



An Analysis of Progress of Sustainable Development Goal 5 in Uttarakhand

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ABSTRACT

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a globally endorsed agenda of 17 goals that seeks to harmonize economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability by 2030. In the state of Uttarakhand despite an impressive top national ranking in the recently released SDG India Index 2023-24 by NITI Aayog, its internal performance on SDG 5 indicators reveals a highly complex, uneven and fragile developmental landscape towards gender equality. Consequently, this study examines the progress of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) Gender Equality across a decadal reference period spanning from 2015-16 to 2024-25 in the state of Uttarakhand. It utilizes a sequential mixed method research design relying on secondary data from NITI Aayog, the Centre for public Policy and Good Governance (CPPGG), UN Women and peer reviewed academic literature. The findings reveal a striking '*Capital City Paradox*' while Uttarakhand shares the top overall spot nationally in the 2023-24 SDG India Index, its internal performance on gender equality remains its weakest and most volatile developmental sector. Highly urbanized and literate hubs like Dehradun have experienced a

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steady decline in SDG 5 scores whereas remote and rural and mountainous districts such as Bageshwar, Chamoli, Champawat frequently outperform the urban capital and plain districts like Haridwar. Furthermore, small population hill districts exhibit a ‘Zig-Zag Effect’ due to index reliance on volatile health and marriage data subsets. Persistent institutional fragmentation, data underreporting, and deeply seeded socio-cultural patriarchal mindset continue to hamper grassroot policy implementation. The study concludes that moving beyond aggregate state level success requires targeted structural interventions including eliminating proxy participation in local governance, bridging education-employment gap and incorporating qualitative metrics into the District Indicator Framework.

Introduction

The aim of global development is accompanied by a definitive transformative change in 2015 when 193 member states of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. This ambitious framework consists of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets which represents a universal call to action for an inclusive growth to end poverty, protect the environment and ensure that by 2030 all the people in the world enjoy peace and prosperity. The transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) signified a move toward a more integrated and universal developmental approach. Where the MDGs were primarily targeted at developing nations, the SDGs are universal. It acknowledges that all countries face challenges in achieving equity and sustainability. Among all the 17 goals of SDGs, *SDG 5* which is “*to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*” stands as a critical cornerstone. It is increasingly recognized that gender equality is not merely a fundamental human right but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world (Jadhav 2025). In the Indian context, the implementation of these goals has been operationalized through a robust process of localisation where it shifts the focus from national frameworks to sub-national level such as district and grassroots governance structures (NITI Aayog 2019). This study examines the progress of SDG 5 within the state of Uttarakhand. It specifically focuses upon the divergent performance trajectories of all the districts by analysing the scores based on SDG 5 metric for the years 2015-16 to 2024-25 for a decade. Despite the state’s commendable top ranking in the recent national SDG India Index released by NITI Aayog, the internal performance on gender equality indicators reveals a complex

landscape of progress in past ten years. SDG 5 clearly indicates this by targeting the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women which ensures equal opportunities for leadership. It also promotes economic empowerment through access to resources and ownership rights with decision making power. The national composite score has seen a notable increase rising from 57 in 2018 to 71 in 2023-24 (NITI Aayog 2024). This improvement is attributed to significant strides in areas such as poverty elimination (SDG 1), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), and (SDG 13) climate action (PIB 2024). However, the performance on SDG 5 remains the weakest among all monitored goals nationally. The overall score for SDG 5 improved significantly from scoring 36 in 2018 but still stood at only 49 in 2023-24 which places India in the ‘Aspirant’ category for this specific goal. This national lag underscores the persistent challenges of patriarchal socio-cultural norms, economic disparities and lack of awareness. In Uttarakhand, this process is looked after by the Centre for Public Policy and Good Governance (CPPGG) which established in the year of 2017 and operates under the Department of Planning, Government of Uttarakhand, as a think-tank. The state’s approach is characterized by integrating SDGs into District and Gram Panchayat Development Plans which will ensure that global visions are translated into local actions that reflect the specific socio-economic context of the Himalayan region. The CPPGG, in collaboration with the NITI Aayog and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has developed comprehensive indicator frameworks to track progress at multiple levels. The Uttarakhand State Indicator Framework (SIF) consists of 369 indicators while the District Indicator Framework (DIF) comprises 125 indicators designed to capture local nuances (CPPGG 2021). This structured data-centric approach aims to foster healthy competition among districts and identify bottlenecks in policy implementation. The state's commitment is articulated in its ‘Vision 2030’ document which emphasizes inclusive and holistic human development through socio-economic and environmental sustainability. By mapping 29 subjects of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to the 17 SDGs, the state has institutionalized the role of local self-government in achieving developmental targets. SDG 5 is explicitly linked to subjects like women and child development, social welfare, and education which creates a direct pathway for localized intervention.

