



## Special Issue

# “(Global Partnership: India's Collaboration Initiatives for Economic and Social Growth)”

## Gender equality and sustainable development

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### Abstract

Encouraging gender equality and creating sustainable routes are pressing issues. This paper examines the reasons of their simultaneous attention as well as potential solutions. It starts by demonstrating the moral, ethical, and pragmatic justifications for gender equality's necessity for sustainable development. Gender equality and sustainable development demand a deep conceptual grasp of each other's relationships. It starts by outlining the moral, ethical, and pragmatic justifications for gender equality's essential role in sustainable development. The prevalent development patterns around a number of concerns, such as labor and industrial production, population and reproduction, food and agriculture, or water, sanitation, and energy, have shown to be unsustainable and gender uneven. A thorough conceptual grasp of both ideas and how they relate to one another is necessary to integrate gender equality with sustainable development. A German forester originally used the term "sustainability" in an environmental context to describe long-term forest management practices. In the midst of later phases of imperial and colonial expansion and consolidation in the 19th and 20th centuries, environmental policies continued to be shaped by this early emphasis on protecting commercially significant natural resources. During this time, a lot of actions, regulations, and interventions were solely focused on generating financial gain for colonial States and European powers. These frequently concentrated on the quick extraction of natural resources in the majority of Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Such laws and practices typically had disastrous social repercussions because they were linked to the appropriation of land and local people's means of subsistence as well as to cruel and dehumanizing labor practices. More generally, critical examination of colonial and neocolonial environmental policies and interventions reveals that safeguarding the environment under the pretext of preserving pristine nature will inevitably have detrimental effects on local lives and affect men and women differently. The colonial era also shows how conflicts between the "economy" and the "environment" first surfaced, as well as how important trade-offs had to be made between environmental preservation, generating a living, and commercial interests. A large number of these sustainable, alternate routes revolve around women. They frequently lead social movements that oppose unsustainable practices. A large number of these sustainable, alternate routes revolve around women. They frequently lead social movements that oppose unsustainable practices. And making demands for substitutes. Their expertise, initiative, and self-determination are vital in discovering, illustrating, and constructing more environmentally, economically, and socially viable paths forward, be it in managing regional ecosystems, adjusting to climate change, growing and gaining access to food, or guaranteeing sustainable, suitable water, sanitation, and energy services. This paper aims to explore a prevalent approach to analysis utilizes ecofeminism concepts, that hold great promise for the development of policies and actions that promote a progressive politics of sustainability and gender equality.

**Keywords:** sustainability, gender equality, environmental, ecological integrity, unsustainability, green economy

### Introduction

There has never been a more urgent need to address the twin issues of advancing gender equality and creating routes for sustainable development. Development that guarantees social justice, gender equality, ecological integrity, and human well-being both now and in the future is known as sustainable development. Integrating gender equality with sustainable development requires profound conceptual understanding of both concepts and their interlinkages. The dominant patterns of distribution, consumption, and production are moving in a very unsustainable way. In a world where people are now a major force behind the processes of the earth system, we are witnessing overuse of natural resources, the extinction of important habitats and biodiversity, and pollution of the land,

oceans, and atmosphere. As humankind approaches or surpasses so-called planetary boundaries, scientific understandings are elucidating the enormous social, environmental, and economic problems posed by dangers like climate change and loss of key ecosystem services. Already, interactions between humans and the environment are causing hitherto unseen shocks. And strains-felt in droughts, floods, and the destruction of livelihoods and urban and rural landscapes-while a "nexus" of food, energy, environmental, and financial crises has affected a great number of people and places.

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natural resources for their well-being. Additionally, they frequently make gender inequality worse. These unsustainable behaviors pose serious risks to future generations and exacerbate poverty and inequality, particularly for the third of the world's population that depends directly on natural resources for their well-being. Additionally, they frequently make gender inequality worse.

Today, there are many examples of policies and interventions that conflict with or damage women's rights and gender equality in the name of sustainability or green economic aims. Around the world, there are more and more instances of alternate routes that lead to gender equality and sustainability. Some have their roots in the routines by which men and women access, manage, and use woods, soils, and urban environments in ways that support their well-being and means of subsistence. Others can be seen in agro-ecology, urban transitions, solidarity economies, and movements and collectivities-many of which are headed by women-that create alternative food and resource sovereignty. Some of these propose ways to improve the existing capitalist relations, while others point the way toward more significant green changes. Creating more equitable gender relations that uphold women's human rights, dignity, and capacities in the face of variations in class, color, sexual orientation, age, ability, and circumstance is first and foremost a moral and ethical necessity. It is also a fundamental component of an ethical global order. Secondly, it is imperative to address the prevalent trend where women are disproportionately affected by environmental, climatic, and economic shocks and pressures, which undermines their essential roles in supporting their families and communities. This will help prevent women from becoming victims. The third-and possibly most important-need is to strengthen women's agency. Gender equality may help increase the production and efficiency of resources, promote the conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems, and create more low-carbon, sustainable food, and energy, water, and health systems. Women can and have played a key role in paving the road for green transformation and sustainability. It's important to note, nevertheless, that this cannot imply instrumentalizing women as the new "sustainability saviors" or adding "environment" to the caring responsibilities of women. It entails acknowledging and respecting their expertise, rights, capacities, and physical integrity as well as making sure that positions are aligned with authority over resources and the ability to make decisions.

