ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Economics

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND GENDER EQUALITY: WHERE DOES INDIA STAND?

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable Development Goals popularly known worldwide as SDGs are evolved from Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which adopted in 2000 by UN member states with a commitment to meet 8 goals and 18 targets by 2015. MDGs were first attempt at global level to address the key challenges of world. However, due to its shortcomings later replaced totally by SDGs. Goal 5 of SDGs addressed the gender specific elements much broader than MDG3. Being a prominent country in shaping the SDGs, India strongly committed to achieve the Gender specific goals within deadline. This makes imperative to trace the performance of country in Goal 5: Gender Equality. The present study is an attempt in this direction. The paper is descriptive in nature. It covers the following aspects: the inter-linkage of Goal 5 with other SDG goals, the methodology of SDG Index with respect to Goal 5 of SDG, and performance of India in Goal 5.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable Development Goals popularly known worldwide as SDGs are evolved from Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In 2000, United Nations member states adopted MDGs with a commitment to achieve 8 goals and 18 targets by 2015. At global level MDGs were the first attempt to address key challenges of world within a single framework. They exhilarated countries to take action. However, meanwhile they paved the way to new set of challenges. To address these challenges and develop a framework to converge the post 2015 development SDGs arose. Unlike MDGs, SDGs are broader in scope and more inclusive in nature (Niti Aayog, 2018; Nirmala Buch, 2016; Valeria E and Caroline S, 2016).

The initial efforts to figure SDGs made by UN member states at the Conference on Sustainable Development held at Rio-de Janeiro in 2012. Later, on September 2015 at the Sustainable Development meeting held at UN Headquarters in New York, 193 UN member states adopted The Agenda 2030 titled "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (Niti Aayog, 2018; Nirmala Buch, 2016).

The Agenda 2030 towards Sustainable Development contains 17 goals and 169 targets. These are global in nature and universally applicable. They effect from Jan 1st, 2016 and expected to be fulfilled by Dec 31st, 2030. UN member states are entrusted with the task to follow-up and review the progress of SDGs (Niti Aayog, 2018).

Fourth world conference on women held at Beijing in 1995 asserts women rights are human rights. Women and girls comprise half of the world population. Moreover, countries experience revealed women empowerment stimulates production and economic growth process. In these backdrops, Gender equality and empowerment found prerequisite to achieve sustainable development. Therefore, the gender specific elements are addressed in broader manner in SDGs than MDGs. One among the 17 SDGs, Goal 5: "Gender Equality and empower All Women and Girls" gave greater emphasis to bring gender equality and empower women. To achieve this aim it calls nations to end all forms of discrimination, violence, and harmful practices such as, early/forced marriage and genital mutilation etc. Further, it asks for valuing women's care and domestic work, usually not expressed in monetary terms. In addition to the above, also calls to ensure full and effective participation of women, and equal opportunities for leadership at all phases of decision (Niti Aayog, 2018; UN website).

History witnesses that, women and girls in India are experiencing inequalities from age long period. This not in just one stream but in many like, access to education, healthcare, nutrition, employment, earnings, and asset ownership so on. These inequalities reflected in the following indicators such as, sex ratio, literacy rate, malnutrition, health care access and labour force rate (Census 2011, NFHS-4, Labour bureau Report) etc. Being a prominent country in shaping the SDGs, India strongly committed to achieve the Gender specific goals within deadline. This makes imperative

to trace the performance of country in Goal5. The present study is an attempt in this direction.

Objectives
- To study the inter-linkage among the SDG goals, with special reference to Gender Equality Goal
- To understand the methodology of SDG India Index with respect to Goal 5
- To map the performance of India in each indicator of Gender Equality
- To explore the gaps between target and achievement

Methodology
The present study is descriptive in nature. Used SDG India Index data, constructed by Niti Aayog in 2018 to fulfil the objectives. In support to this Census Report 2011, NFHS-4 Labour Bureau Report and National Indicator Framework (NIF) by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) are referred. For better understanding Bar chart, SmartArt Graphics and customised map are utilised in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
A) Gender Equality and interconnection with other Goals
Since, SDG goals are interconnected in nature Figure 1 shows Goal 5 inter-linkage with other goals. Further it provides holistic approach to achieve the targets of gender equality.

B) Gender Equality Targets and Indicators
SDGs are not legally bonded. Countries can take ownership and establish a national framework for achieving the 17 goals. In India, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation was entrusted with the task of developing National Indicator Framework which goes with all the 17 SDGs and its 169 targets. MOSPI thus consulted 38 Central Ministries and 29 States/ 7 UTs and drafted the huge monitoring framework of India, consisting of 306 indicators (Niti Aayog, 2018).