Objectives

- To understand and analyse the targets, indicator framework and the methodology for Index score calculation by NITI Aayog.
- To analyse the SDG 5 scores for a decadal reference period from 2015-16 to 2024-25 based on SDG Indices and dashboard developed by Centre for Public Policy and Good Governance in Uttarakhand.

Methods and Materials

This study adopts a *sequential mixed-method research design* which relies exclusively on *secondary data*. The primary framework evaluates the progress, localized implementation trajectories, and performance variations of Sustainable Development Goal 5 spanning a decadal reference period from 2015-16 to 2024-25. The macro-level analysis utilizes the national benchmarks of *Quantitative indicators* and tracking data of SDG 5 metrics for the state of Uttarakhand which are further systematically compiled from four consecutive editions of SDG India Index published by NITI Aayog. While the micro-level analysis explores sub-national disparities using the localized dashboards generated by the Centre for Public Policy and Good Governance (CPPGG), Department of Planning, Government of Uttarakhand. Finally, to ensure empirical reliability and to complement the quantitative trend analysis for indicators and composite scores of SDG 5, the state SDG Indices, UN Women publications and peer-reviewed academic literatures are qualitatively analysed. It critically evaluates the institutional, structural, and socio-cultural barriers underlying regional gender disparities.

Objective 1 Findings:

To understand and analyse the targets, indicator framework and the methodology for Index score calculation by NITI Aayog,

Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) serves as a global blueprint for achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls by 2030. This goal focuses on dismantling discrimination and ending all forms of violence and harmful practices such as child marriage and human trafficking.

United Nations has established nine specific targets to measure the progress that range from valuing unpaid domestic work to ensuring women's full and effective participation in leadership and decision-making roles at all levels. By addressing these targets, the goal seeks to grant women equal rights to economic resources, land ownership and reproductive health services. It also leverages technology to enhance female empowerment worldwide.

In the Indian context there is National Indicator Framework (NIF) through which these global goals are getting translated into local realities by tracking metrics. These metrics include sex ratio at birth, female labour force participation rate and the prevalence of crimes against women (MoSPI, 2023). India's approach is unique in its emphasis on both social health and economic agency. It monitors everything from women's involvement in household decision-making to her representation in the Lok Sabha (NITI Aayog 2024). These indicators allow the government to identify specific gaps in policy and direct resources towards states

that are lagging. It also highlights “front runner” regions that are setting benchmarks for the rest of the country.

In Uttarakhand, the localized tracking and strategic implementation of the 2030 Agenda are managed by the Centre for Public Policy and Good Governance (CPPGG) established in 2017 as an official state think tank operating under the Department of Planning, Government of Uttarakhand. The CPPGG works to embed sustainable development directly into state policy. The core strategy of the CPPGG relies on institutional integration which ensures that SDGs are systematically integrated into District Development Plans (DDPs) and Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs). This structural integration ensures that global indicators match the unique socio economic and geographical realities of the Himalayan terrain. SDG 5 has nine specific targets which are as follows, 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 share 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 Programme 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 communication 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 (UN 2030 Agenda Document, 2015).

Every target is associated with an indicator framework which is then prepared at global, national and sub-national level to meet these nine specific targets under Sustainable Development Goal 5 in each region. The indicators are based on the data availability in the region and other socio-cultural and geographical factors. To implement data driven governance the CPPGG works in close collaboration with NITI Aayog and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It has created tiered multi-level monitoring systems.

