# Sustainable Development Goal-5
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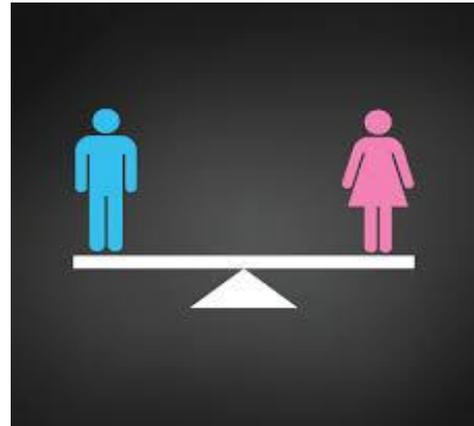
Dear Friends,

This month we shall discuss the fifth Sustainable Development Goal: Gender Equality.
In this blog, we shall try to explain:



    a. What it is and why is this relevant
    b. What are its indicators
    c. What are the targets
    d. Where do we stand in India
    e. What can we do to support the goal

As stated earlier, I have little to contribute on my own. I have attempted to provide a few references, so that if anyone is interested in probing deeper, you could do so.

## What is SDG 5 and why is this relevant [1]
Before we discuss this SDG it is important to recall that the MDG 3 covered Gender Equality, as seen from this report below:

MDG 3 Gender Equality & Women Empowerment
Target 3.A:
Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015
- The developing countries as a whole have achieved the target to eliminate gender disparity in primary, secondary and tertiary education.
- Globally, about three quarters of working-age men participate in the labour force, compared to half of working-age women.
- Women make up 41 per cent of paid workers outside of agriculture, an increase from 35 per cent in 1990.
- The average proportion of women in parliament has nearly doubled over the past 20 years.
- Women continue to experience significant gaps in terms of poverty, labour market and wages, as well as participation in private and public decision-making.

*Source:* https://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/default.aspx

However, the global community wished to push this goal further, and included this as SDG 5.

The SDG 5 aims at
1. Education for women and girls everywhere

2. Women to get equal share in responsible positions in government, social institutions, business and other organizations.
3. Social norms and age-old practices like child marriage hinders efforts towards gaining equality between the genders
4. Unpaid domestic work need to be shared equitably

*A word of caution: there are certain aspects where women hold unique positions like motherhood. In our search for gender equality, we should not forget and compromise on such basic and natural distinctions.*

In support of this view, we summarise what Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi (Amma) a world-renowned humanitarian and spiritual leader, said in an *interview* [5]:

Mother is the first Guru,
The feminine may hold the key to the survival of our species,
Women are 'the power of will, knowledge and action' just needs awakening,
There is nothing a woman cannot do if she sets her mind to it,
Today, we see women flourishing in political, social and economic spheres,
But women should always remain firm in their motherly nature. It is without leaving that foundation that they should strive to excel in all other fields,
Women have the muscle of the heart – much more powerful than the muscles of men.

**The UNICEF 2018 Report on Gender Equality [8] lists the following results:**

Result 1: Equal health care and nutrition for girls and boys
Result 2: Quality and dignified maternal care
Result 3: Gender equality in health systems and the health workforce
Result 4: Equality in education for girls and boys
Result 5: Gender equality in teaching and education systems
Result 6: Addressing gender-based violence against girls, boys and women
Result 7: Gender-responsive water, sanitation and hygiene systems
Result 8: Positive gender socialization for girls and boys
    Targeted priorities on adolescent girls' wellbeing and empowerment
Result 9: Girls' nutrition, pregnancy care, and HIV and HPV prevention
Result 10: Girls' secondary education and skills
Result 11: Gender-based violence in emergencies
Result 12: Child marriage and early unions
Result 13: Dignified menstrual health and hygiene

## What are its indicators and targets? [2]

The following is a list of the targets for this goal.

**5.1** End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere

**5.2** 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

**5.3** Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation

**5.4** 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

**5.5** Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life

**5.6** Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences

**5.A** 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

**5.B** Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women

**5.C** 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
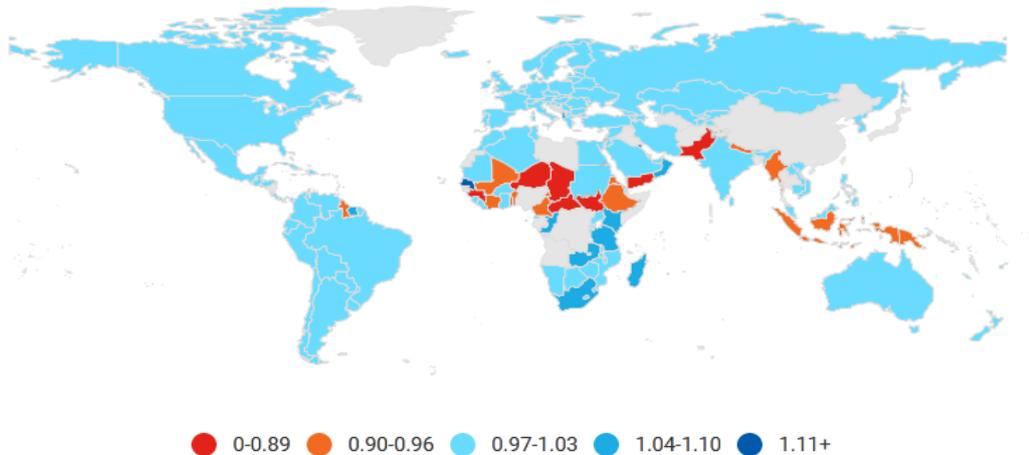
## Where do we stand in India? [4]

The following images offer some national as well as global status on SDG 5 Gender Equality [4].

