

Gender and Climatic Policies in India- A Review of National and State Action Plans on Climate Change

Kirti Sharma

Jawaharlal Nehru University

Abstract:

It has been widely argued that the worst sufferers of climate change are poor and marginalized groups, particularly from developing countries (IPCC-AR4, 2007). It has been found that women being the poorest of the poor are even more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change as compared to men. Further, women's greater dependence on natural resources such as forests for fuelwood and fodder, expose them to greater risks associated with climate change.

It has also been seen that during natural disasters, women tend to die in far greater proportions as compared to men due to their physical limitations and also during the post-disaster scenario, women become more vulnerable due to their domestic roles, natural resource dependence, and also other societal norms such as a limitation on females' ability to migrate out after a major climatic disaster. It has been widely highlighted that traditional roles and responsibilities such as collection of water, fuelwood, and fodder make women vulnerable due to extreme events such as flooding and droughts and therefore exacerbate women's inequalities and oppressions.

Therefore, it is imperative to include gender concerns in all policy documents and laws relating to climate change and ensure adequate women's participation to ensure gender equality through climate action. This paper therefore aims to analyze the level of participation of women in climatic policies in India and also find out how the gender concerns are being addressed in India. In another section, key barriers to gender mainstreaming have been identified and the last section deals with key suggestions to engage with gender in the context of climate change in a meaningful manner.

Keywords: Gender, Climate Change, NAPCC, SAPCC

Introduction:

According to Article 1 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), "Climate change" refers to the change of climate that is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable periods" (UNFCCC, 2020)¹. Climate change is impacting the ecosystem in myriad ways including sea level rise, biodiversity loss, the decline in agricultural productivity, habitat destruction, coral bleaching, etc, thereby influencing all the terrestrial and marine organisms.

¹<https://unfccc.int/resource/csites/zimbab/conven/text/art01.htm#:~:text=2..observed%20over%20comparable%20time%20periods>.

Climate change can be regarded as one of the most significant biophysical phenomena on the earth but at the same time, it is not just a biophysical issue but also a social concern since it interacts with the pre-existing vulnerabilities of the human system and creates new forms of vulnerabilities and marginalizations. It has been widely argued that the repercussions of climate change are not gender neutral (Dankelman, 2010)² but due to the pre-existing inequalities in terms of gender, the effects of climate change are also gendered.

Climate change influences people contrastingly because of contrasts in their customary jobs, cultural assumptions, and occupations. Women, who make up most of the fostering scene's 1.4 billion poor, by and large, have lower wages, less admittance to credit and dynamic power, and restricted command over assets, expanding their weakness to numerous environmental influences (OECD, 2009)³

According to the UNFCCC, climate change greatly affects those segments of the populace, in all nations, that are most dependent on natural assets for their livelihoods and additionally, who have minimal ability to respond to regular dangers, like dry spells, avalanches, floods, and storms. Women normally face higher dangers and more noteworthy weights from the effects of environmental change in circumstances of destitution, and most of the world's poor are women. Women's inconsistent cooperation in dynamic cycles and work markets compound disparities and frequently keep ladies from completely adding to environment-related arranging, strategy-making, and execution (UNFCCC, 2023)⁴.

However, women can (and do) assume a basic part for adaptations to climate change because of their closer understanding of nature and natural resources and the rich traditional knowledge that women hold. Further, women's support at the political level has brought about more noteworthy responsiveness to climatic actions, frequently expanding participation across party and ethnic lines and conveying more manageable harmony between various sections of the community (UNFCCC, 2023). On the other hand, it has also been found that if plans and policies have been designed and implemented without taking into consideration women's active participation, not only have the projects and interventions been less effective but it has also tended to increase the existing inequalities in the society (UNFCCC, 2023).

“Climate change is a man-made problem with a feminist solution”- Mary Robinson⁵

Therefore, it is imperative to include gender concerns in all policy documents and laws relating to climate change and ensure adequate women's participation to ensure gender equality through climate action. This study therefore aims to analyze the level of participation of women in climatic policies in India and also find out how the gender concerns are being addressed in India. In another section, key barriers to gender mainstreaming have been identified and the last section deals with key suggestions to engage with gender in the context of climate change in a meaningful manner.

Gender, environmental issues and laws in India: Environmental issues are a ubiquitous issue in the world and therefore impact everyone, nevertheless, laws are applicable only within the geographical limits and therefore, to deal with environmental challenges effectively and diminish the impact upon various sections of the population, environmental laws, policies and actions need to be streamlined in such a manner that they benefit all the sections of the society (Mathur, 2022)⁶.

