

Harnessing Gender Equality For Environmental Sustainability: A Critical Analysis Within The SDG Framework

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Abstract:

Gender equality and environmental sustainability are intertwined imperatives within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework. This abstract explores the inter sectionality of gender equality and environmental issues, emphasizing their significance in achieving sustainable development. Firstly, it delves into the disproportionate impact of environmental degradation on women, particularly in vulnerable communities where women often bear the brunt of resource depletion, climate change-induced disasters, and lack of access to clean water and sanitation. Secondly, it highlights the pivotal role of women as agents of change in environmental conservation and sustainable development, emphasizing the importance of their participation and leadership in decision-making processes related to environmental policies and initiatives. Moreover, it discusses how promoting gender equality can enhance environmental sustainability by addressing social and cultural norms that perpetuate unsustainable practices and by fostering more inclusive and equitable approaches to resource management and conservation. Finally, it underscores the necessity of integrating gender perspectives into environmental policies and programs to ensure that they are responsive to the diverse needs and experiences of women and men. Ultimately, achieving gender equality and environmental sustainability are not only mutually reinforcing goals but also essential components of the broader agenda for sustainable development outlined in the SDGs.

Keywords: Environmental Sustainability, Gender Equality, Vulnerable Communities.

INTRODUCTION

Gender equality and environmental sustainability stand as twin pillars in the pursuit of global development. Embedded within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), these intersecting issues demand comprehensive attention and integrated action. While the SDGs offer a roadmap for transformative change, the synergy between gender equality and environmental conservation remains a focal point for achieving sustainable development. This article critically examines the nexus between gender equality and environmental sustainability within the SDG framework, highlighting key challenges, opportunities, and strategies for progress.

In the intricate tapestry of sustainable development, the integration of gender equality and environmental sustainability emerges as a foundational imperative. Within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the synergy between gender parity and environmental stewardship serves as a linchpin for advancing global progress towards a more equitable and sustainable future. This critical analysis embarks on a comprehensive exploration of this symbiotic relationship within the context of the SDG framework, aiming to dissect the challenges, opportunities, and transformative pathways towards harnessing gender equality for environmental sustainability.

The intertwining of gender equality and environmental sustainability is deeply rooted in the complex interplay of socio-economic, cultural, and political dynamics. Across diverse contexts, women and men experience environmental changes and ecological challenges disparately, with women often bearing a disproportionate burden exacerbated by systemic inequalities. From unequal access to resources and decision-making power to

the undervaluation of women's contributions to environmental conservation, the gendered dimensions of environmental sustainability are both pervasive and profound.

Against this backdrop, the SDGs provide a comprehensive roadmap for addressing the intertwined challenges of gender inequality and environmental degradation. Central to this framework, Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and Goal 13 (Climate Action) underscore the imperative of mainstreaming gender considerations across all dimensions of sustainable development. Yet, despite this recognition, the practical integration of gender-responsive approaches into environmental policies and initiatives remains uneven, hampering progress towards achieving the overarching goals of the SDGs.

This critical analysis seeks to unravel the complexities of the gender-environment nexus and shed light on the multifaceted dimensions of this relationship. By examining the structural barriers, institutional constraints, and socio-cultural norms that perpetuate gender disparities in environmental sustainability, we aim to deepen our understanding of the intersecting inequalities that undermine progress towards sustainable development.

Moreover, this analysis endeavors to identify promising strategies, innovative interventions, and transformative practices for leveraging gender equality as a catalyst for environmental sustainability within the SDG framework. From amplifying women's voices in environmental decision-making to fostering women's leadership in conservation efforts, there exist myriad opportunities for advancing gender equality and environmental sustainability in tandem.

In essence, this critical analysis calls for a concerted effort to harness the transformative potential of gender equality in safeguarding our planet and securing a sustainable future for all. As we navigate the complexities of the global challenges ahead, let us embrace the imperative of gender equality as a cornerstone of environmental sustainability within the SDG framework.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The historical relationship between women and the environment is multifaceted and complex, with cultural, economic, and social factors shaping their roles and interactions with the natural world over time. Here is a brief overview of the historical background of this relationship:

In many early agricultural societies, women played central roles in food production, gathering wild plants, tending to crops, and managing household resources. Their intimate knowledge of local ecosystems and plant diversity contributed to agricultural innovation and sustainability.¹

The advent of industrialization and urbanization in the 18th and 19th centuries led to significant changes in women's roles and relationships with the environment. As industrialization progressed, men increasingly dominated wage labour in factories and urban industries, while women's work remained centred on domestic tasks and subsistence agriculture in rural areas.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, conservation movements emerged in response to widespread environmental degradation and resource depletion. While these movements were often led by men, women also played important roles as conservationists, environmental activists, and advocates for wildlife protection and natural resource management.

