

SDG 2030

**INSIGHTS FROM INDIA
FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**



EDITOR: DR. K K SOMASEKHARAN MA MPHIL PH.D

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Gaveshana R&D Cell

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	i
Chapter One.....	1
Chapter Two	9
Chapter Three	31
Chapter Four	47
Chapter Five.....	55
Chapter Six	70
Chapter Seven.....	103
Chapter Eight.....	112
Chapter Nine.....	127
Chapter Ten	144
Chapter Eleven.....	161
Chapter Twelve.....	176
Chapter Thirteen	185
Chapter Fourteen.....	194

INTRODUCTION

In 2015, 193 member countries of the United Nations (UN) adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, marking a historic global commitment to dignity, peace, and prosperity for both humanity and the planet. This landmark agenda outlines 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with specific targets to be achieved by the year 2030. The agenda encompasses a wide range of action areas, including poverty eradication, sanitation, education, health, and economic development, while simultaneously addressing social equity and environmental sustainability. This edited volume is a modest attempt to offer meaningful insights toward building a sustainable future.

It gives me immense pleasure to present this edited book titled *SDG 2030: Insights from India for a Sustainable Future*. This volume is the outcome of a concerted academic effort to compile scholarly contributions that aim to enrich discourse and inspire action toward a sustainable and inclusive future.

The book consists of 14 chapters, each offering diverse perspectives and practical insights on sustainable development.

The first chapter, *How Informal India Hinders the Path to Meeting SDG 2030: An Exploratory Overview for Research*, emphasizes the critical role of social sector investment in development and encourages researchers to explore emerging and underexplored areas related to sustainability.

The second chapter elaborates on the transformative potential of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in reshaping the

agricultural landscape of rural India and emphasizes their role in promoting rural transformation and collective empowerment.

Chapter 3 analyses how digital technologies are transforming microfinance delivery and enhancing women's access to credit, while also exploring regional variations in adoption behaviour, financial management practices, and social norms that shape empowerment trajectories in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Chapter 4 illustrates how SDG 4 (Quality Education) can be achieved through the introduction of progressive educational policies such as the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUGP). This article offers a theoretical and critical examination of the key features and emerging concerns of the FYUGP in Arts and Science colleges in Kerala.

The fifth chapter explains the transition of women from economic dependence to financial independence through microfinance initiatives. The study proposes policy recommendations aimed at enhancing microfinance initiatives to secure wider and long-lasting benefits for women.

Chapter 6 examines the influence of green brand image, brand credibility, green packaging, eco- innovation, and consumer environmental awareness on green purchasing behaviour among working women professionals in Tamil Nadu. This study further analyses the confidence of women professionals in relation to their propensity to purchase green products.

In Chapter 7, the authors explore Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's illuminating work *We Should All Be Feminists* as an influential text that resonates with the principles of SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and women's empowerment. The chapter

highlights how Adichie's text raises awareness of persistent gender inequalities and encourages a rethinking of social attitudes in ways that align with the broader goals of SDG 5.

Chapter 8 discusses various government-led initiatives such as the Atal Innovation Mission, Skill India Mission, and Startup India, and their alignment with NEP 2020 objectives to foster innovation, enhance skills, and promote youth employment in line with SDG 4 (Quality Education).

In Chapter 9, the authors examine the impact of government policies on agricultural sustainability, drawing evidence from rural households in Kannur District, Kerala, with a focus on SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger).

Chapter 10 evaluates the effectiveness of government initiatives such as the Jal Jeevan Mission, Jal Shakti Abhiyan, and Atal Bhujal Yojana, with particular emphasis on Jal Jeevan Mission activities in rural Palakkad, in alignment with SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation).

Chapter 11 analyses the socio-economic and sustainable development impacts of Self-Help Group (SHG) participation on rural women in Kerala, corresponding to SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

In Chapter 12, the authors highlight the role of Big Data Analytics in Public Health from the perspective of SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being). This chapter also critically evaluates the ethical and regulatory guidelines associated with Big Data Analytics (BDA) in public health applications.

Chapter 13 examines how literary works not only offer aesthetic value but also provide critical commentary on real-world challenges related to sustainable development. The author reads the renowned novel, *The Hungry Tide* by Amitav Ghosh, in line with SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation).