As Goal 5 was concerned, based on the data availability and to ensure comparability across States and UTs, Niti Aayog identified six priority indicators keeping the National Indicator Framework as base. They captured four out of nine targets of Goal 5. Figure 2 provide the details of global targets and national level indicators outlined under Goal 5: Gender Equality (Niti Aayog, 2018; NIF, 2016).

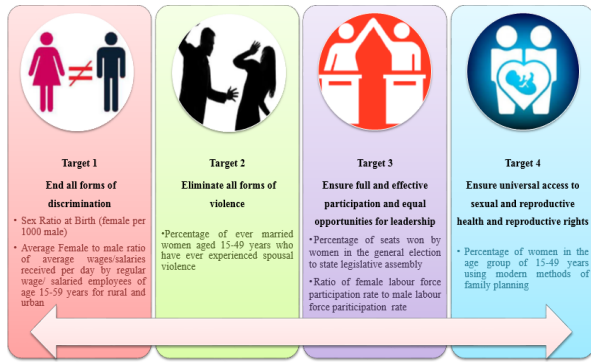**Figure 1: Goal 5 and its Interconnection with Other Goals**

Figure 2: Global Targets and National Level Indicators - Goal 5

c) Performance of India in Goal 5

Performance of India in Goal 5 was measured with SDG index score constructed by Niti Aayog in 2018. Below steps were followed in the calculation of respective SDG index score.

Step 1: Normalising the Raw data

Each priority indicator values under Goal 5 are rescaled into a score, ranging from 0 to 100. Where 0 indicates the lowest performance and 100 indicates target has been achieved. Two formulas adopted to compute normalised values. For positive indicators such as indicators of Target 1, 3 and 4, values are normalised with formula 1, and for negative indicator of Target 2 normalized value calculated with formula 2.

$$x^1 = \frac{x - min(x)}{T(x) - Min(x)} \times 100$$

Where,
x= raw data value
min (x)= minimum observed value of the indicator in the data set
T(x)= national target value of the indicator
x' = normalized value after rescaling
Here, increasing value means better performance in specific indicator

$$x^1 = \left[1 - \frac{x - T(x)}{Max(x) - T(x)}\right] \times 100$$

Where,
x= raw data value
max (x)= maximum observed value of the indicator in the data set
T(x)= national target value of the indicator
x' = normalized value after rescaling
Here, increasing value means low performance in specific indicator

Step 2: SDG Index Score

Once normalized values are obtained for six indicators, arithmetic average computed to get Index score. Each indicator assigned with equal weights. The arithmetic mean was rounded off to the nearest whole number (Niti Aayog, 2018).

Based on the overall index score in goal 5, states and UTs were classified into four groups as shown in figure 3.
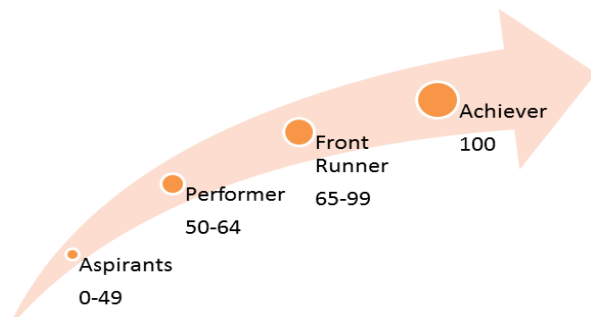

Figure 3: SDG Index Score Classification

Indicator wise data presented in figure 4 revealed the following facts:
1. Sex ratio at birth in India is below the target set under SDG.