² <https://gender.cgiar.org/publications/gender-and-climate-change-introduction>

³ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/46460915.pdf>

⁴ <https://unfccc.int/gender>

⁵ [ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS AND IT'S IMPACT ON WOMEN AND TRIBALS IN INDIA • The International Prism](#)

⁶ [ibid](#)

Gender and Climate change:

It has been widely argued that the worst sufferers of climate change are poor and marginalized groups, particularly from developing countries (IPCC-AR4⁷, 2007). It has been found that women being the poorest of the poor are even more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change as compared to men. Further, women's greater dependence on natural resources such as forests for fuelwood and fodder, expose them to greater risks associated with climate change.

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Ladies at the forefront experience the ill effects of the impacts of climbing temperature, climate limit, and flighty precipitation however the last to be viewed as in environment variation arrangements. Because of inconsistent power relations, and underlying and institutional limitations, environmental fiascos greatly affect socially hindered networks including ladies and young ladies. Dry season or flood-related environment emergencies cause an extra weight for ladies bringing about chronic weakness and sterilization and examples of sexual savagery. Ladies are excessively impacted as a result of orientation jobs and obligations, restricted admittance to assets, man-centric designs, restricted versatility, and low portrayal in dynamic bodies (Arya, 2023⁸).

Further, the burden of respiratory diseases arising due to climate change, greenhouse gases, and global warming tends to impact women disproportionately (BCG, 2021⁹).

Gender, Climate Change and Challenges to the International and Domestic Laws:

It has been found that during climate-induced disasters, Sexual and Gender-based violence also tends to increase (Desai and Mandal, 2021)¹⁰. Also, in the post-disaster scenario, women and girls continue to be the victims and there is no justice available to them. This signifies that climate change has introduced an additional layer of vulnerability and victimisation for women and girls that needs to be addressed by international and national laws and policies.

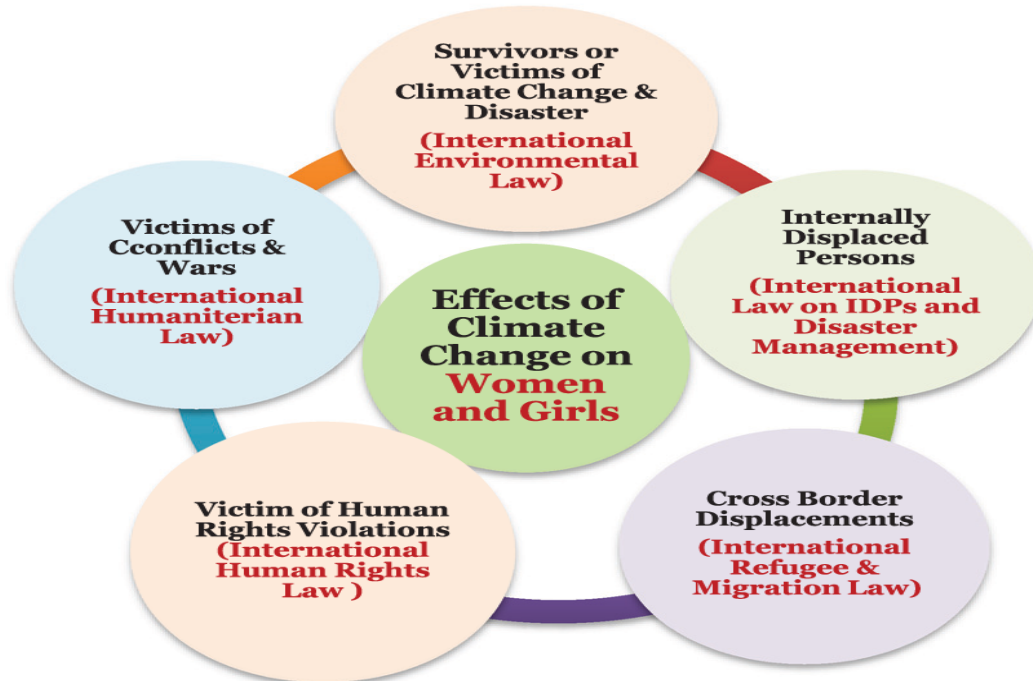
⁷ <https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar4/>

⁸ [India's Masculinist Climate Policy And The Need For Gender Inclusivity In Policy-making | Feminism in India](#)

