much lower than that of male lawmakers. On the other hand, it's a little better than it was in 1990.

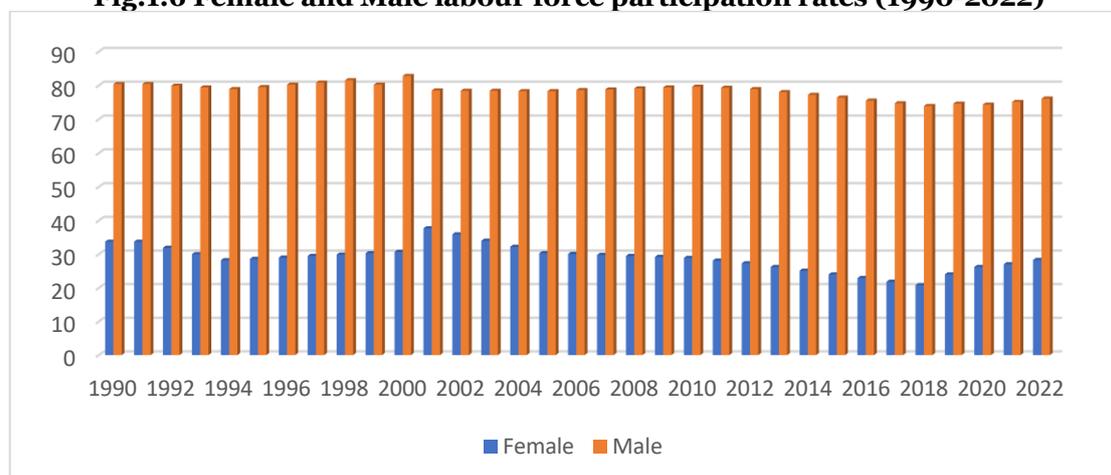
Fig:1.5 Female and Male Population with at least secondary education (1990-2022)



Source: UNDP Human Development Report (Various Issues)

Figure 1.5 shows that from 1990 to 2022, there was only a little increase in the proportion of women with a secondary education or above, compared to men. According to current statistics, almost 40% of Indian women who are 25 years old and above have finished secondary school. Compared to 60% of males of the same age in India. This difference is indicative of more systemic problems with gender inequality in educational opportunities, which are particularly acute in underserved rural regions and communities.

Fig:1.6 Female and Male labour force participation rates (1990-2022)



Source: UNDP Human Development Report (Various Issues)

Over the study period (i.e., 1990–2022), the female participation rate was much lower than the male rate, as shown in figure 1.6. According to the statistics, women in India have an LFPR of around 27–30%. This number shows the proportion of working-age women who are actively looking for job. On the other hand, males in India have a much higher LFPR, ranging from 75 to 85%. This difference has to be addressed since it may be caused by socio-cultural norms, safety concerns, education and skill levels, unpaid care work, and economic factors, such as the informal character of most of India's economy.

Section – III

Performance of Sustainable Development Goals in India

Integrating social, economic, and environmental goals into a holistic framework is the goal of sustainable development. All three of these factors must be considered simultaneously for a complete comprehension of sustainable development. More than 40 years ago, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) proposed the idea of sustainable development, which aims to strike a balance between social, economic, and environmental dynamics. In order to grasp sustainable development, it is necessary to grasp the concept of "sustainability," which is fundamental to this idea. An important part of neoclassical economics is the idea of conventional growth models; from this criticism, the concept of sustainable development emerged. To tackle these issues of sustainability, theorists have created growth models.

Sustainable Development Goals – At a Glance



Source: www.un.org.in

National Indicators in the Context of SDG5:

Indicator Selected for SDG5 Index	National target Value for 2030	Performance in 2023-24
Sex Ratio at Birth (female per 1000 male)	954	929
Average female to male ratio of average wages/salaries received per day by regular wage/salaried employees of age 15-59 years for rural and urban	1	0.76
Percentage of ever married women aged 15-49 years who have ever experienced spousal violence	0	29.2
Percentage of seats won by women in the general elections to state legislative assembly	50	
Ratio of Female Labour force participation rate to Male Labour force participation rate	1	0.48
Percentage of women in the age group of 15-49 years using moder methods of family planning	100	74.1 ²⁹

Source: NITI Aayog SDG India Index Report (2023-24)

Supervising the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in India falls on the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog). In order to monitor the development and difficulties encountered by each of India's Union Territories (UTs), NITI Aayog has been releasing the SDG India Index and Dashboard since 2018. Goals including health, education, gender equality, economic growth, institutional development, environment, and climate change are all included of the SDG Index. The purpose of this article is to talk about SDG5, which is gender equality in India and its different states.