Therefore, it is essential to link gender equality with sustainable development for a number of reasons. Gender inequality and unsustainability have closely related root causes and underlying drives. Both stem from the political-economic relationships that enable specific forms of market-driven, neo-liberal growth in late capitalism. At the expense of government control, redistribution, reproduction, and care, these include severe privatization, financialization, and capital concentration; production focused on short-term profits; unrestricted material consumption; and unprecedented levels of militarism. These political-economic relationships prey on and perpetuate gender inequality by taking use of women's labor, unpaid caregiving, and frequently even their bodies. They are eroding people's rights and dignity and, in many cases, causing social reproduction problems.

The need to shift economies and society toward more

sustainable routes is currently receiving increased attention and discussion on a global scale, whether to prevent crisis and disaster or to promote prosperity through "green economies." Nancy Folbre argues that market economies are sustained not by the 'invisible hand of the market' alone but also by the 'invisible heart of care' <sup>[1]</sup>. But a sense of the politics at play is frequently absent from these discussions. The difficulty is frequently understood in managerial and technological terms as an issue of correctly implementing legislation, pricing, and technologies. This ignores the possibility that we will need to restructure social, economic, and political structures more drastically in order to change unsustainable tendencies. On the other hand, "sustainability" is frequently used as though it were an unambiguous concept. However, there are a lot of conflicts and trade-offs. For example, there are conflicts over funding for various forms of low-carbon energy and whether to prioritize food, biofuels, or trees for carbon storage in order to reduce global warming or support local livelihoods. The way in which these conflicts are resolved has a significant impact on who wins and loses-between local, national, and international interests as well as inside social groups. This essay demonstrates how many current examples of policy and intervention support the goals of sustainability or the "green economy" in ways that conflict with or jeopardize women's rights and gender equality.

A lot of the popular market-driven routes are likewise unsustainable from a social and environmental standpoint. In fact, gender inequality, pollution, and over-exploitation of the environment are all supported by mainstream neo-liberal paradigms. The way dominant theories of gender rely on a division between productive and reproductive labor-the latter includes unpaid and volunteer labor for care, subsistence, and reproduction, with a large portion of it performed by women-is a key gender dynamic. Although labor that is productive is valued, capitalist pressures frequently drive down salaries. The expansion of numerous industries and commercial agriculture sectors has coincided with the rise in female labor force participation <sup>[3]</sup>. Even though economic globalization has given women from all socioeconomic backgrounds more work options, many of these have been offered inside existing labor markets that perpetuate patterns of discrimination and segregation. Poorer women thus work in low-end retail, domestic service, assembly lines, and labor-intensive agriculture-all of which are perceived as continuations of their conventional gender roles. These jobs are typically characterized by low pay, unstable employment, and unfavorable working conditions. A lot of them are unofficial. They may continue to be invisible in the economic system and perpetuate the idea that women are the secondary breadwinners in their family <sup>[3]</sup>. More importantly, the very nature of capitalism markets and production depends on the continuous utilization of unpaid labour, primarily performed by women, to tend to the needs of the young, the ill, and the elderly. Women as caregivers are often essentialized by the nature of the effort that goes into providing care and the fact that it is underpaid. In addition to placing a strain and stress on women, these socially imposed roles also restrict their options, capacities, and chances for engaging in paid work outside the home, which has a detrimental impact on their position, rights, and dignity. In capitalist economic models, care work is routinely disregarded, undervalued, or "externalized," while being crucial to the

reproduction of the labor force as well as larger communities and cultures. Therefore, gender inequality is promoted by and a component of this dominant development model. But this paradigm runs the risk of becoming socially unsustainable since it overuses human "capital" and undermines the principles of social security and caring. In fact, there is mounting evidence of a social reproduction crisis that is developing as individuals and communities battle to give young children with the proper care they need to raise the next generation.

The discussion of gender and climate change has mostly been on adaptation and vulnerabilities at the local level, whereas large-scale, technological, and growth-related mitigation programs have been hesitant to incorporate social and gender justice components. Discussions around climate financing have likewise been largely gender-neutral <sup>[4]</sup>. This illustrates how gender is generally not included into national and international legislation. Feminist visions are frequently very critical of prevailing paradigms and discourses, as the history of feminist engagement with international debates and institutions demonstrates, and it is simpler for policy makers to concentrate on simplified imagery rather than take on more radical problems. However, they are the ones that are required to genuinely address the global climate change concerns and to reevaluate the prevalent pathways surrounding production and consumption. Realizing all human rights-such as the rights to food, water, sanitation, and livelihoods-as well as the rights to security and integrity of the body are ultimately necessary for gender equality. Frequently, rights alone are insufficient to bring about their realization; additional conditions include power and voice, acknowledgment and respect, and challenges to prevailing institutions and ways of knowing. This is where we witness the crucial role that women's mobilization and collective action play in dispelling myths, holding states responsible for the fulfillment of rights, and offering alternatives.

In the writings of feminist researchers, in women's cooperatives and movements, in urban and rural areas where men and women create and maintain their livelihoods, and in bureaucracies and international organizations. We must locate these advocates and make room in theory and policy for their viewpoints and methods. These present compelling arguments against the logic of 'homo economicus' as well as against the prevalent consumption and production patterns that support unsustainability and structural inequality. They provide options that have the ability to bring about socially and gender-equitable green developments. Additionally, there is a chance to actualize them through a developing progressive politics of gender and environmental alliance-building that combines official and informal practices, states, conscious enterprises, and movements. The most scathing criticisms of prevailing ideologies and lifestyles have always come from feminists, usually from the periphery. It's time to get past those boundaries and advance alternative lifestyles.

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