⁹ [Why Climate Action Needs a Gender Focus | BCG](#)

¹⁰ <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/womens-resilience-how-laws-and-policies-promote-gender-equality-climate-change-and-disaster-risk-management-asia-and-pacific>

Figure 1: Gender, Climate Change and challenges to International Laws



Source: Mandal and Desai, 2021 available at <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Role-of-Climate-Change-in-Exacerbating-Sexual-and-A-Desai-Mandal/e9625561374958c418380d841e29c7f306fad6fc>

Climate change has led to war and crisis in countries such as Sudan’s civil war which has been described as a war that has been indirectly caused by the climatic changes in the region (UNFCCC, 2022¹¹). Similarly, the Syrian crisis has also become worse due to climate change as the already drought-prone regions are becoming drier and drier compounding the struggles faced by the poor and the marginal (UNFCCC, 2022¹²). In such a state of affairs, women and girls have been disproportionately impacted as victims of climate and wars, victims of forced migrations and displacements, and sex-based violence in the aftermath of climatic disasters and extreme events.

Therefore, gender is an important criterion to assess the vulnerabilities faced by individuals however, the laws and policies in place fail to address gender concerns for instance, Mandal and Desai, 2021¹³ have highlighted how important international laws about the environment, human rights, refugee and migration fail to consider the gendered nature of the climatic crisis and fail to address gender issues.

Furthermore, international treaties on climate change that serve as the guiding light for other international and national laws including Kyoto Protocol of 1997, UNFCCC of 1992, and the Paris Agreement of 2015 fail to bring in the gender consideration while dealing with climate change particularly those relating to climate change induced sexual and gender-based violence.

In addition to this, there are other legal concerns arising out of climate change. This includes the challenges associated with equality and justice. Gender equality can be defined as the basis of the relationship between men and women based on norms, cultural practices, and social and behavioral expectations that translate into differences in the powers exercised by men and women (World Bank, 2012).¹⁴

¹¹ <https://unfccc.int/news/conflict-and-climate>

¹² Ibid

¹³ [\[PDF\] Role of Climate Change in Exacerbating Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Women: A New Challenge for International Law | Semantic Scholar](#)

¹⁴ [Gender Brief-07.05.2021.indd \(unwomen.org\)](#)

It has been found that climate change not only increases the vulnerabilities of women but also increases the inequalities faced by women (ADB, 2023¹⁵). It has been argued by BCG that the progress achieved in terms of gender equality could be reversed due to climate change and this could take us back by over 20 years (BCG, 2021¹⁶). Climatic adaptations have also been found to follow a masculine approach and has been blamed to widen the differences between men and women. As a result, it has been widely advocated by feminist scholars that climatic action should not only look at the concerns of women but also make women as equal participants in the fight against climate change as equals to men and not just be seen as victims or saviours for the climate change scenario (Arora-Jonsson, 2011¹⁷). This has been referred to as gender mainstreaming in the academic parlance.

As per the United Countries Monetary and Social Chamber (ECOSOC), mainstreaming has been defined as the assessment of action plan, laws, policies and programmes in terms of their impacts upon men and women including all the areas of intervention. It advocates for involving gendered concerns of both men and women in all the stages of policy-making ensuring equal participation of men and women at all levels and all stages including planning, implementation, and assessment. The aim is to ensure gender equality and gender justice (ECOSOC, 1997)¹⁸.

It has been argued that climate justice cannot be achieved without achieving gender justice. The Global Fund for Women defined gender justice as the intersectional approach that focuses on the differential needs, experiences, and leadership abilities of different individuals who are suffering due to various challenges including discrimination and other forms of oppression¹⁹. Further, climate justice can be defined as following a people-centric approach towards climate change focusing on establishing a link between human rights, development, and climate action. It is also based on a sound understanding that everyone has had a different share of contribution towards climate change and everyone has different capacities to deal with climate change. Thus, the United Nations Children's Fund calls for all climate action initiatives to focus on social, economic, political, intergenerational, and environmental justice²⁰.

Hence, any analysis of climatic policies would be incomplete without incorporating the dimension of gender justice and equality. While the idea of justice and equality are embedded in our constitution, the policy actions need to be streamlined in a gender-sensitive manner to create synergies for holistic gender development and equality.