The feminist movements of the 20th century brought attention to the intersectionality of gender and environmental issues. Feminist scholars and activists highlighted how environmental degradation disproportionately affects women and marginalized communities, linking environmental justice with social justice and women's rights.

Women's participation in global environmental governance has increased significantly since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972. Women's rights organizations and grassroots movements have advocated for gender-responsive approaches to environmental policy-making and sustainable development.²

In many rural communities, women continue to be primary stewards of natural resources such as land, water,

1. ¹ Theresa L. Tyers, Patricia Skinner, Gender and the 'Natural' Environment in the Middle Ages, Gwasg Prifysgol cymru university of walfs press, 2023

2. ² Shweta Prasad, Gender, Environment and Sustainable Development Challenges and Responses from India, 1st Edition, Routledge, 2024

and forests. Efforts to promote sustainable rural development and community-based natural resource management have recognized the importance of women's knowledge and participation in environmental conservation.

Climate change has emerged as one of the most pressing environmental challenges of the 21st century, with gender-differentiated impacts on vulnerability, adaptation, and resilience. Women, particularly in developing countries, are often disproportionately affected by climate change due to their roles as caregivers, resource managers, and providers of food and water.³

Overall, the historical relationship between women and the environment reflects a dynamic interplay of cultural norms, economic structures, and social inequalities. Recognizing and addressing gender disparities in environmental decision-making, resource management, and climate action is essential for achieving sustainable development and environmental justice for all.

THE CHIPKO MOVEMENT: TREE HUGGERS OF INDIA

For centuries, resistance in India has predominantly embraced nonviolent strategies. Mahatma Gandhi achieved global recognition for popularizing this approach, introducing the term "satyagraha" to denote nonviolent resistance as an alternative to coercive political tactics.⁴ The Chipko Movement, deriving its name from the word "chipko," meaning to embrace or cling to, emerged during the 1970s. Rural villagers in regions like Uttar Pradesh protested against tree felling by physically embracing the trees as a form of peaceful demonstration.⁵

The roots of this movement trace back to the 1920s and 1930s when British colonizers exploited and devastated forests in Uttar Pradesh for shipbuilding purposes for their navy and for expanding railway networks.⁶ The Forest Act of 1927 furthered British interests, leading to a surge in forest satyagrahas. The Uttar Pradesh region, known for its valuable forests and resources, often left local villagers grappling with the repercussions of governmental exploitation of their land.

In the early 1960s, Dasholi Gram Swarajya Mandal (DGSM) was established by Chandi Prasad Bhatt to assist unskilled and semiskilled construction workers in the Garhwal region of Uttar Pradesh in securing employment.⁷ The organization began acquiring rights over nearby forests and advocated for local access to forest lands. By the 1970s, villagers who had traditionally relied on the forests for sustenance found themselves importing resources due to depleted soil fertility.

On April 24, 1973, Chipko's inaugural protest took place with C.P. Bhatt and his associates marching to halt tree felling in Gopeshwar. This single protest prompted the Forest Department to revoke the tree-felling company's permit and assign the trees to DGSM. Chipko gained momentum in Himalayan regions, with Sunderlal Bahuguna leading a similar protest on October 25, 1973.⁸

In March 1974, when the Forest Department obstructed Bhatt and his followers from protesting on a day scheduled for tree felling in the Reni forest, Gaura Devi rallied a group of 30 women and children to halt contractors from cutting trees until the men returned to the village. Consequently, a 10-year ban on tree felling was imposed in the Reni forest. This event prompted C.P. Bhatt and Chipko leaders across the Himalayas to involve women more actively.