The national target is to achieve sex ratio at birth of 954 females for 1000 males; it is just 898/1000 males. It obtained an index score of 54. Hence, two states namely Kerala and Chhattisgarh have achieved the target.
2. Thirty percentage of Wage gap observed between male and female at national level. While two UTs reached the goal of equal pay for men and women, namely Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Andaman and Nicobar islands.
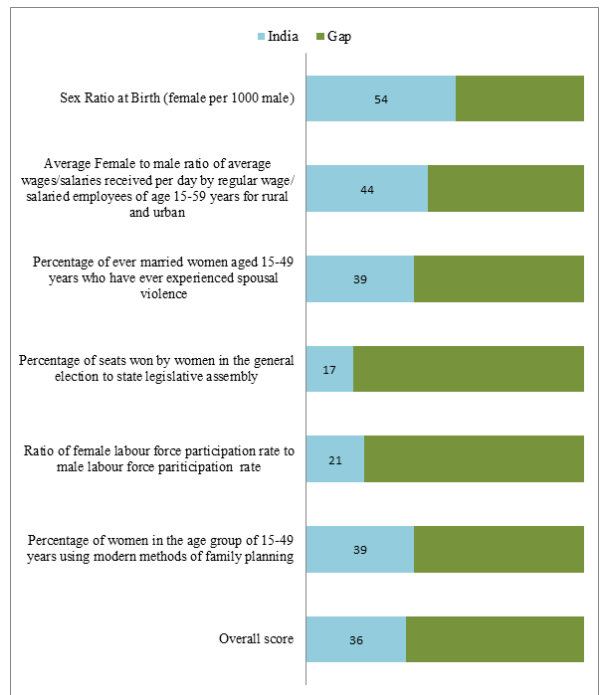

Figure 4: Index Score of Each Indicator in Goal 5

3. Domestic violence indicator showed one third of ever-married women in India have experienced spousal violence. North-East State Manipur accounted the highest violence rate (55%) within country. Least (7%) observed for Sikkim.
4. Against the target of 50 percent representation by women in state legislative assemblies, India achieved only 8.7 percent so far. Amongst all the indicator of goal 5 it scored least.
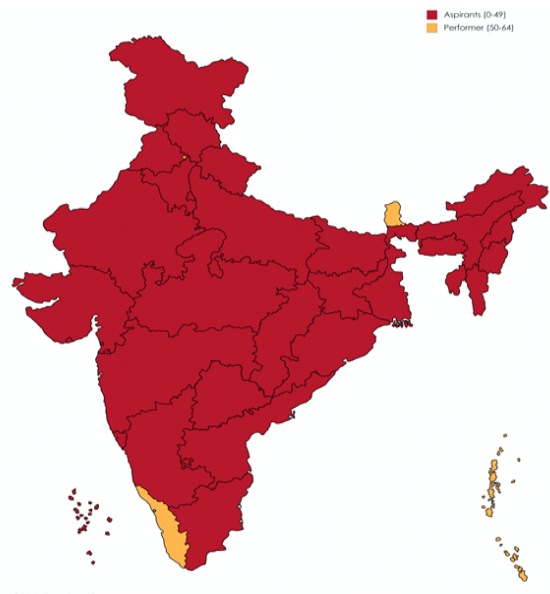

Figure 5: Performance of States and UTs in Goal 5

Source: Reproduced as like in report from https:// mapchart. net/ india.html

5. Women labour force participation rate is just 32 percent in India against the target of 50%. Nagaland has the highest women labour force participation rate accounting 76 percent amongst the states.

6. Use of Female sterilization reported 54 percentage among women aged between 15 to 49 years. The use of modern family planning methods found highest in Punjab and Chandigarh.

To sum up, the overall SDG Index Scores for the Goal of Gender Equality ranged between 24 to 50 for states and 27 to 58 for UTs. Nine states and two UTs figured below the national average of 36.

On a shocking note, not even single state/UTs listed under Achiever or in front runner category on Goal 5. Among the states Kerala and Sikkim with scores 50, and among the UTs Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Chandigarh with score 58 and 51 respectively, earned the Performers status (figure 5).

CONCLUSION

Being a prominent member state in shaping SDGs, India committed strongly to meet the targets within deadline. With 143 countries out of 195 of UN it stood by the goals and guaranteed Gender Equality in constitution. Number of legislation passed, several national level schemes and programmes taken up. At state level efforts made to achieve gender equality by launching number of schemes as well. Inspite of the concerted efforts' performance of India is not up to the mark. Amongst 13SDGs, considered in SDGs India Index, country secured the lowest index score of 36 in Goal 5: Gender Equality. Even worse, not even single state/UTs listed under Achiever or in front runner category on Goal 5. It revealed India is much behind in achieving the targets of Goal 5 compared to other SDGs. Much more progress remains to be made in Goal 5, especially towards women leadership and labour participation rate. Like MDGs, SDGs too quite on the policy options, efforts must be made in framing sound and target oriented policies. Further, Gender Inequalities are multidimensional in nature a holistic approach should adopt to reach the goals and targets.

Limitations

1. Analysis is confined to the results provided in SDG India Index.
2. Performance of India in Gender Equality excluded few indicators and targets underlined under Goal 5

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