

Gender Justice and Sustainable Development: A vision for Kerala 2031

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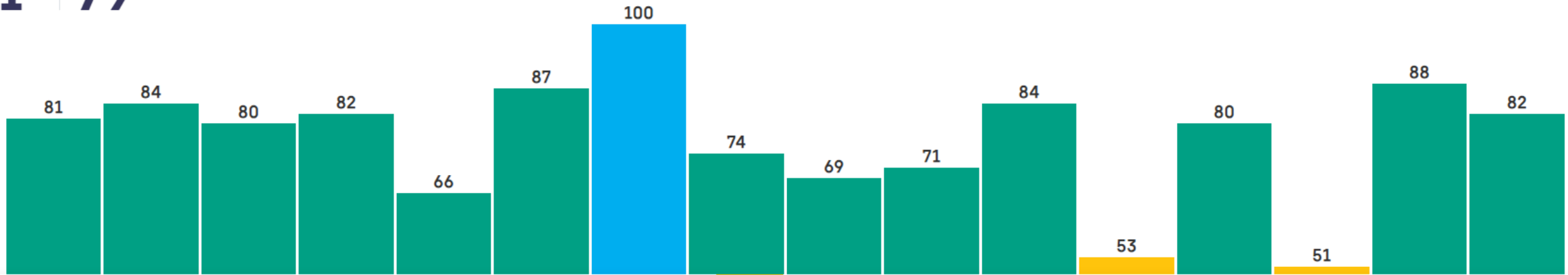
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Norwich Institute
Sustainable Development



Rank **1** | Score **79**



NITI Aayog



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SDG India Index | Kerala | 2023-24

SDG Goal	Score 2023-24	Score 2020-21
1. No Poverty	81	83
2. Zero Hunger	84	80
3. Good Health and Well-being	80	72
4. Quality Education	82	80
5. Gender Equality	66	63
6. Clean Water and Sanitation	87	89
7. Affordable and Clean Energy	100	100
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth	74	62
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	69	60
10. Reduced Inequalities	71	69
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities	84	75
12. Responsible Consumption and Production	53	65
13. Climate Action	80	69
14. Life Below Water	51	53
15. Life on Land	88	77
16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	82	80

Kerala a leader in SDG performance in India

Trend in right direction, yet lags behind in Goal 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment

(Fact sheet on SDGs, KILA)

Labour: Ratio of female to male average wages/earnings has improved between 2018-2021, yet remains at 0.84. No data on unpaid care work

Resource Control: Female operated land-holdings increased from 1.20 to 22.98 between 2018-2021.

Participation in Decision-making: Elected women in state assembly only 5.71%, but 50% reservation in local government

Bodily Integrity: Violence against women is high and rising (60 to 63/100,000 women, NCRB)

Underlying factors

Rigid patriarchal norms and lack of freedom for young women

- In contexts of male migration, girls in Northern Kerala confronted with early marriage; in other parts, burdened with domestic roles