Women, disproportionately affected by Himalayan deforestation due to their responsibility for cooking and cultivating forest crops, began assuming leadership roles in the Chipko movement. However, it is crucial to note that this was not a feminist or conventional environmental movement; rather, it was a response to the destruction of villager's homes and livelihoods caused by forest exploitation.⁹

³ <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jed>

⁴ Shiva, Vandana, and J. Bandyopadhyay. "The Evolution, Structure, and Impact of the Chipko Movement." *Mountain Research and Development* 6, no. 2 (May 1986): 133–42.

⁵ Jain, Shobita. "Women and People's Ecological Movement: A Case Study of Women's Role in the Chipko Movement in Uttar Pradesh." *Economic and Political Weekly* 19, no. 41 (October 13, 1984): 1788–94.

⁶ Singh, Pamela. *Chipko Tree Huggers of the Himalayas*. 1994. Photograph. *Sepia Eye*.

⁷ Shiva, Vandana, and J. Bandyopadhyay. "The Evolution, Structure, and Impact of the Chipko Movement." *Mountain Research and Development* 6, no. 2 (May 1986): 133–42.

⁸ Jain, Shobita. "Women and People's Ecological Movement: A Case Study of Women's Role in the Chipko Movement in Uttar Pradesh." *Economic and Political Weekly* 19, no. 41 (October 13, 1984): 1788–94.

⁹ Shiva, Vandana, and J. Bandyopadhyay. "The Evolution, Structure, and Impact of the Chipko Movement." *Mountain Research and Development* 6, no. 2 (May 1986): 133–42

The Chipko Movement adhered to nonviolent protest tactics, mirroring several other resistance movements across the Indian subcontinent.¹⁰ Chipko has led to the imposition of decade-long bans on tree-felling in various Himalayan forests, safeguarding the inhabitants and resources of rural India. Gandhi, in Hind Swaraj, observed, “In India, the nation has typically employed passive resistance across all spheres of life. We withdraw our cooperation from our rulers when they fail to meet our expectations.”¹¹

THE GENDER-ENVIRONMENT NEXUS

The relationship between gender and the environment is multifaceted and dynamic. Women and men interact with the environment differently due to social, economic, and cultural factors. Historically, women have played pivotal roles in natural resource management, agriculture, and conservation efforts, yet they often face disproportionate impacts of environmental degradation and climate change. In many societies, gender disparities limit women’s access to land, water, and clean energy, exacerbating their vulnerability to environmental risks and diminishing their resilience.¹²

Within the SDG framework, Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and Goal 13 (Climate Action) are intrinsically linked. Achieving gender equality is not only a fundamental human right but also a catalyst for environmental sustainability. Empowering women and girls can enhance adaptive capacity, promote sustainable livelihoods, and drive innovation in environmental conservation. Moreover, integrating gender perspectives into climate policies and initiatives can lead to more effective and equitable outcomes, addressing the differentiated impacts of climate change on women and men.¹³

The relationship between gender and the environment is indeed multifaceted and dynamic, shaped by a complex interplay of social, economic, cultural, and ecological factors. This relationship manifests itself in various ways, influencing how individuals, communities, and societies interact with and are impacted by their natural surroundings. Here, we explore some of the key dimensions of this relationship¹⁴:

1. *Access to Resources*: Gender often determines access to and control over natural resources such as land, water, forests, and energy.¹⁵ In many societies, women are responsible for resource management and agriculture, yet they may face legal, social, and economic barriers that limit their rights to land ownership or control over productive assets. Lack of access to resources can exacerbate women's vulnerability to environmental changes and disasters, undermining their resilience and well-being.¹⁶
2. *Division of Labour*: Gender norms and roles influence how labour is divided within households and communities, shaping patterns of resource use and environmental management. Women frequently bear the primary responsibility for household chores, food production, and water collection, placing additional burdens on their time and energy. These gendered divisions of labour can contribute to unsustainable resource exploitation and environmental degradation if not addressed.
3. *Vulnerability to Environmental Risks*: Women often experience disproportionate impacts of environmental degradation and climate change due to their socio-economic status and gender roles. For instance, women in rural areas may be more vulnerable to water scarcity or food insecurity, as they rely heavily on natural resources for their livelihoods. Moreover, cultural norms and legal frameworks may limit women’s mobility or access to information, further constraining their ability to adapt to environmental changes.
4. *Health and Well-being*: Environmental pollution and degradation can have differential health impacts on women and men. For example, indoor air pollution from cooking with solid fuels disproportionately affects

10 Jain, Shobita. “Women and People’s Ecological Movement: A Case Study of Women’s Role in the Chipko Movement in Uttar Pradesh.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 19, no. 41 (October 13, 1984): 1788–94.