Gender and education
Most countries have achieved gender parity in primary enrolment, but in many countries, disparities disadvantaging girls persist. India falls under the 0.97 − 1.03 range of the parity index for primary enrolment.

Gender parity index for primary enrolment, 2012-2018



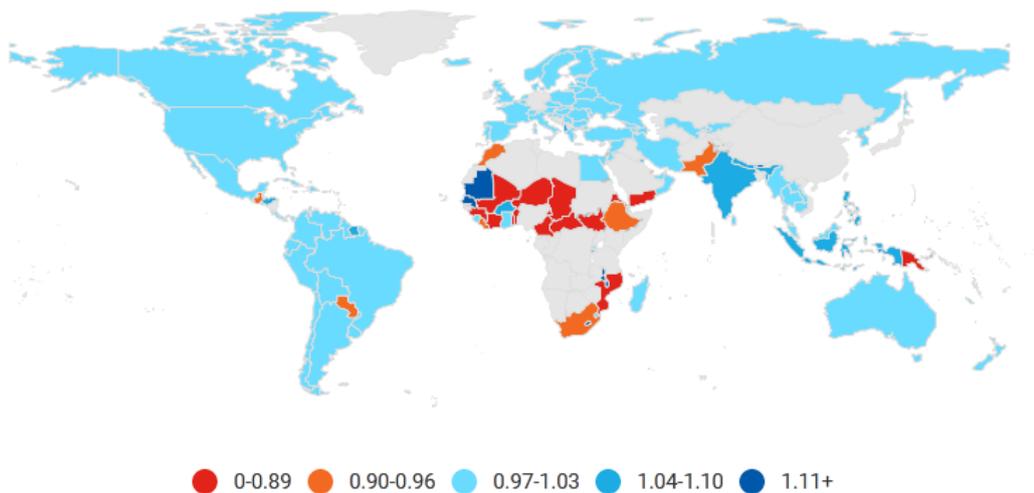● 0-0.89   ● 0.90-0.96   ● 0.97-1.03   ● 1.04-1.10   ● 1.11+

"While considerable progress has been made in reducing the number of out-of-school girls of primary school age, there are currently 5.5 million more out-of-school girls than boys, worldwide

Gender disparities increase at the secondary level but the patterns of disadvantage are more complex.

"Gender disparities disadvantaging girls in lower secondary education are widest in West and Central Africa, but boys are disadvantaged in some countries [9]. India falls under the 1.04 – 1.10 range of the parity index for lower secondary enrolment."

We may safely conclude that India has achieved the targets under these two indicators.

Gender parity index for lower secondary enrolment, 2012-2018



● 0-0.89   ● 0.90-0.96   ● 0.97-1.03   ● 1.04-1.10   ● 1.11+

The following table shows India's performance on SDG 5 in 2019 [10]

## SDG5 – Gender Equality

| Indicator | Value | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Demand for family planning satisfied by modern methods (% women married or in unions aged 15-49) | 72.0 | 🟡 | ↗ |
| Female to male mean years of schooling, population age 25 + (%) | 58.5 | 🔴 | → |
| Female to male labour force participation rate (%) | 34.2 | 🔴 | → |
| Seats held by women in national parliaments (%) | 11.8 | 🔴 | ↓ |

| 🟥 Major challenges | 🟧 Significant challenges | 🟨 Challenges remain | 🟩 SDG achieved | ⬜ Information unavailable |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| ↓ Decreasing | → Stagnating | ↗ Moderately improving | ↑ On track or maintaining SDG achievement |
|---|---|---|---|

The above table shows that India's performance on demand for family planning satisfaction is moderately improving while challenges remain. On the other 3 indicators, mean years of schooling, labour force participation and seats held by women in national parliament, major challenges remain, while the trends in the first two shows stagnation, and for the last one, seats in the national parliament, the trend is declining. It is clear that we in India have miles to go with regard to adult women and gender equality, if we want to meet this goal by 2030.

## What can we do to support the goal? [3]

Both state and central governments have undertaken several schemes to remove gender inequality in India. But we face a great challenge, as we are a 138 crore population, compared to China's 144 crore [11]. The challenge lies in making the schemes actually reach the target population. If every college student (1) every year (1) reaches out to one target beneficiary (1) and ensures that the beneficiary actually gets the benefits (let us call this Scheme 1-1-1); it would help a lot.

The UNESCO Chair for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment [6] at Amrita University plays a vital role in the health, welfare and upliftment of women, be it maternal health, education, sanitation or infant mortality. Women have been trained in plumbing and masonry, etc. to build toilets to make villages 'Open Defecation Free' as a part of the National Clean India program [7].

The SDG web [3] states the following:

"What can we do to fix these issues?
If you are a girl, you can stay in school, help empower your female classmates to do the same and fight for your right to access sexual and reproductive health services. If you are a woman, you can address unconscious biases and implicit associations that form an unintended and often an invisible barrier to equal opportunity.

If you are a man or a boy, you can work alongside women and girls to achieve gender equality and embrace healthy, respectful relationships.

You can fund education campaigns to curb cultural practices like female genital mutilation and change harmful laws that limit the rights of women and girls and prevent them from achieving their full potential".

**Finally, as Indians, we must never give up on our tradition of respect for all women as a form of the Universal Mother, the _Parashakti._**

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