Gender and Policies framework: UNDP, 2012 (in Uttarakhand State Action Plan on Climate Change) has highlighted different policy frameworks that can be used to analyze the policy documents. These include gender-blind, gender-neutral, gender-specific, gender-sensitive, and gender transformative policies. Chandni, 2021 has highlighted that the gender blind and gender-neutral frameworks can be described as those where gendered vulnerabilities are not even recognised whereas gender specific policies could be described as those where gender is considered as an important determinant of vulnerability and hence women are viewed as victims.

¹⁵ <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/womens-resilience-how-laws-and-policies-promote-gender-equality-climate-change-and-disaster-risk-management-asia-and-pacific>

¹⁶ [Why Climate Action Needs a Gender Focus | BCG](#)

¹⁷ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0959378011000069>

¹⁸ ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council). 1997. Agreed Conclusions. 1997/2. [Link]

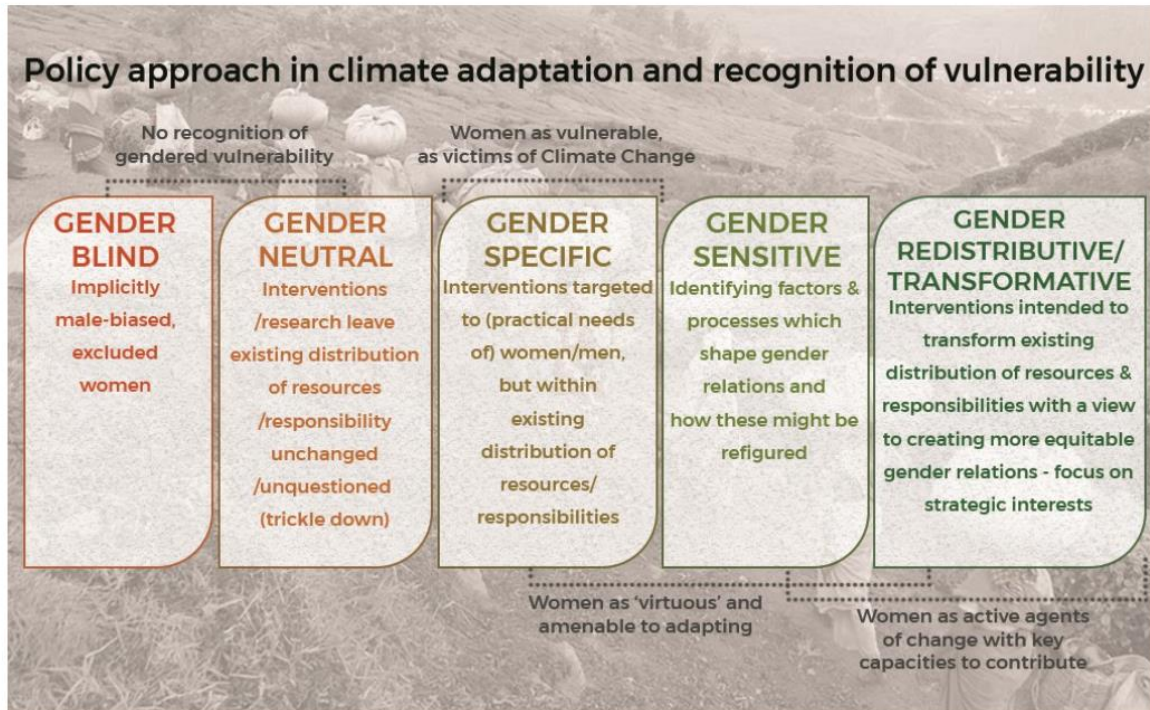
[Towards-a-gender-responsive-implementation-of-the-Convention-on-Biological-Diversity-en.pdf](#)

¹⁹ [What is Gender Justice? | The Importance of Gender Justice \(globalfundforwomen.org\)](#)

²⁰ [What is Climate Justice? And what can we do achieve it? | UNICEF Office of Global Insight & Policy](#)

However, this is still a narrow view of women as victims, and hence gender-sensitive and gender-transformative policies focus at viewing women not only as victims but also as agents of change and transformation thereby giving women a virtuous position in view of climate change and related adaptations.

Figure 3: Policy frameworks



The spectrum from gender-blind climate policy to gender-redistributive climate action.

Adapted from Singh et al. 2021.

Illustration: Shivani Dave

Source: Singh, 2023 available at <https://questionofcities.org/how-is-india-mainstreaming-gender-in-climate-change-adaptation/>

According to the framing suggested above, the NAPCC can be recognized as a policy document somewhere between “gender-neutral” and “gender-specific” policy document since even though it recognizes the gender concerns and the vulnerability of women in the context of climate change and variability, at the same time it doesn’t challenge the existing structures that create this gendered vulnerability. Therefore, it can only be said the move in the right direction but still a lot more is required to make it an action plan focusing on gender equality and justice.