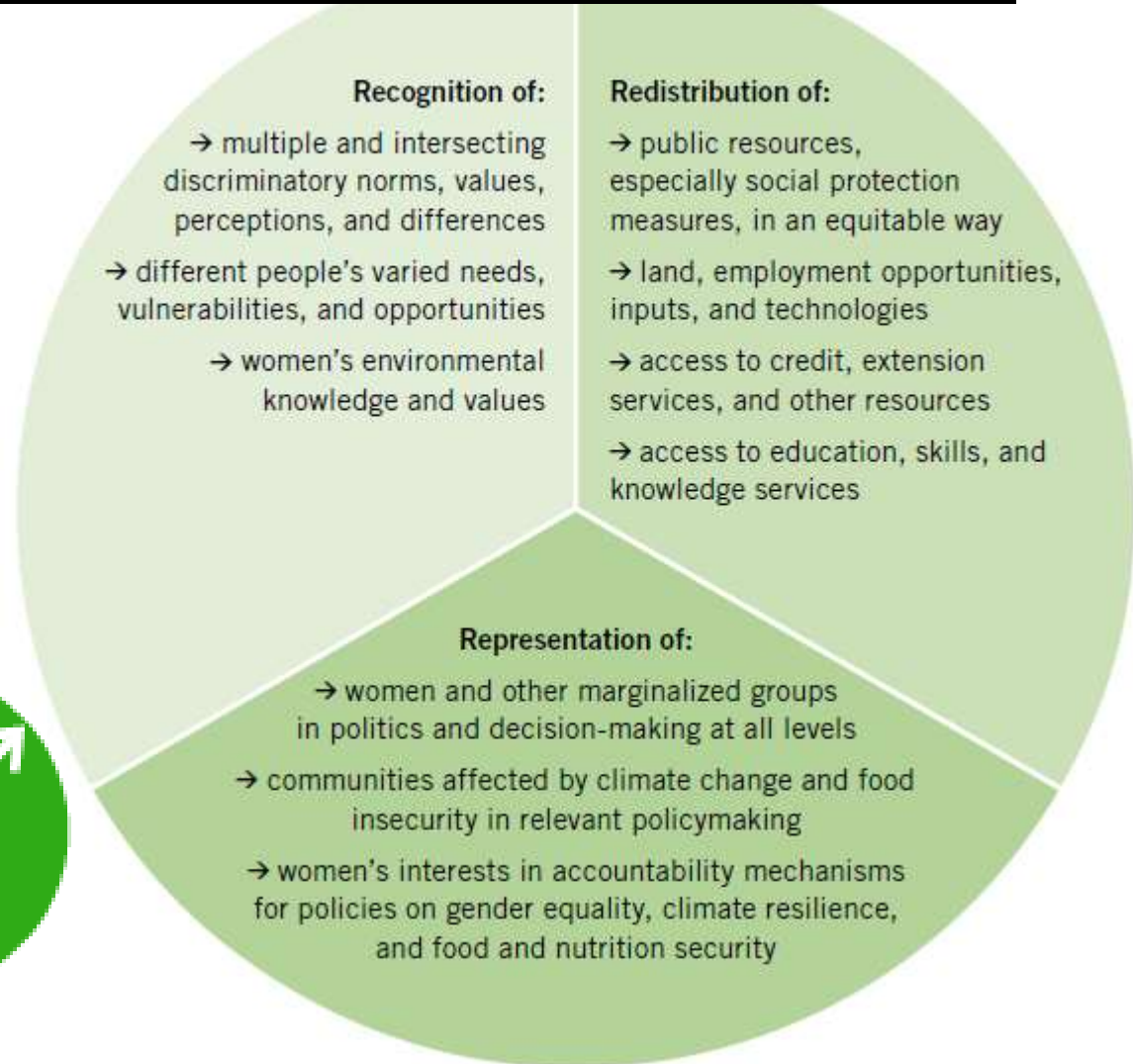
Concentration of women in certain professions (nursing, secretarial work...)

Male alcoholism and rising fear of gender-based violence or sexual harassment

GENDER JUSTICE AS A CORNERSTONE FOR ACHIEVING EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Gender justice – that is equity between people in all spheres of life - consists of three interconnected dimensions:

- recognition,
- redistribution,
- representation.