Uttarakhand State Indicator Framework (SIF): It comprises 369 indicators in total which are designed to capture macro-level policy shifts and long-term institutional progress across the entire state.

District Indicator Framework (DIF): It comprises of total 125 indicators which are customized to capture local nuances. It highlights developmental obstacles and fosters healthy performance-based competition among 13 districts of Uttarakhand which are further divided into two regions, Garhwal and Kumaon respectively. The institutionalization of the SDGs in Uttarakhand is further strengthened by mapping the 29 functional subjects of the Panchayati raj Institutions (PRIs) mandated under the 11th schedule of the Indian Constitution to the 17 global goals. Under this localization architecture, SDG 5 is explicitly linked to local subjects such as, women and child development, social welfare administration, primary and secondary education etc.

This creates direct pathways for local self-governments to allocate funds and deploy localized administrative interventions for gender empowerment. The SDG India Index frameworks (2018 Baseline, 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2023-24) map distinct numbers of indicators over time to measure SDG 5. Raw data metrics for these indicators are compiled from official institutional sources such as the Ministry of statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), National Indicator Framework (NIF), Sample Registration System (SRS), Civil Registration System (CRS), National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), and Periodic labour Force Surveys (PLFS). The SRS and CRS capture vital statistics primarily tracking the sex ratio at birth. The PLFS generates annual data regarding the Female Labour Force Participation Rate and the daily gender wage gap. NCRB collects standardized criminal justice statistics regarding registered crimes against women, domestic violence, and child abuse. The National Family Health Survey provides household level data on spousal physical/sexual abuse, mobile phone ownership and modern family planning usages. Following is the table of different indicators under SDG 5 metrics which collects raw data to track the progress of Gender Equality. It calculates scores through index scoring after calculating the raw data. Till now NITI Aayog has released total four indices of SDG progress. Which were released in below mentioned respective years.

Table 1: SDG 5 Indicators and Raw Data Metrics at National Level

SDG 5 Indicators at National Level	Raw Data of Indicators for Different Years based on SDG India Index released by NITI Aayog			
	2018	2019-20	2020-21	2023-24

5.1 Sex Ratio at Birth	850	841	840	984
5.1 Average female to male ratio of average wages/salaries received per day by among regular wage/salaried employees of age 15-59 for rural and urban	0.93	0.78	0.71	0.88
5.2 Percentage of ever married women aged 18-49 years who have ever experienced spousal violence (physical/ sexual)	14.40	14.4	-	15.3
5.2 Rate of Crime against Women per 100000 female population	-	36.8	46.5	-
5.2 Per lakh women who have experienced cruelty/physical violence by husband or his relatives during the year	-	-	11.79	-
5.2 Proportion of sexual crime against girl children to total crime against children during the calendar year	-	57.96	-	-
5.5 Ratio of female labour force participation rate to male labour force participation rate	0.28	-	0.29	0.52
5.5 Female labour force participation rate	-	13.7	-	-
5.5 Percentage of seats won by women in the general elections to state legislative assembly	7.14	7.14	8.45	-
5.5 Proportion of women in managerial positions including women in board of directors, in listed companies (per 1,000 persons)	-	-	234	155.74
5.6 Percentage of women in the age group of 15-49 years using modern methods of family planning / Percentage of currently married women aged 15-49 years who have their demand for family planning satisfied by modern methods	53.4	-	71.60	72.6
5.a Percentage of female operated operational land holdings – gender wise	-	11.93	11.93	11.93
5.b Percentage of women aged 15-49 years who own	-	-	-	60.9

a mobile phone that they themselves use				
5.c Percentage of currently married aged 15-49 years who usually participate in three household decisions	-	-	-	91

Sources: Compiled from SDG India Indices released by NITI Aayog, Govt. of India

NITI Aayog utilizes a standard, globally accepted rescaling methodology inspired by the Sustainable Development Solution Network (SDSN) framework to normalize raw data into standard scores. First, it starts from target setting where a national or global target benchmark for 2030 is designated for every single indicator. For an example, achieving a sex ratio at birth of at least 950. To guarantee comparability across inherently disparate units, normalisation on the scale of 0 to 100 is done. For an example, percentages vs. Rates per lakh, metrics are rescaled.