The final chapter explores the influence of microfinance on women's empowerment, with a special focus on Kudumbashree, Kerala's flagship programme for women's empowerment and poverty alleviation. The chapter also identifies the challenges faced by beneficiaries in achieving independence, self-confidence, and entrepreneurship, thereby underscoring the importance of SDG 5 (Gender Equality).

I would like to wholeheartedly acknowledge the contributors to this edited volume for their valuable scholarly contributions. I extend my sincere gratitude to the Management of Navajyothi College for their constant support and encouragement. I also congratulate the entire Gaveshana (R&D) Team for their dedicated efforts in bringing out this publication in a time-bound manner.

Dr. K K Somasekharan M.A., M.Phil., PhD.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Narrating Empowerment: Adichie's Feminism and the Vision of SDG 5

Ms. Namitha Mathew*

Mrs. Athira C V**

1. Introduction

Literature has always been a medium for social reflection and critique. While literature has been playing its role in society, the United Nations has introduced the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with SDG 5 specifically concentrating on achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *We Should All Be Feminists* is a compelling example of a literary engagement towards a positive social change.

The essay, which is adapted from Adichie's 2012 TEDx talk, is a conversation on equality and feminism while discussing the deeply rooted societal construct of gender. Adichie speaks from a Nigerian context, while providing instances from the US too; it can be taken as a condition faced by women all over the world. This paper focuses on how Adichie's concerns are addressed in the SDG strategies and expand the understanding of literature's role in global advocacy through Adichie's feminist vision and UN's developmental framework.

2. SDG 5: Goals, Targets, and Implications

“Ending all discrimination against women and girls is not only a basic human right, it's crucial for a sustainable future; it's

proven that empowering women and girls helps economic growth and development” (*Sustainable Development Goals*, n.d.). When the United Nations introduced the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, its aim was to make the world a better place and Sustainable Development Goal 5 emphasizes the need to eliminate gender discrimination and ensure equal rights and opportunities for all individuals. In addition, its targets are to eliminate all types of violence and discrimination against women and girls, guaranteeing equal representation in leadership and decision-making roles, and improving access to reproductive health and rights. These cannot be achieved just by structural changes, but the mentality and the conscience of the people also must change to bring forth these achievements. Along with lived experience and proper awareness, literary texts pave the ways for challenging and even changing dominant ideologies. Adichie’s work is one such which offers a narrative that is both personal and universally resonant.

3. Adichie’s Feminist Framework

Adichie’s definition of feminist is, “... a man or a woman who says, ‘Yes, there’s a problem with gender as it is today and we must fix it, we must do better’” (Adichie, 2014). Her approach is human-centered, grounded in personal anecdotes, and delivered in accessible language which makes it reach a wider audience. Adichie’s writing strengthens women and girls to challenge societal expectations and she provides a platform for women’s voices and highlighting their experiences in the midst of inequality and discrimination. *We Should All Be Feminists* begins with Adichie giving an account of her childhood experiences including moments of gender-based exclusion and the double standards faced by women. Further into the essay, she delves into how deeply embedded gender inequalities are in aspects of life

that often appear mundane or ordinary. She acknowledges gender inequality as a global issue which needed to be addressed both from a global level and local level. Adichie shows how different and difficult it is to navigate through the society which considers women as second class citizens. On a critical analysis of the essay, it is viewed that, “Adichie argues that gender inequality is a fallout of an imbalance in the construction of roles for men and women. Children, right from infancy, are socialized into gender-specific roles founded on discrimination against the girl-child. Femininity is constructed to keep a girl reserved, likable and, most importantly, silent” (Amako-Effiong & Akpa, 2024). Adichie wants societies to re-examine the ways in which they teach gender, raise children, and define success. These themes closely correspond with several targets outlined in SDG 5, especially Target 5.1 which suggests the abolition of all kinds of discrimination, Target 5.5 ensures full participation in leadership, and Target 5.c addresses the adoption and reinforcement of positive gender equality policies.