National Action Plan on Climate Change²¹:

Deshpande et, al., 2023 have highlighted that the NAPCC marks the paradigm shift in terms of policy making in India by following a “embedded liberalism” framework rather than the traditional and typical paradigm marked by “structural conflict”²². The structural conflict paradigm supported the dependence on external aids and finances from developed countries in order to adapt to climate change whereas, the embedded liberalism paradigm focused on making adjustments and adaptations while considering the

²¹ [doc202112101.pdf \(pib.gov.in\)](https://pib.gov.in/doc202112101.pdf)

²² [Full article: Policy styles and India’s national action plan on climate change \(NAPCC\) \(tandfonline.com\)](https://tandfonline.com)

limited domestic resource base and social structures (Deshpande et. al, 2023). As a reflection to this, NAPCC was designed as a voluntary climatic action plan that focused on growth along with a focus on poverty reduction, justice and equality.

The focus areas identified in the action plan for climate change action include conserving natural resources, improving knowledge of climate change impacts, and increasing the use of solar energy. It is to be done through eight targeted missions that have been discussed below.

The National Solar Mission aims to increase the share of solar energy in the energy mix. However, it doesn't explicitly recognize the gender concerns or involve gender in a meaningful manner where women can play a crucial role in the development of solar energy and ensuring sustainable development and utilisation of energy. The case of solar mamas from Tilonia region of Rajasthan can be highlighted as a perfect example of women-led development and management of solar energy in India. Similarly, the National Water Mission aims to promote equitable distribution of water at the local and national levels, as well as sustainable water management based on the National Water Policy, which does not follow a gender-based approach.

The National Energy Efficiency Mission aims to improve the financing required for energy efficiency and to promote the use of energy-efficient appliances however it follows a very technocentric and masculine approach towards energy development where women do not get figured in any of the policy strategies. Such initiatives may prove to exacerbate gender inequality by not taking into account women's participation and active involvement when in rural areas particularly, women constitute the major workforce that share the burden of managing sources of energy including fuelwood and fodder.

The National Sustainable Habitat Mission aims to focus on energy efficiency in public transportation, energy efficiency in buildings, and energy-efficient waste management. This again tends to follow an infrastructure-led, top-down approach where the element of local involvement, local participation, and grassroots are being ignored thus making it a less responsive and less people-centric policy measure. Finally, the useful element includes support for disaster management, with a focus on improving early warning systems during extreme weather events. This includes building structures for rainwater harvesting, as well as reviving structures related to irrigation. In this component, women could be very actively involved and they should be provided with the adequate information through the early warning systems.

The mission of national mission for sustaining the Himalayan ecosystem is to protect and conserve the Himalayan ecosystem, especially the glaciers, and mountains, through community-based interventions to preserve 2/3rd of the area under forests. While the policy document fails to include gendered concerns of the women engaged in mountain regions, it has strong merit since women contribute significantly to agricultural workforce in mountains and also since these regions are characterised by high male out-migration, women should be empowered to initiate, implement and manage any strategy focusing on development of mountain regions.

The national mission for a green India is to create carbon sinks to improve ecosystem services and reforestation with the help of the community and the mission for sustainable agriculture is to improve the state of the country's agriculture by making it more resilient to changes caused by climate change. The mission will identify and develop new varieties of crops especially thermal-resistant crops and alternative cropping patterns, capable of withstanding extremes of weather, long dry spells, flooding, and variable moisture availability. The mission of strategic knowledge on climate change is to identify and build effective responses to the risks and challenges posed by climate change. Both these missions can have

significant gender participation and can hugely benefit by involving gendered vulnerabilities and capabilities.

Arya, 2023 argues that despite being a gender-responsive action plan, the NAPCC falls short of being recognized as a gender-transformative action plan since it still follows a gender conception of gender where gender is being considered synonymous with women²³. Despite recognizing gender as a criterion that exaggerates vulnerabilities, it fails to recognize the role of social structure and other intersectional identities such as those based on caste, class, etc. as determining the positionality of men and women in terms of vulnerabilities and ability to adapt²⁴. It has therefore been projected that the NAPCC sets into context only masculinist values that promote economic growth rather than focusing on sustainable growth objectives which are based on gender equality and justice.