11 Mallick, Krishna. “Chipko (Hug the Trees) Movement.” Essay. In *Environmental Movements of India: Chipko, Narmada Bachao Andolan, Navdanya*, 37–58. Amsterdam : Amsterdam University Press, 2021.

¹² <https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/cgpc20>

¹³ Priyam Manisha, *Human Rights, Gender And The Environment*, Pearson Education India, 2009

¹⁴ <https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/resources/updates/gender-and-the-environment>

¹⁵ <https://link.springer.com/journal/12147>

3. ¹⁶ Leah Thomas, *The Intersectional Environmentalist: How To Dismantle Systems Of Oppression To Protect People + Planet*, Little, Brown, 2022

women and children, who spend more time indoors. Similarly, inadequate sanitation facilities can pose specific risks to women's health and dignity, highlighting the intersectionality of gender, environment, and public health.

5. *Agency and Participation*: Gender inequalities often limit women's participation in decision-making processes related to environmental governance and natural resource management. Women's voices and perspectives are frequently marginalized in policy debates and planning processes, despite their significant contributions to sustainable development at the local level. Empowering women to participate actively in environmental decision-making can lead to more equitable and effective outcomes.

6. *Women as Agents of Change*: Despite facing numerous challenges, women around the world are also driving forces for environmental conservation and sustainability. Women-led initiatives and grassroots movements are emerging as powerful catalysts for positive change, advocating for environmental justice, sustainable livelihoods, and gender-responsive policies. Recognizing and supporting women's agency in environmental stewardship is essential for achieving inclusive and equitable sustainable development.

In essence, the relationship between gender and the environment is multifaceted and dynamic, shaped by intersecting social, economic, and ecological factors. Addressing gender inequalities and promoting women's empowerment are integral to achieving environmental sustainability and building resilient, equitable societies. By recognizing the diverse experiences and contributions of women and men in environmental conservation and management, we can forge pathways towards a more just and sustainable future for all.¹⁷

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Despite growing recognition of the gender-environment nexus, significant challenges persist. Gender disparities in decision-making, access to resources, and participation in environmental governance undermine efforts to address environmental challenges effectively. Furthermore, entrenched gender norms and stereotypes perpetuate inequalities and hinder women's leadership in environmental conservation and sustainable development.¹⁸

However, there are also promising opportunities for progress. The SDGs provide a framework for mainstreaming gender considerations across all sectors, including environmental management. Initiatives that promote women's empowerment, such as access to education, land rights, and financial resources, can contribute to more sustainable and resilient communities. Moreover, fostering partnerships between governments, civil society, and the private sector can leverage diverse expertise and resources to advance gender-responsive environmental policies and programs.¹⁹

Women often face barriers in accessing and controlling resources such as land, water, and forests due to entrenched gender norms and discriminatory policies. This limits their ability to participate in decision-making processes related to environmental management and conservation. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation and climate change, which can exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and lead to increased instances of gender-based violence in affected communities.²⁰

Women are often underrepresented in environmental leadership and decision-making roles at all levels, from local community initiatives to international negotiations. This lack of representation can result in policies and projects that do not adequately address the needs and perspectives of women and other marginalized groups. Women typically bear the primary responsibility for household and care giving tasks, which can increase during environmental crises. This unpaid care work can limit women's time and opportunities for education, employment, and participation in community resilience-building efforts.²¹

Climate change is increasingly leading to displacement and migration, with women and girls often facing greater risks and challenges during these processes, including increased vulnerability to trafficking, exploitation, and violence. There is still a lack of comprehensive data and research on the gender-environment nexus, which hinders efforts to develop evidence-based policies and interventions that address the specific needs and experiences of women and men in relation to environmental issues.