The composite score for SDG 5 is computed by calculating the simple arithmetic mean of all individual normalized indicators belonging to the goal. Which assigns an equal statistical weight to each metric. Based on the final calculated value 0-100, regions are sorted into operational tranches, *Aspirant*: Scores between 0-49, *Performer*: scores between 50-64, *Front Runner*: Scores between 65-99, *Achiever*: A perfect score of 100.

Objective 2 Findings:

To analyse the SDG 5 scores for a decadal reference period from 2015-16 to 2024-25 based on SDG Indices and dashboard developed by Centre for Public Policy and Good Governance in Uttarakhand,

Although Uttarakhand has emerged as a front-runner in the SDG India Index released by NITI Aayog and shares the top position with Kerala in the 2023-24 with a score of 79. This represents a significant improvement from its 9th position in 2019. The state has achieved perfect or near-perfect scores in areas like affordable and clean energy (SDG 7, score 100) and clean water and sanitation (SDG 6, score 94) (SDC Foundation, 2024). However, the state's performance on SDG 5 presents a striking paradox. Despite its overall success, Uttarakhand scored only 68 on the SDG 5 metrics in the 2023-24 report. The overall performance on SDG 5 score was thereof increased to 81 in the year 2024-25. But looking at the table below compiled from the SDG dashboard of Uttarakhand developed by CPPGG, the scores of SDG 5 remains unsatisfactory. While this is higher than the national average, it remains the state's lowest score across all goals indicating that gender equality remains the most difficult developmental target to achieve.

This suggests that general economic growth and environmental conservation have not yet yielded equivalent benefits for women's empowerment and gender parity.

Uttarakhand's strategic performance on Gender Equality shows noticeable shifts across consecutive tracking timelines, reflecting standard structural trends across its mountainous landscape. Initially in the 2018 baseline survey done by NITI Aayog, there were six key indicators to compute scores on SDG 5 metrics where India has achieved a score of 36 and Uttarakhand had a score of 41. Thereafter in 2019-20 and 2020-21, the number of key indicators were increased to eight and nine respectively. India scored 42 and Uttarakhand had a score of 38 in 2019-20, while in 2020-21 India was on 48 and Uttarakhand got 46 in scoring. As by 2023-24, the number of key indicators at national level remained nine but the performance of the state of Uttarakhand improved far better than the composite score of India on SDG 5. Where India stands on 49 placing itself in *Aspirant* category, Uttarakhand has a score of 56 which places it in the *Front Runner* category.

Table 2: District-Wise SDG 5 scores in Uttarakhand Over a Decadal Reference Period

Districts of Uttarakhand	Scoring on SDG 5 Metrics from the year 2015-16 to 2024-25 based on Uttarakhand's SDG Indices									
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Almora	59	74	74	79	83	80	81	87	67	82
Bageshwar	59	69	75	74	94	83	86	77	67	83
Chamoli	57	76	73	72	91	87	81	75	46	86
Champawat	68	67	82	66	77	87	90	80	61	86
Dehradun	63	73	69	60	55	56	61	62	55	58
Haridwar	51	60	51	63	80	71	63	58	39	66
Nainital	65	73	72	69	77	84	81	81	74	82

Pauri Garhwal	60	49	63	64	91	74	78	80	71	89
Pithoragarh	57	72	67	67	84	79	84	72	63	74
Rudraprayag	65	80	76	69	87	72	78	81	46	87
Tehri Garhwal	69	76	76	84	76	73	79	74	62	79
Udham Singh Nagar	48	58	57	49	56	77	76	72	60	69

Sources: Compiled from SDG Indices and Dashboard of CPPGG, Department of Planning, Government of Uttarakhand

The empirical data across the tracking cycles reveals a clear geographic divide in gender equality performance. The longitudinal data on SDG 5 scores extracted from the dashboard and indices by CPPGG reflects the most significant finding which is the ‘*Capital City Paradox*’ (Ansari & Rajaram, 2024; NITI Aayog, 2024). Dehradun, the capital city of the state of Uttarakhand, consistently records the higher female literacy in the state around 70% and exceeding, also has a strong institutional and infrastructural resources (Census of India, 2011; MoSPI, 2024). However, its SDG 5 score has steadily declined from 73 in 2016-17 to 58 in 2024-25. On average the score for Dehradun remains very low on 61.2 compared to other districts. In contrast more rural and mountainous districts like Bageshwar, Chamoli, Champawat and Rudraprayag outperform the urban capital on gender equality metrics. This paradox indicates that higher income, urbanization, and basic literacy are not always sufficient to ensure gender equality (Jadhav, 2025).