State Action Plans and Gender: with the active participation from the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN), a few states such as Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand have tried to incorporate gender mainstreaming into their action plans²⁵. Singh, 2023²⁶ argues that 12 out of 28 states do not even recognize gender concerns in their action plans whereas 16 out of 28 state-level action plans on climate action tend to identify women as vulnerable but fail to acknowledge their ability as powerful agents of change in the context of climate change and associated adaptive interventions.

The five states namely Assam, Manipur Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Odisha end up following an extremely gender-blind approach towards their adaptation strategies (Singh et. al. 2021). They neither recognize women as victims of climate change nor try to incorporate gender concerns in their policy strategy. This is highly significant in the Indian context as north-eastern states are characterised by relatively better and matrilineal relations as compared to other parts of the country and women also contribute significantly towards the agricultural workforce and in this context, gender-blind policies end up propagating gender inequality and therefore make women even more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Another set of states including the north-eastern state of Arunachal Pradesh, southern states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, central state of Madhya Pradesh and northern state of Uttar Pradesh follow a gender-neutral approach in their climatic action plans (Singh et. al, 2021) since they include specific plans and policies focusing on gendered improvement of outcomes but at the same time do not challenge the gender norms, gender inequalities and the existing gender relations that shape and determine vulnerabilities.

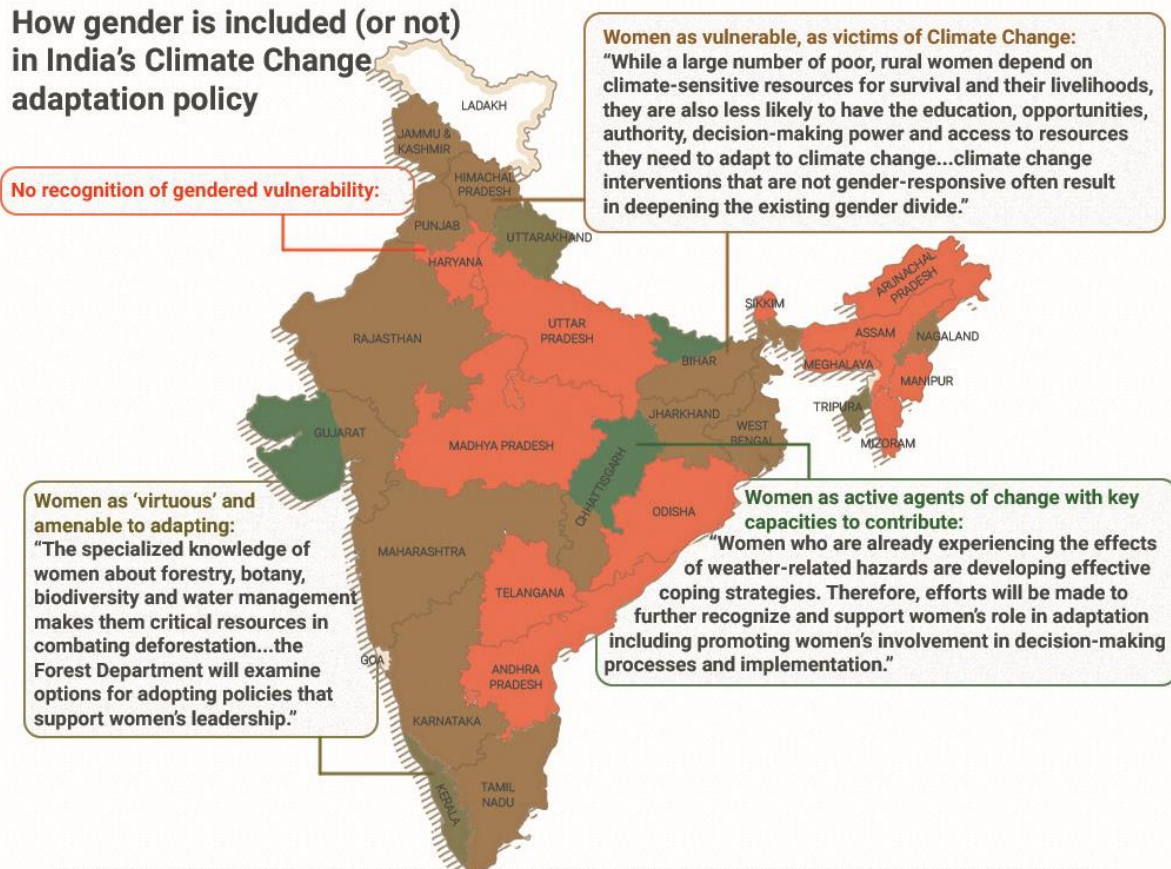
²³ [India's Masculinist Climate Policy And The Need For Gender Inclusivity In Policy-making | Feminism in India](#)