Kerala does well at the level of local government/PRI

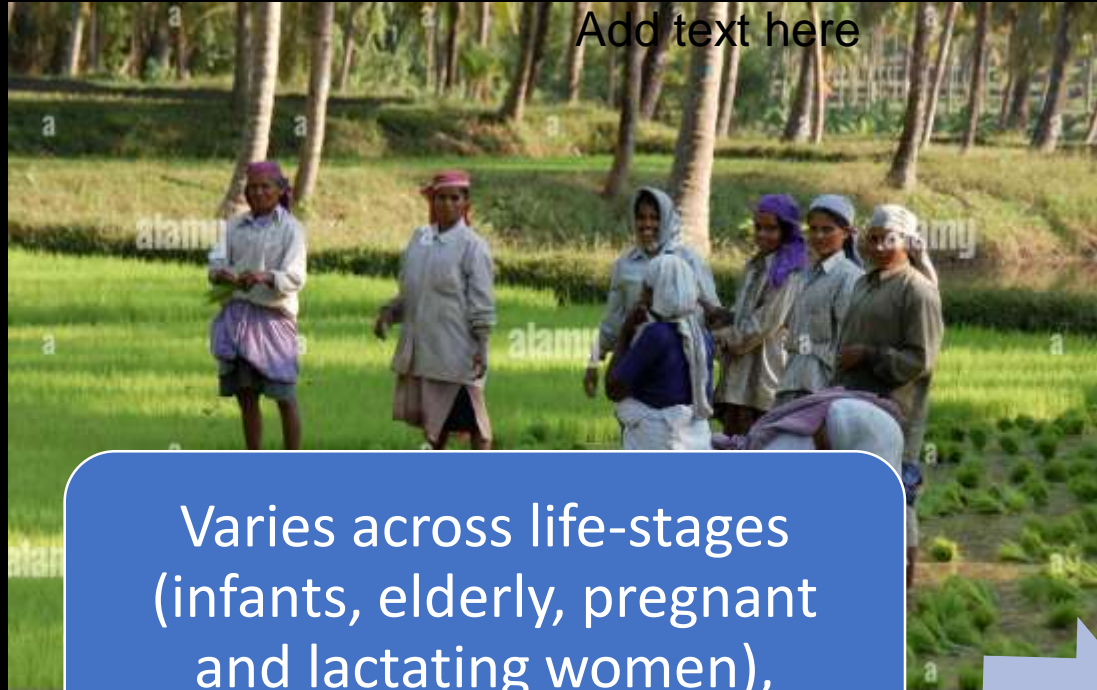
- Representation and voice in Panchayats
- Programs like Kudumbashree enable redistribution of resources – land, credit through JLGs etc
- They also recognize women's contributions to the local production economy

What needs further strengthening is:

- Recognition of:
 - Invisibility of women's unpaid care work; and
 - Differences amongst women belonging to different social groups (intersectionality);



VULNERABILITIES & NEEDS AS INTERSECTIONAL



Varies across life-stages (infants, elderly, pregnant and lactating women), poverty levels, geographic location, outdoor workers, ethnicity etc.



Vulnerabilities intersect to exacerbate effects of climate on women's agency, wellbeing and health

NEED A LOCATION SPECIFIC APPROACH: Specific locations (Wayanad, Idukki) falling behind in women's health, education and other human development needs

Growing Aspirational Migration of Women

Female migrants are 19% of total emigrants.

Yet 71% have degrees (highly educated)

47% are in the labour force, more than half of them as nurses or nursing assistants

Compared to 80% men, only 60% women migrate to GCC countries

Remittances to Kerala continue to rise – 20.6% between 2018-23 – potentially due to rising female skilled migration.



Are young women rejecting marriage?

- With high literacy rates, aspire to careers, economic independence and self-worth
- Seek to move away from rigid, traditional domestic and care roles
- Awareness and reporting of domestic violence
- Decline in marriage rates since 2018 needs exploration:
 - Women's profiles on matrimonial websites dropped by 57%
 - Divorce petitions increased by 40%



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Credit: Dethan P



Global Policy: Creating an enabling environment

Global level

Belem Gender Action Plan adopted at COP 30 (2026-2034)

Gender-Responsive Climate Action needs to address:

Intersectionality

Care, health, violence against women and safety and protection mechanisms

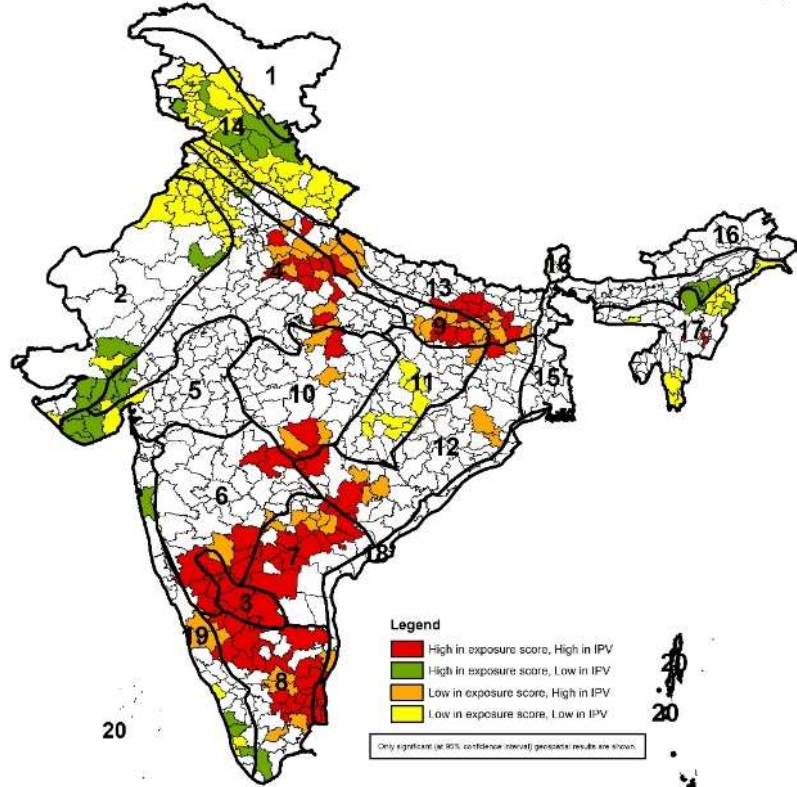
Finance, technology and capacity-building to achieve these goals

Kerala

7 of 28 state action plans for climate change in India identified women as key to adaptation (including Kerala)

The Kerala SAPCC didn't recognize women as active agents, it is nevertheless the only state which prepared a separate document titled 'Gender-inclusive State Action plan for Climate Change' in response to MoEFCC request.

EXPOSURE TO EXTREME HYDROMET HAZARDS AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE(IPV) ON WOMEN IN INDIA, 2021



Legend

- High in exposure score, High in IPV
- High in exposure score, Low in IPV
- Low in exposure score, High in IPV
- Low in exposure score, Low in IPV

Only significant (at 95% confidence interval) geospatial results are shown.

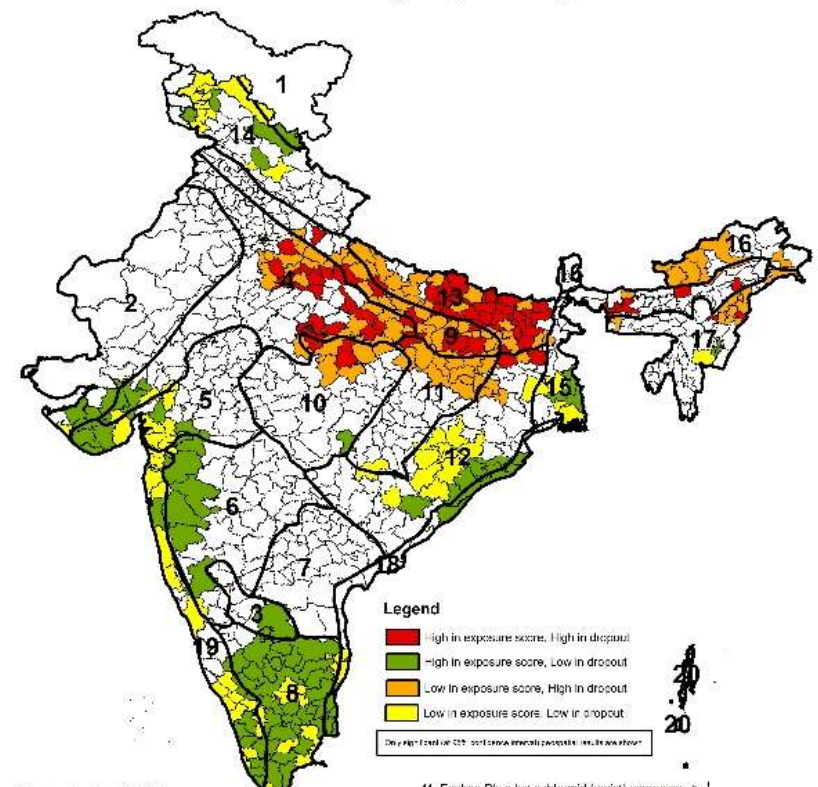
1. Western Himalayas cold arid ecoregion
2. Western Plain Kachchh and part of Kathiawar Peninsula hot arid ecoregion
3. Deccan Plateau Hot arid ecoregion
4. Northern Plain and Central Highlands including Aravallis, hot semi-arid ecoregion
5. Central (Malwa) Highlands Gujarat Plains & Kathiawar peninsula hot semi-arid ecoregion
6. Deccan Plateau hot semi-arid ecoregion
7. Deccan (Telangana) Plateau and Eastern ghats hot semi-arid ecoregion
8. Eastern ghats TN Uplands & Deccan (Karnataka) Plateau hot semi-arid ecoregion
9. Northern Plain hot subhumid (dry) ecoregion
10. Central Highland (Malwa, Bundelkhand & Eastern Satpura) hot subhumid ecoregion

