Equality and empowerment of women can be ensured through the rightful implementation of the already existing laws. Women are participating much more in the Panchayat now. But this needs to be supported by the state apparatus. The grass root workers have to ensure that the voices get through to the government.

The laws have changed and transformed in the last 20 years to view welfare activities as a possible source of ‘Social Drain’. As a result, there has emerged a sense of Targeted Beneficiaries. The laws and schemes designed to ensure gender equality are receiving lesser budgets as a result.

Rights of everyone must be remembered to decentralize, implement and expand these schemes. Budgets need to be expanded in these schemes. We often see that infrastructure funds are exacted more than wage funds in these schemes. Examples of how Nirbhaya fund (a fund which was created to help rape survivors in distress) has decreased and the situation of women in the Haryana Panchayat elections showcase the aforementioned points in the practical light.

In the Child Labor Act Amendment, family enterprise and entertainment industry are left out of the purview of welfare activities. We are all aware of how this amendment can be used and molded in various ways.

Women are migrating more and more in the present social scenario. But the boundary between migration and trafficking is getting blurred as a result.


CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Popularizing the SDGs among the youth of India, popularizing SDGs in schools, colleges, communities through campaigns, workshops will be a great way to involve everyone. Promotion of development justice among youth is very important for the future.

2. Monitoring Global platform: There should be an online platform where it should be compulsory for all the state and central government to provide the data on the progress and successes of SDGs every three months. This online platform should be open for public so a common citizen can see the progress. This same platform can also be open for the suggestion on if policies are not being implemented properly so the citizen or CSOs can hold government accountable.

3. A major problem which CSOs are facing is that the SDGs are not legally bound, that means that the CSOs have to persuade the local or state level authorities to engage in the process which creates a continuous rift between government authorities and CSOs.

4. There should be a rights-based approach in SDGs as currently, it seems to be like a charitable working framework by the government to empower and improve the people who were left behind in the race of development. Instead, SDGs should be promoted as rights of the citizen and there should be a way where any citizen can hold any government authority accountable for not implementing any scheme.

5. The term ‘inclusiveness’ probably needs to be redefined to have a transformative approach to ensure the SDGs slogan ‘LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND’ true.

Established in 1927, AIWC is a pioneer NGO consistently working towards socio-economic empowerment of women across India. Concerned about the legal, environmental, health, literacy and other social economic ills facing women in the country, AIWC’s mission is to empower women, especially rural women to strive for their rights, to have better quality of life through sustainable livelihoods and for women in India to have a voice in and benefit from India’s development agenda. This research was carried out by AIWC as part of an eight country project on Monitoring and Review of the SDGs with the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law & Development (APWLD).

www.apwld.org

Monitoring and Review of the Sustainable Development Goals & Development Justice

Reviewed by
ALL INDIA WOMEN’S CONFERENCE

COUNTRY CONTEXT

Situated in the southern part of Asia, India is the 7th biggest country in land size (3,287 million km²) and second most populated country in the world (1,410.19 million people) which includes 623.64 (51.5%) million men and 586.46 (48.5%) million women as per the Census data of 2011. According to UN report, India has 536 million youth (28%) of the country’s population which can be a driving force to boost India’s economy. India is also an economic giant with its 2.095 trillion US dollars GDP. The country possesses a pool full of opportunities for efficient implementation of SDG. India is among the most unequal country in the world with the richest 1% owning 53% of the country’s wealth, while at the other end of the pyramid, the poorer half jostles for a mere 4.1% of national wealth. 21.9% of total population is still living below poverty line. The literacy rate remains at 74.04% at the national level with women’s literacy rate remaining below national average, at 65.46% according to the last census. India is the world’s biggest democracy which, unlike many other post-colonial states, has managed to keep the spirit of democracy alive and peoples rights in order. India is also a multi-religious country where people live with diversity, speak 23 languages combined with a number of dialects and survive with multi-social economic background. India’s justifies the increase allocation of its military budget to its border disputes and communal challenges with its neighbouring countries, with an allocation of 40 billion dollars, a raise of 7% from last year. There are also issues of rampant migration across bordering states. India’s health sector is yet not equipped sufficiently to provide basic healthcare to majority of citizens, particularly those from vulnerable community and medical expenses are still out of the reach of poor. India spends around 4.7% (5.33 billion US$) of its total GDP in the health sector and with the lack of proper medical infrastructure, the situation is still at low level.