4. ¹⁷ Susan Buckingham, *Gender And Environment*, 2nd Edition, Routledge Publication, 2020

¹⁸ [Nivedita Roy, Atasi Choudhury, Understanding Gender Inclusion Using Environment and Gender Index: A Secondary Analysis Positioning India, Open Journal of Social Sciences Vol.10 No.2, February 11, 2022](#)

¹⁹ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/explainer/2022/02/explainer-how-gender-inequality-and-climate-change-are-interconnected>

²⁰ <https://www.undp.org/blog/gender-equality-cornerstone-environmental-and-climate-justice>

5. ²¹ Madhavi Desai, *Gender and the Built Environment in India*, Paperback, E-book, 2007

Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts to mainstream gender considerations into environmental policies and programs, promote women's empowerment and leadership in environmental decision-making, and ensure that interventions are inclusive, equitable, and sensitive to the diverse needs of all individuals and communities.²²

STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

To harness the potential of gender equality for environmental sustainability, concerted action is needed at multiple levels. First and foremost, policymakers must prioritize gender mainstreaming in environmental policies, ensuring that women's perspectives and priorities are integrated into decision-making processes. This requires collecting sex-disaggregated data, conducting gender analyses, and implementing targeted interventions to address gender inequalities in environmental governance and management.

Furthermore, investing in women's education, skills development, and leadership training can enhance their capacity to participate meaningfully in environmental conservation efforts. Empowering women as stewards of the environment not only benefits their well-being but also contributes to the achievement of multiple SDGs, including poverty eradication, food security, and biodiversity conservation.²³

Absolutely, harnessing the potential of gender equality for environmental sustainability requires coordinated action at various levels:

Governments need to develop and implement gender-responsive policies and legal frameworks that address the intersection of gender and environmental issues. This includes ensuring equal access to resources, promoting women's participation in decision-making processes, and integrating gender considerations into environmental legislation and strategies.

Investing in education and capacity-building programs that empower women and marginalized gender groups with the knowledge, skills, and resources to actively participate in environmental conservation and sustainable development initiatives is crucial. This includes promoting STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education for girls and providing training on sustainable agricultural practices, renewable energy technologies, and natural resource management.²⁴

Engaging local communities, particularly women and marginalized groups, in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of environmental projects fosters ownership and ensures that interventions are culturally appropriate and responsive to local needs. Participatory approaches that prioritize inclusivity and diversity can lead to more effective and sustainable outcomes.²⁵

Businesses and corporations play a significant role in driving environmental sustainability through their operations and supply chains. Promoting gender equality within the private sector, including equitable employment practices and opportunities for women's leadership, can enhance corporate sustainability efforts and contribute to positive environmental outcomes.

Continued research and knowledge generation on the gender-environment nexus are essential for understanding the complex interactions between gender, environmental sustainability, and development. This includes conducting gender-disaggregated data collection, interdisciplinary research, and case studies that highlight the linkages between gender equality and environmental outcomes.²⁶

Collaboration among governments, multilateral organizations, civil society, and the private sector is vital for scaling up efforts to promote gender equality and environmental sustainability globally. This includes sharing best practices, mobilizing resources, and supporting countries in integrating gender considerations into their environmental policies and programs.

Establishing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress on gender equality and

²² <https://www.unep.org/regions/asia-and-pacific/regional-initiatives/promoting-gender-equality-and-environment>

²³ https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/Final_HumanRightsEnvironmentGenderEqualityKM.pdf

²⁴ <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/4/f/36360.pdf>

6. ²⁶ Zorrilla-Muñoz, Maria Silveria Agulló-Tomás, Eduardo Fernandez, Blanca Criado Quesada, Sonia de Lucas Santos and Jesus Cuadrado Rojo Law, Ageing, Gender and Environment: Problems and Challenges from different disciplines, MDPI Publication, 2022

environmental sustainability goals is essential for accountability and learning. This involves collecting sex-disaggregated data, assessing the gender impacts of environmental interventions, and adjusting strategies based on feedback and lessons learned.

By taking concerted action at these multiple levels, stakeholders can unlock the synergies between gender equality and environmental sustainability, leading to more equitable, resilient, and environmentally sound development pathways.