SDG5 in the Indian Context

By 2030, India aspires to have achieved its vision of a world free of violence and discrimination, where all women are able to lead dignified lives and contribute equally to the progress and prosperity of their country. In India, there is a gender gap when it comes to healthcare, education, nutrition, work, and owning property. Furthermore, women are under-represented in positions of decision-making power in both private and governmental sectors. A human right and a condition for long-term prosperity is the elimination of gender discrimination in all its manifestations.

By taking these measures, India hopes to empower all women and girls by 2030 and make great strides towards gender equality. This will guarantee that they are able to participate fully in all parts of life.

Fig: 1.7 SDG5 Composite Index Score of India



Source: NITI Aayog SDG India Index

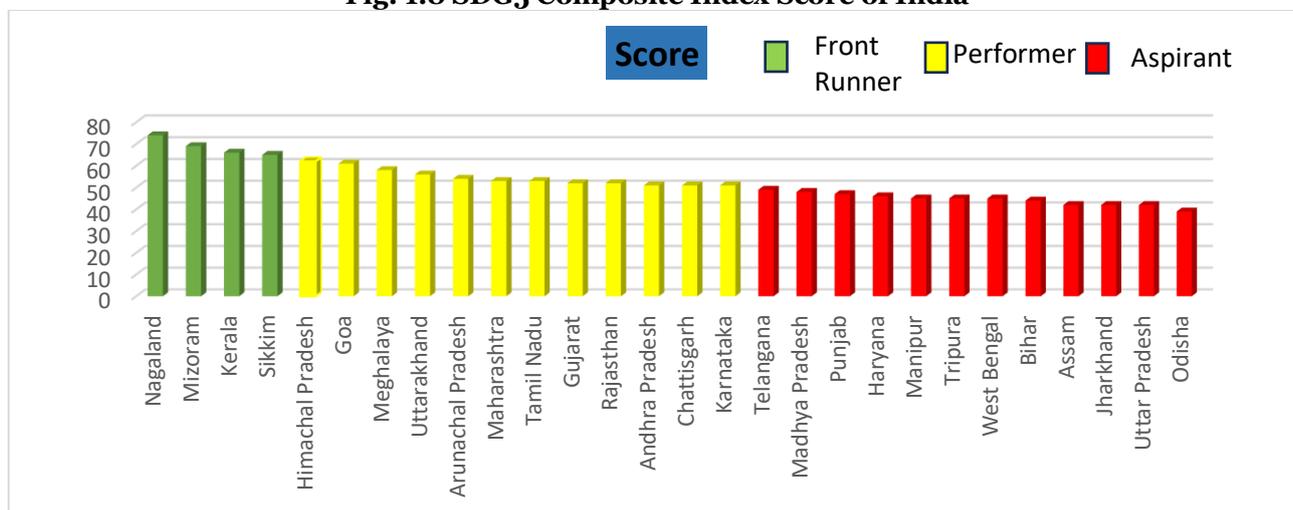
Overall, India's score for SDG5 increased from 36 in 2018 to 49 in 2023-24, as shown in figure 1.7. The improvements in performance can be traced back to numerous government programs, including Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP), Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK), Rastriya Mahila Kosh, Sukanya Samridhhi Yojana, Skill Upgradation, and Mahila Coir Yojana, as well as the allocation of seats for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions. Six national-level indicators have been chosen to measure India's progress towards gender equality. These indicators cover four of the nine SDG objectives for 2030 under this goal.

State wise Performance of SDG5 in India

Concerningly, there is a noticeable disparity in performance throughout the states of India when it comes to the Sustainable Development Goals. For each objective, states are grouped into four groups according to their target scores.