Urban settings can introduce its own kind of challenges such as higher rates of reported crimes, lack of female labour force participation due to lack of safe transport or formal childcare, and structural barriers to formal employment (Ansari & Rajaram 2024; MoSPI, 2024). Meanwhile, the close-knit social structure in rural, hilly areas often fosters stronger community-based protection mechanisms and social capital (Thapliyal, 2018).

District-Wise Differential Performance Analysis

The districts exhibit stark contrasts in their starting points, peak performances, and closing scores by the year 2024-25:

Almora began with a score of 59 in 2015-16 which peaks at 87 in 2022-23 before experiencing a slight decline to finish at 82 in 2024-25. Bageshwar showed substantial early progress which surges from 59 in

2015-16 to an impressive peak of 94 in 2019-20 but faced a noticeable drop down to 83 by 2024-25. Chamoli rose from 57 in 2015-16 to 91 in 2019-20 which experienced a sharp slip to 46 in 2023-24 and steadily recovered next year to 86 by good margin. Champawat demonstrated a strong upward trajectory towards the end of the decade starting from 68 which hits peak at 90 in 2021-22, sustaining a solid score at 86 in the year 2024-25. Dehradun as discussed above, remained a consistently low performer throughout the decade. It started from 63 peaked modestly 73 in 2016-17 but again dropped back down to 58 by the year 2024-25. Haridwar exhibited severe fluctuations and overall poor performance starting at 51 then dropping down to low of 39 in 2023-24 and closing the decade at 66 showing net zero progress over the ten years. Nainital maintained relatively strong profile beginning at 65 and closing at 82 in 2024-25. Pauri Garhwal showed some of the most significant long-term growth which starts at 60 hitting 91 in 2019-20 and finishing as the Performer at 89 in 2024-25. Pithoragarh started at 57, peaked at 84 in 2021-22 while experiencing mid-period volatility and ends at 74 in the closing year of 2024-25. Rudraprayag began at 65 and peaked at 87 across multiple years. Tehri Garhwal maintained a moderate and relatively stable trajectory compared to others started at 69 then scoring high in the year 2018-19 with the score of 84 and closing with 79 in 2024-25. Udham Singh Nagar ranked among the lower-performing districts starting at 48 in the year 2015-16, peaking at 77 in 2020-21 and then dropping back to 69 by 2024-25. The decadal analysis highlights that while rural or hilly districts like Pauri Garhwal, Chamoli, Champawat and Nainital have achieved high standard scores in SDG 5 Gender equality metrics by 2024-25, major plain and semi-plain urban hubs like Haridwar, Dehradun and Udham Singh Nagar have consistently lagged behind or stagnated. The widespread year over year fluctuations point to a critical need for sustained, systematic policy interventions rather than temporary, indicator-driven spikes.

As seen in districts like Chamoli which crashed from 91 to 46 before recovering 86 or Bageshwar dropping from 94 to 83, the scores show immense year to year volatility or the zig-zag effect. The fluctuation occurs because of the heavy reliance of CPPGG index on data subsets such as the Maternal Mortality rate (MMR), numbers of reported child marriages, or localized institutional delivery rates.

In small population hill districts, a slight variation in the absolute number of cases in a given year can create a massive percentage drop or spike on the dashboard. It reflects institutional gaps in sustaining progress year over year.

Barriers to SDG 5 localisation and Implementation: The implementation of SDG 5 faces structural, institutional, and socio-cultural barriers that are often interlinked. Despite a well-defined indicator framework, the transformation of data into effective policy remains a challenge (Jadhav, 2025).