4. Narrative as a Tool for Advocacy

As the world changes there has been developments against gender discrimination but there are still significant disparities in some regions, with women often being denied the same job privileges as men. Throughout history, literature has contributed meaningfully to global advocacy. In addressing gender-based discrimination, literature has consistently articulated these issues with nuance and complexity. In *We Should All Be Feminists*, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie critically examines the multifaceted challenges arising from gender-based discrimination, highlighting how deeply ingrained societal norms perpetuate inequality. Women have long carried the weight of societal gender expectations. Adichie weaves storytelling with social critique rather than relying on abstract argument which brings people to

the lived reality of the ones suffering. For instance, her anecdote from childhood where she wanted to be the class monitor but even after gaining the top marks, she was not given the opportunity just because she was not a boy. It was the ‘normal’ for them then. Adichie talks on the social conditioning that brought about this circumstance.

While heading on the journey with Adichie, the disparities with which women are treated is witnessed. From birth onwards, they are being conditioned to act, talk and behave in ‘an appropriate way’ which does not ‘threaten’ men and is suitable for a girl in a society. Adichie speaks from an African and Nigerian context, suggesting situations which she experienced, which aims not just to inform but to transform. They also reflect what SDG 5 attempts to quantify through targets and indicators. SDG 5 recommends women to be paid the same as men for the same job as it is not always the case. “A man and a woman are doing the same job, with the same qualifications, and the man is paid more *because* he is a man” (Adichie, 2014). While this observation stems from the context of the United States, similar—or even more severe—conditions persist across many other countries. Thus, Adichie’s narrative strategy becomes an act of feminist literary activism.

5. Gender Equality in Focus: Adichie and the SDG 5

Targets

Examining how *We Should All Be Feminists* corresponds to specific SDG 5 targets:

SDG Target 5.1 calls for the abolition of all kinds of discrimination against women and girls worldwide. Adichie provides multiple examples of everyday discrimination faced by women, be it from the workplace or from the smallest act of

inequality faced by most of the girl child from their homes just because the people and society has internalized the idea of gender discrimination believing it to be natural. “Each time I walk into a Nigerian restaurant with a man, the waiter greets the man and ignores me. The waiters are products of a society that has taught them that men are more important than women, and I know that they don’t intend harm, but it is one thing to know something intellectually and quite another to feel it emotionally” (Adichie, 2014). She also observes that only the man gets acknowledged even when she gives out money and most importantly through this all men feel that nothing is wrong with the way society treats women as they never had to be exposed to every minor and major inconvenience just because of their gender. Adichie also highlights the expectation placed on girls to cook for their siblings and on wives to prepare meals for their husbands, even when both partners are equally engaged in work or study—revealing how gender roles persist in everyday domestic responsibilities. Her critique is not just about pointing out inequalities, she also unpacks the cultural stories and beliefs that make such discrimination seem normal or acceptable.

Target 5.4 recommends that unpaid care and domestic labor be valued and acknowledged through the implementation of social protection programs, infrastructure, and public services as well as the encouragement of shared responsibility within the family and household as suitable for the country. Adichie too speaks about the shared responsibilities in households and how differently children should be taught about internalizing gender, so that women should be naturally seen as the ones who are supposed to cook and look after the entire family. “I know a woman who hates domestic work, but she pretends that she likes it, because she has been taught that to be ‘good wife material’, she has to be – to use that Nigerian word – *homely*” (Adichie, 2014). Such expectations

should be avoided so that people could be who they want to be rather than what society expects them to be.

The goal of Target 5.5 is to guarantee women's full and effective involvement as well as equal leadership opportunities at all levels of political, economic, and public decision-making. The UN through this is trying to make sure that women do not have to go the extra mile in the areas of leadership and decision making because of their gender. While it is easier said than done, Adichie observes various instances where women have to attach themselves with men in some way in order to gain respect and to be 'seen', which reinforces the need for such a target. Be it having to wear manly dress or wearing a wedding ring even when they are not married, women had to be in a man's shoes sometimes to be taken seriously. According to Adichie, men are initially viewed as the norm and the standard when it comes to appearance, which is a sad reality. A lot of us believe that women are more likely to be treated seriously if they don't look extremely feminine. Men don't worry about being taken seriously during business meetings because of their attire, but women do. Her call for raising children differently, with equal expectations for boys and girls, is central to long-term change in leadership dynamics.