- Achiever: When the index score equals 100
- Front Runner: When the index score is between 65 and 99, including both
- Performer: When the index score is between 50 and 64, including both
- Aspirant: When the index score is less than 50

Fig: 1.8 SDG5 Composite Index Score of India



Source: NITI Aayog SDG India Index Report (2023-24)

Figure 1.8 shows that out of all the states with scores close to 65, Nagaland, Mizoram, Kerala, and Sikkim are the front-runners in SDG5. There may be laws that promote women's rights and welfare, together with high levels of female literacy and health, that explain why certain states do so well.

Performer states like Himachal Pradesh, Goa, Meghalaya, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, etc., have decent results when it comes to women's health and education. Nevertheless, there are still obstacles to overcome in areas like as equal representation in politics, violence against women, and gender gaps in the workforce.

In contrast, states like Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, etc., are striving to attain SDG5. poor female labor force involvement, early marriage, poor political representation, and low female literacy are major issues in these states. Gender equality has been a sluggishly progressing issue, with underlying socio-cultural norms acting as a roadblock.

Section – IV

Government of India Initiatives to Achieve SDG5 i.e. Gender Equality

1. **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao:** It ensures the protection, survival and education of the girl child.
2. **Mahila Shakti Kendra:** Aims to empower rural women with opportunities for skill development and employment.
3. **Mahila Police Volunteers:** It envisages engagement of Mahila Police Volunteers in States/UTs who act as a link between police and community and facilitates women in distress.
4. **Rashtriya Mahila Kosh:** It is an apex micro-finance organization that provides micro-credit at concessional terms to poor women for various livelihood and income generating activities.
5. **Sukanya Samridhi Yojna:** Under this scheme girls have been economically empowered by opening their bank accounts.
6. **Female Entrepreneurship:** To promote female entrepreneurship, the Government has initiated Programmes like Stand-Up India and Mahila e-Haat (online marketing platform to support women entrepreneurs/ SHGs/NGOs), Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programme (ESSDP).
7. **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya:** They have been opened in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs).
8. **National Creche Scheme** offers safe environments for children, enabling women to pursue employment.
9. **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandna Yojna** provides maternity benefits to pregnant and lactating mothers.
10. **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana** ensures housing under women's names.
11. **Gender Budget** has been made a part of the Union Budget of India since 2005 and entails fund allocation towards programmes/schemes dedicated to women.
12. **Nirbhaya Fund Framework** provides for a non-lapsable corpus fund for the implementation of initiatives aimed at enhancing the safety and security of women in the country.
13. **One Stop Centres (OSCs)** offer integrated services for women victims of violence, including medical aid, legal assistance, and counselling.
14. The **Constitution (106th Amendment) Act, 2023** reserves one-third of all seats for women in Lok Sabha, State legislative assemblies, and the Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, including those reserved for SCs and STs. 33% reserved seats in Panchayati Raj Institutions for women are already in place.
15. **The Vigyan Jyoti programme** aims to encourage girls to pursue higher education and careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), especially in the areas where women's participation is low in order to balance the gender ratio across the streams.

Conclusion

A multipronged strategy including gender-sensitive education, extensive legislative changes, and the advancement of women's economic possibilities is necessary to combat gender disparity. To build a more just and secure society, it is essential to strengthen and enforce laws that address gender-based violence, child marriage, and job discrimination. Also, schools may do their part to combat gender stereotypes and provide girls a fair shot at a good education by adopting gender-sensitive policies and curriculum.

In the future, we want to advertise and make it easier for housewives to utilize their abilities in areas like graphic design, online teaching, social media management, virtual help, content writing, and freelancing on platforms and marketplaces. It is also important to acknowledge and appreciate unpaid care Labour, and we want to promote shared responsibility in homes by getting more men to help out around the house. Lastly, we will adhere to rules that promote gender diversity in leadership roles, fair compensation for equal Labour, a healthy work-life balance, and a safe workplace free from harassment and discrimination. We can achieve gender equality and empower women in all areas of life by following these guidelines.

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