- **Poor Policy Implementation:** While gender equality policies exist, their execution is often inconsistent due to a lack of political will, poor accountability mechanisms, and inadequate resources at the block and village levels (Jadhav, 2025).
- **Fragmented Approaches:** Many governmental policies are fragmented. For an instance, a policy might advance education (SDG 4) while failing to address the safety concerns (SDG 5) that prevent women from using that education to enter the workforce (SDG Knowledge Hub, 2025).
- **Data Inaccuracies:** Underreporting of crimes and labour participation remains a significant issue. High-reporting states or districts like Dehradun may reflect better institutional responsiveness rather than a higher actual crime rate, yet they are penalized in the rankings (Ansari & Rajaram, 2024).

Moreover, the socio-cultural determinants of women empowerment act as an obstacle in achieving SDGs such as the basic amenities provided to the women (Thakur & Singh, 2025). The deeply rooted patriarchal mindset continues to be the most formidable barrier including the orthodox rituals, preferences for male children, and gender-based discrimination in household nutrition and education persist in many parts of the state (Jadhav, 2025).

Conclusion

The decadal analysis of SDG 5 metrics in Uttarakhand from 2015-16 to 2024-25 reveals a striking developmental paradox. While the state has earned a commendable top position nationally alongside Kerala in the macro level SDG India Index, its internal progress on SDG 5 and its localized efforts remain at its weakest. The institutional efforts led by the CPPGG have successfully established data centric multi-level monitoring frameworks and achieved unprecedented political inclusion which shows women holding 56.02% of all seats in Panchayati Raj Institutions. However, this structural integration has yet to be completely uniform and successful till it escapes the phenomenon of *Pradhan Pati*. The core empirical finding of this research brings to light the '*Capital city Paradox*'. Dehradun, despite possessing robust institutional resources, high infrastructural capacity and the highest female literacy rate in the state experienced a persistent year over year decline in the SDG 5 composite scores. Conversely remote and mountainous districts outpaced the urban plain districts including capital of the state. This pattern clearly indicated that rapid urbanization, higher income levels, and basic literacy are insufficient drivers of gender parity on their own. As urban environments introduce distinct structural obstacles like barriers to formal workforce participation and higher rates of reported crimes. Furthermore, the longitudinal data exposes a profound institutional vulnerability in the form of '*Zig-Zag Effect*' or extreme year to year score volatility

within small population hill districts due to the heavy reliance on narrow data subsets such as maternal mortality rates, reported child marriages etc. Minor fluctuations in absolute case numbers manifest as massive, artificial spikes or crashes on the district dashboards. This volatility underscores a deeper implementation gap which demonstrates that current progress is often temporary and indicator driven rather than systemic and sustained

Recommendations

The achievement of SDG 5 in Uttarakhand is a critical mission that requires moving beyond aggregate state-level success to address district-level disparities. While the state's overall performance is outstanding, the low score on SDG 5 gender equality targets signals a need for a fundamental shift in the developmental strategy. To bridge the performance gap between districts and accelerate progress on SDG 5, the following strategies should be prioritized:

- **Empower Elected Women Representatives through Institutional Support:** The state must aggressively tackle the proxy participation culture in Panchayati Raj Institutions. Measures should include intensive leadership training programme for the first-time women representatives and the institutionalization of video-recorded meetings to ensure independent decision-making (Ministry of Panchayati Raj, 2025).
- **Bridge the Education-Employment Gap:** Education policies must be linked with economic opportunities. This involves creating 'urban creche' facilities and safe transport options to encourage educated women in districts like Dehradun to enter the formal workforce (Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation, 2024).
- **Strengthen Localisation Monitoring:** The CPPGG should enhance the District Indicator Framework (DIF) to include qualitative indicators along with quantitative. Women's awareness and participation in policies and control over household assets with decision making and sociocultural, geographical hurdles should keep in concern.
- **Intersectionality in Planning:** Future district-level action plans must account for the intersection of gender with geography, caste, and urbanization, ensuring that "No One is Left Behind" in the journey towards the Sustainable Agenda of 2030.

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