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ [Project : Gender and state climate change action plans in India | Climate & Development Knowledge Network \(cdkn.org\)](#)

²⁶ [How is India mainstreaming gender in Climate Change adaptation? - Question of Cities](#)

Figure 4: Gender and State Action Plans in India



Source Report: How does climate change adaptation policy in India consider gender? An analysis of 28 state action plans By Chandni Singh, Divya Solomon, Nitya Rao.

Source: Singh, 2023 available at <https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fquestionofcities.org%2Fhow-is-india-mainstreaming-gender-in-climate-change-adaptation%2F&psig=AOvVaw3PRzh1v-7tKPS9V-MyQpHO&ust=1701420220126000&source=images&cd=vfe&opi=89978449&ved=0CBUQ3YkBahcKEwiIz5WvquuCAxUAAAAAHQAAAAAQFQ>

Further, "Thirteen SAPCCs (Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, West Bengal) follow a gender-specific approach, targeting women and certain livelihoods, castes, and income groups through sectoral or livelihoods-based interventions." (Singh et.al, 2021²⁷).

Similarly, they have also highlighted that even when few of the state action plans involve gender concerns and vulnerabilities, states like Uttarakhand, Tripura, and Odisha's revised SAPCC follow a gender transformative pathway toward climate action but at the same time fail to take into account the intersectional view of gender.

Key barriers to mainstream gender in climatic action plans and policies²⁸: Barriers to gender-responsive climate action that lead to further sharpening of inequalities between men and women can be categorized as normative barriers, structural barriers, capacity barriers, and decision-making barriers (UN Women, 2021).

²⁷ [Accepted Manuscript.pdf \(uea.ac.uk\)](#)

²⁸ [Gender Brief-07.05.2021.indd \(unwomen.org\)](#)

Normative obstacles are linked to gender norms in society and culture, which influence how men and women behave in public and private settings. Men and women participate in and contribute to a variety of livelihood-related activities within a framework that is shaped by gender norms, perceptions, and the attitudes that support them. Further, an unequal distribution of money and opportunities is referred to as a **structural barrier**. One of the most important structural barriers identified in this regard can be described as the unequal and insecure access to land amongst women (IUCN, 2020).²⁹ The allocation of assets is highly gendered, and in many developing nations, the proportion of women who own land is relatively low. Just 10–20% of the agricultural land in these countries is owned solely or jointly by women, even though they produce 60–80% of the food (FAO, 2019).

Another form of barriers includes capacity limitations or **capacity barriers** which represent the fact that women have less access to technology, innovation, training, extension, and knowledge and information. **Barriers to decision-making** draw attention to the disparity in the representation of women in local, provincial, and federal decision-making. Women's voice in choices on policies and initiatives about climate change is diminished as a result of this disparity. IUCN, 2020 highlights that world over, only 12 percent of the top ministerial positions in sectors related to environment are dominated by women³⁰.

Suggestions for gender integration in climatic policies, legislations, and action plans:

The first and foremost step towards gender sensitive policy action therefore stems from the recognition that the outcomes and vulnerabilities are gendered and the social structure interacts with climate change in a number of ways thereby compounding the challenges faced by women. Women are disproportionately bearing the burden of climate change across sectors and therefore, this narrow framing of climate change as an external biophysical phenomenon in itself needs to be challenged and the social lens need to be adopted before framing any policy response.

Gender equality may be attained through climate adaptation initiatives that acknowledge the various roles that men and women play in risk management and climate resilience at the local and national levels. There have been notable outcomes from the effective application of initiatives aimed at gender equality and women's empowerment that are backed by sufficient resources.