11. Eastern Plateau (Chhattisgarh), hot subhumid ecoregion
12. Eastern (Chotanagpur) Plateau and Eastern Ghats hot subhumid ecoregion
13. Eastern Plain hot subhumid (moist) ecoregion
14. Western Himalayas Warm subhumid (to humid with inclusion of perhumid) ecoregion
15. Bengal and Assam plain hot subhumid (moist) to humid (inclusion of perhumid) ecoregion
16. Eastern Himalayas warm perhumid ecoregion
17. North - eastern Hills (Arunachal), warm perhumid ecoregion
18. Eastern Coastal plain hot subhumid to semi-arid ecoregion
19. Western Ghats & Coastal plain hot humid to perhumid ecoregion
20. Islands of Andaman - Nicobar & Lakshadweep hot humid to perhumid island ecoregion

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Chennai

0 250 500 1,000 Km

EXPOSURE TO EXTREME HYDROMET HAZARDS AND DROP OUT FROM MINIMUM RECOMMENDED ANTENATAL CARE (ANC) IN INDIA, 2021



Legend

- High in exposure score, High in dropout
- High in exposure score, Low in dropout
- Low in exposure score, High in dropout
- Low in exposure score, Low in dropout

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12. Eastern Plateau hot subhumid ecoregion
13. Eastern Plain hot subhumid ecoregion
14. Western Himalayas warm subhumid ecoregion
15. Assam & Bengal plain hot subhumid to humid ecoregion
16. Eastern Himalayas warm perhumid ecoregion
17. North - Eastern hills warm perhumid ecoregion
18. Eastern Coastal plain hot subhumid ecoregion
19. Western Ghats & Coastal plain hot humid to perhumid ecoregion
20. Islands of Andaman - Nicobar hot humid to perhumid ecoregion

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Making Food Systems more inclusive

- Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girl's Empowerment in the context of Food Security and Nutrition endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in 2021: framework and mechanisms to end discrimination of women in agrifood systems
- UNFSS process addressing the complex **inequalities** faced by women, youth and other marginalised groups, and unlocking **finance**
- Fiji, Guinea, Niger, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Tanzania, Uruguay are countries that have mainstreamed gender in agriculture policies.



127 countries have adopted national pathways for food systems transformations.



Policy, Research and Action for gender justice

Address the patriarchal norms that constrain women's agency and all forms of structural violence – central to dignity, equality, justice

- Recognize women as workers with equal entitlements to resources – material, financial, knowledge
- Redistribute public resources equitably, in specific marginalized locations, further strengthening public health, education and care systems
- Reduce women's sole responsibility as carers and household workers by sharing the burden of domestic work
- Address unequal institutional norms by giving women voice and leadership in decision-making processes at all levels
- Learn from community-led, collective empowerment programs that simultaneously address livelihoods, political participation and social norms – strengthen women's agency