SDG Target 5.a calls for reforms to ensure that women have equal access to economic resources, including ownership and control of land and other property, inheritance, financial services, and natural resources, all while following national laws. Adichie reflects on how girls are raised to aspire to marriage rather than financial independence, while boys are encouraged to be providers which sometimes become a burden for both the genders. Women are not expected to be financially independent; they are supposed to be in the unpaid and underpaid jobs without any control or access to money or ownership in any form. Adichie mentions her grandmother who "refused, protested, spoke up whenever she felt she was being deprived of land and access because she was

female” (2014). Adichie’s call for feminism is for the women to have equal access aligning with Target 5.a.

Target 5.c: In order to promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels, Target 5.c calls for the adoption and strengthening of sensible laws and regulations. Adichie throughout her essay advocates for a cultural and societal change that needs to be implemented. She emphasizes on unlearning the existing notions of gender and reframing gender roles to promote equality. She also challenges the belief held by some that women’s subordination to men is justified simply because it is part of the culture, to which she responds as culture being in a state of perpetual change and serves primarily to maintain the preservation and continuity of a community. So when the culture changes it is also important to bring in policies that would benefit women to be empowered and promote gender.

6. Global Relevance and Cultural Specificity

“Culture does not make people. People make culture. If it is true that the full humanity of women is not our culture, then we can and must make it our culture” (Adichie, 2014). This emphasizes the need to question and transform societal norms to promote gender justice. She believes that societal norms and cultures are shaped by people and it can be redefined to value everyone’s humanity. Adichie’s essay has the power to be culturally specific and globally relevant. While she writes from a Nigerian perspective, it could be seen as having universal relevance. This universality enhances the essay’s value as a tool for global advocacy. Gender inequality is viewed and experienced differently by different cultures, but the underlying cause and power structures often share similarities. Through an Igbo lens, Adichie explains Nigerian history, politics and social issues. Her

experiences from being treated differently at public spaces, being seen as a second class citizen even from childhood, having to witness and experience inequalities just because of her gender is not her experience alone, it is something that most of the women go through on a daily basis and then get told, “I don’t see what you mean by things being different and harder for women. Maybe it was so in the past, but not now. Everything is fine now for women” (Adichie, 2014). As previously noted, this is a reality faced by many women, making it a universal issue rather than merely Adichie’s personal experience. Even with notable gains, women still face ingrained challenges, including unequal pay, restricted pathways for professional development, and unequal access to leadership opportunities. Readers around the world can identify with the frustration, injustice, and hope embedded in her words.

7. Conclusion

We Should All Be Feminists is a reminder of all the things unfair yet normalized in society. It is also a call for action and through this Adichie shows how literature can contribute to global developmental goals. Through the work, people are reminded that real change requires both structural reform and cultural transformation. The goals stated in SDG 5 have the capacity to address and impact change for the problems mentioned in the essay. So while the essay has the power to raise awareness and initiate cultural transformation, the policies formulated could bring in effective changes that could be implemented to bring forth equality. Adichie’s essay presents the idea that literature can serve as a mirror to society, reflecting its realities while also offering possibilities for its improvement. The way she navigates through the issues and with the easiness of the language and idea, it makes it much more than a piece of literature. Writers like Adichie and works like *We Should All Be Feminists* are not just relevant, but indispensable. While international organizations like the UN

formulate policies, it is also important to be the voice of the voiceless and the unheard.

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SDG 2030: INSIGHTS FROM INDIA FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

As the world races toward the United Nations' 2030 deadline, India stands at a critical crossroads in the journey toward dignity, peace, and prosperity. *SDG 2030: Insights from India for a Sustainable Future* provides a powerful examination of the nation's pursuit of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Bridging the gap between academic research and practical action, this book is an essential guide for anyone looking to understand or contribute to an inclusive and sustainable tomorrow.

Dr. K. K. Somasekharan, the Principal of Navajyothi College, Cherupuzha, brings over 30 years of distinguished academic and administrative experience to this volume. Throughout his prolific career, he has served numerous prestigious higher education institutions across Kerala, contributing significantly to the state's academic landscape.

A scholar at heart, Dr. Somasekharan holds a PhD in Economics. His extensive research background is reflected in his numerous publications across reputed journals and books, focusing on socio-economic development. This volume, *SDG 2030: Insights from India for a Sustainable Future*, represents his continued commitment to fostering academic discourse and inspiring collective action toward a more inclusive and sustainable world.



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