For example, in the modified Environmental Change Strategy of Nepal, 2019, mainstreaming of gender equity and social consideration has been included as one of its seven goals; the previous variant of the approach (2011) incorporated no gender-related goals. This has led to better outcomes in the country about environmental management. Similarly, in Bangladesh, it has been noticed that, through consistent government and nongovernment initiatives, women are better sharpened to environmental change issues and better educated in wording regarding readiness for future catastrophes. In Pakistan, there have been endeavors towards a significant consideration of women in decision-production at the local area level through advances, for example, through holistic development and execution of community-based disaster risk management plans, building up of climate resilient and resistant infrastructure and climate-smart adaptations in the agricultural sector (Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, 2021).³¹

Other steps may include the incorporation of gender analysis and a detailed vulnerability assessment report to correct existing key sectoral strategies dealing with climate change. The amended arrangements and techniques ought to be expected to wipe out existing normative and structural barriers thereby focusing

²⁹ [Gender and the environment: What are the barriers to gender equality in sustainable ecosystem management? | IUCN](#)

³⁰ *ibid*

³¹ [Gender Brief-07.05.2021.indd \(unwomen.org\)](#)

on the improvement of women's decision-making ability and therefore encouraging their participation in decision-making (UNEP, 2020)³².

Further, applying a cross-sectoral approach in connecting various ministries and planning agencies with representative women's organizations at various levels can be conducive to increasing women's participation across sectors.

There is a need not only to incorporate women in various sectors but also ensure effective implementation of gender responsive plans and policies at all level of governance. This can be done through effective capacity building exercises in all the relevant departments and agencies thereby leading to meaningful gender integration. Thus, gender responsive policy making should be followed with gender sensitive climate action plan which is effectively ensured.

Another critical dimension that is of utmost importance to mainstream gender concerns in all the environmental policies and programs into climatic action plans is to take care of the specific financial needs of women through tools such as Gender budgeting to gender-responsive budgeting that aims to earmark specific part of the budget for effective implementation of plan components which are meant for gender empowerment and gender equality.

In addition to this, there is a need to effectively monitor the sectoral spending for each department once the gender budgeting has been done. There should be periodic audits to understand the spending pattern and ensure that the amount earmarked for specific gender-based schemes and programme be effectively executed and utilized.

World Bank, 2011³³ has highlighted that women's contribution to local societies has been commendable even in areas where women have access to very few productive sources and women have set an example in the aftermath of the disasters. This suggests that women with effective training and hand-holding can act as virtuous agents in the face of climate change. There is only a need to channelize and materialize the potential that women hold in terms of their strength and resilience driven by the love and empathy for their people. Thus, there is also a need to revisit the societal norms that tend to make women a passive player in the battle against climate change. The challenged situations during a disaster or extreme event make women challenge these societal norms and work for the betterment of their communities. Gender mainstreaming can therefore lead to the emergence of transformed communities that can deal with the crisis of climate change effectively.

The Boston Consulting Group 2021³⁴ advocates for the creation of green jobs focusing on women and also for incorporating gender lens in all climate finance initiatives of the future and focus on both traditional and modern ways of climatic adaptations and mitigations.

Conclusion:

Therefore, it is important to understand that despite climate change being a phenomenon that would impact each and everyone globally, the deeper impacts of climate change would be felt in proportion to one's location in the structure of the power hierarchy and levels of development since climate change doesn't act as an external phenomenon but at the same time it interacts with various socio-economic inequities existing in the society and tends to exacerbate them.

³² ibid

³³ ibid

³⁴ [Why Climate Action Needs a Gender Focus | BCG](#)

In this context, it is important that our policies and action plans focusing on climate action should prioritise gender and other forms of intersecting axis of vulnerability in all the policy stances and documents. We barely have environmental laws that specifically look at gender or follow gender concerns in their approach, be it the Environmental Acts, Forest Acts among others.

An examination of the National Action Plan on Climate Change (2008) reveals that the action plan tries to address gender inequality as its guiding principle but still falls short in terms of policy action and strategies mentioned. Similarly, most State Action Plans also do not follow a gender sensitive approach and end up either being gender neutral or gender blind. Only few SAPCCs such as those from Uttarakhand, Tripura and the revised action plan of Odisha tend to follow a gender transformative approach wherein they not only view women and victims of climate change but also view them as virtuous participants in the context of climate change by giving them opportunities to act as participants in adaptation measures. This is a move in the right direction however still there is a long way to go in order to mainstream gender action in all the policy documents of the country.

Further, it is important to breakdown the institutional silos and ensure greater climate change and gender related concerns in all the associated sectors dealing with environment and climate change. Women should be encouraged to occupy top-most positions in the decision-making bodies working on climate change and this process should be emulated at all the levels of governance from bottom to top and from national level to the local levels. Ensuring Gender Responsive Budgeting and ensuring the structural and normative barriers to women's meaningful participation would also be the steps in the right direction which can help the country in better dealing with the crisis of climate change.

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