OVERVIEW OF SYSTEMIC & STRUCTURAL BARRIERS TOWARDS ACHIEVING DEVELOPMENT JUSTICE

Patriarchy, unequal distribution of wealth and resources, climate change and unequal gender roles creates multiple social and economic inequalities within India. Varying levels of poverty, poverty assessment tools and methodologies that do not seem to reflect the actual ground realities, and policymakers’ lack of capacity and indifference towards the realities on the ground will probably make the implementation of SDGs for the real beneficiaries difficult.

The neo-liberal global system of trade and investments whether it is the World Trade Organization (WTO) or other trade agreements often conflicts with government’s obligations to its citizens. These agreements are also problematic given that the beneficiaries tend to be the developed countries or the selected few within a country. India has been sued at the WTO over its policy for mandatory local content requirements on solar power developers aimed to ensure local green energy incentives for the country. Despite arguing that these are steps that forms part of the suggested actions for combating climate change and ensuring development of its citizens, WTO ruled against India, further undermining efforts to combat climate change.

Climate change and destruction of the environment is adding an extra burden to women in most of the...
Gender inequalities have restricted participation of women in decision-making in some cases, and lack of capacities in others. Social taboos, pre-determined social and cultural roles, fear of violence and similar challenges have perpetuated gender inequalities in India. Women’s participation in the parliament of India is currently at 12.2%, women’s leadership in businesses remains low, and women continued to be paid much less than men for the same kind of job in many unorganized sectors. Maternal mortality rates remain at 190/100000 and the adolescent birth rate is still hovering around 32.8/1000 (age of 15-19). Women are being excluded in policy formation, dialogues on development framework and implementations. Violence against women is also creating a barrier to women’s participation in public places. In 2014 the National Crime record Bureau recorded 337,922 crimes against women. All these challenges present constraints towards achieving development justice for women.

ARCHITECTURE FOR SDGS IMPLEMENTATION

India has appointed National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) as the main agency to take on the implementation work of SDGs in India. NITI Aayog has been established to provide a platform for cooperative federalism; facilitating the state and centre together as equals while states will take lead in providing policy interventions to the union government. The NITI Aayog has prepared a mapping of all the related schemes and departments working on the implementation work of SDGs. Different schemes relating to the goals are being popularized through the government website, television advertisement, radio advertisements, newspaper etc. State governments have been asked to replicate the schemes at the state level. Until now only the State of Assam has started working on it and in the process of partnering with Earth Institute, the University of Colombia for the implementation of SDGs. There have been no officially defined roles for CSO’s engagement and no other CSO’s have been invited to participate in the implementation process as of now.

While various schemes linking the SDGs have been announced in the run up to the SDG implementation, there has been no clear financial allocation or budgets provided so far. A report released by Technology and Action for Rural Advancement has estimated the gap of around 8468 Billion USD for the implementation of SDGs in India. The goal wise estimation of the financial gap can be seen in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SDGs Goals</th>
<th>Source of Finance</th>
<th>Finance Required (in Billion USD)</th>
<th>Gap (in Billion USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal 3: Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-Being for all at all Ages</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 4: Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for all</td>
<td>Public and Private</td>
<td>2258</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>1408</td>
<td>1091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 13: Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and its Impacts</td>
<td>Public and Private</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, no clear cut means of implementation guidelines or legal bindings makes it difficult for CSO member like AIWC to hold government accountable.