SUGGESTION

To enhance the relationship between environmental sustainability and gender equality, several key strategies can be employed:

1. *Mainstream Gender Considerations in Environmental Policies and Programs*: Integrate gender perspectives into the design, implementation, and evaluation of environmental policies and programs. This includes conducting gender analysis to understand the differentiated impacts of environmental initiatives on diverse gender groups and ensuring that interventions address the specific needs and priorities of women, men, and gender-diverse individuals.
2. *Promote Women's Leadership and Participation*: Empower women and marginalized gender groups to actively participate in decision-making processes related to environmental governance, resource management, and climate action. This can be achieved through capacity-building initiatives, leadership training programs, and the establishment of inclusive platforms for dialogue and collaboration.
3. *Address Gender-Based Violence and Environmental Degradation*: Recognize and address the intersectional relationship between gender-based violence and environmental degradation. Implement measures to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in environmental contexts, including during natural disasters, resource conflicts, and displacement situations.²⁷
4. *Ensure Equal Access to Environmental Resources and Opportunities*: Remove barriers that hinder women and marginalized gender groups access to land, water, energy, and other natural resources essential for their livelihoods and well-being. This may involve reforming land tenure systems, promoting women's land rights, and expanding access to clean energy technologies and sustainable agricultural practices.
5. *Challenge Gender Stereotypes and Promote Gender-Responsive Education*: Combat gender stereotypes and norms that perpetuate unequal gender roles and limit opportunities for women and girls to engage in environmental stewardship and sustainable livelihoods. Integrate gender-responsive education and awareness-raising activities into formal and informal education systems to promote environmental literacy and empower individuals of all genders to take action for sustainability.
6. *Foster Intersectional Approaches*: Recognize the intersecting inequalities that shape individuals' experiences of environmental issues, including factors such as race, ethnicity, class, age, disability, and geographic location. Adopt intersectional approaches that account for these multiple dimensions of identity and privilege, ensuring that environmental policies and programs are inclusive and equitable for all.²⁸
7. *Support Gender-Responsive Research and Data Collection*: Invest in gender-disaggregated data collection, research, and monitoring mechanisms to better understand the linkages between gender and environmental sustainability. This includes supporting interdisciplinary research initiatives, building the capacity of researchers to integrate gender analysis into their work, and sharing knowledge and best practices across sectors and regions.

By implementing these suggestions, stakeholders can strengthen the relationship between environmental sustainability and gender equality, leading to more effective and inclusive efforts to address pressing environmental challenges and advance sustainable development for all.

CONCLUSION

Gender equality and environmental sustainability are inextricably linked components of the SDG framework. By addressing gender disparities and promoting women's empowerment, we can unlock new pathways to environmental resilience, social equity, and economic prosperity. As we strive to build a more sustainable

7. ²⁷ Heleen Van Den Hombergh, *Gender, Environment and Development: A Guide to the Literature*, International Books, 1993

²⁸ Bridgitte Barclay And Christy Tidwell, *Gender And Environment In Science Fiction*, Lexington Books, 2018

future, let us recognize the transformative potential of gender equality in safeguarding our planet for future generations.

Through collaborative efforts and innovative solutions, we can harness the synergies between gender equality and environmental sustainability to create a more just, inclusive, and sustainable world for all.

The nexus between gender equality and environmental sustainability presents a compelling opportunity to advance progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through a critical analysis within the SDG framework, it becomes evident that harnessing gender equality for environmental sustainability requires multifaceted approaches that address systemic barriers and promote inclusive, equitable, and rights-based solutions.

The SDGs provide a comprehensive framework for addressing pressing global challenges, including poverty, inequality, climate change, and environmental degradation. Gender equality is explicitly recognized as a standalone goal (SDG 5), with cross-cutting implications for achieving all other goals, including those related to environmental sustainability (e.g., SDG 13 on climate action, SDG 14 on life below water, and SDG 15 on life on land).

However, despite growing recognition of the inter-linkages between gender and environmental issues within the SDG framework, significant challenges persist. These challenges include data gaps, unequal access to resources and decision-making, gender-based violence, limited participation in climate action, entrenched stereotypes, intersectional inequalities, and gaps in policy implementation and enforcement.

By addressing these challenges and taking proactive steps to mainstream gender considerations into environmental policies, programs, and decision-making processes, stakeholders can unlock synergies between gender equality and environmental sustainability, contributing to more equitable, resilient, and environmentally sound development pathways.

Ultimately, harnessing gender equality for environmental sustainability is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic imperative for achieving the broader vision of the SDGs: a world where all people can live in dignity, prosperity, and harmony with nature.

1.