

Feminist Foreign Policy

GENDER IN CLIMATE ACTION

The Case for Inclusion in Mumbai



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We need to understand the nuances of the impact of climate change on gender and are open to learning. As part of the climate action plan, we need community and nature-based solutions, and by involving women in climate action. More than 20% of the BMC's net income is going towards women's causes.

SMT. ASHWINI BHIDE

IAS, Additional Municipal Commissioner (Eastern Suburbs)

In her opening remarks at the 'Collaborative Conversations around Gender in Climate Action' event, Mumbai, September 2022.



INTRODUCTION

The concept of Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP) underscores that a more inclusive foreign policy can be an effective tool to deal with new and emerging challenges, a key one being climate change.¹ While a FFP is not a panacea for existing challenges, it offers a new form of thinking and a wider lens that ultimately offers innovative solutions. The FFP additionally takes into consideration marginalised and other vulnerable groups that are most affected by climate change and often excluded in decision making processes. These groups should not be seen as victims, but as key drivers and agents of change. Climate policy is an inseparable element of foreign policy and global governance and is often the axis between stakeholders at various levels of domestic governance. This is especially relevant at the city level, calling for greater sharing of information and knowledge co-creation amongst stakeholders.

Cities are critical to India's overall economic growth and outlook. The nature and impact of climate change is such, that a lack of integration between considerations including on infrastructure development, resource management, mobility, socio-economic aspects, and on ground realities, could be the weakest links bringing cities to a standstill. The growing numbers of people living in urban centres will only complicate matters and result in cascading disasters for the most vulnerable and marginalised. There is a dual need to both protect the vulnerable as well as involve those most deeply affected in decision making. Each city must therefore consider potential risks through an integrated, inclusionary and intersectional lens, in order to prepare for an uncertain future. Integrating gender considerations with climate action at the city level can strengthen policy impact.

Through this brief we present the significance of linking gender and inclusion with climate action at the city level in India. We present ideas focusing on Mumbai - the financial capital of India, a coastal city, and the first Indian city to develop a climate action plan. The perspectives presented are a result of knowledge and research from Kubernein Initiative as well as ideas shared at the conference '*Collaborative Conversations around Gender in Climate Action*' held in September 2022.

LINKAGE BETWEEN GENDER, INCLUSION AND CLIMATE CHANGE



The linkages of gender with climate change are not new, and exist outside of the FFP conversation. Multilateral engagements on climate change already recognize the mainstreaming of gender as an instrumental approach. For example, the introduction of the Gender Action Plan under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2016, has led to greater acknowledgement of the need for ensuring women's participation in climate change-related decision-making and resulted in nation states adopting roadmaps to integrate gender into their respective climate actions.

In the case of India, The National Action Plan for Climate Change (NAPCC) sets forth an inclusive pathway by acknowledging the disproportionate effects of climate change on women, particularly their health, and the need for paying special attention to gender aspects in climate policy. India's disaster management policies also feature gender prominently. Drawing on country experiences as well as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, India has incorporated criteria to provide special care to the needs of women and children and prevent discrimination based on all grounds including gender.

At the sub-national level Indian states have developed action plans. Maharashtra's State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC), amongst other key aspects, recognizes the impacts of climate change at the household level, which is also affected by social relations such as gender and caste, or by institutions or market practices. Mumbai, a coastal city and financial capital of India, has developed a Mumbai Climate Action Plan (MCAP), one of the first cities in the country to do so, that recognizes gender differentiated experiences along with some policy prescriptions. Mumbai has also joined the C40 Cities Women4Climate program to ensure that women play a pivotal role in Mumbai's fight against climate change.

The effects of climate change are experienced differently across gender and society in India. Various data and studies² highlight a common thread where they find that women and girls, who are often the primary providers of food, water, and heating in their households, spend more time and effort attending to these needs in the event of a crisis or scarcity. A 2023 report by DASRA and India Climate Collaborative³ lists amongst the reasons for this, the lack of adequate representation in policy making circles, prevalence of patriarchy, low access to education, economic resources, and assets, biologically vulnerable roles of child bearing and nurturing, and intersectional differences of caste, religion and ethnicity. The implications are manifold. Women also place themselves on low priority when it comes to rescue and relief operations. Dr. Dhanasree Jayaram writes in an essay⁴, that the disproportionate effects of climate change on women and other marginalised communities, is being recognised as a form of climate injustice, which requires urgent attention.

While the disproportionate effects of climate change on gender are widely studied and reported on, cities in India are "rarely gender-responsive".⁵ This in turn furthers the gender differentiated impacts of climate change. It affects how we make decisions in the long term, how we want our cities to develop, our housing and transportation policies, etc. How climate policy is operationalized through various internal and external mechanisms of governance can therefore determine its impact. Integrating gender into climate action forces human security and environmental security to be bridged in a strong and intentional manner. It is important for these conversations to be collaborative and enriched by diverse perspectives since strong partnerships broaden the circles of engagement for topics that otherwise run on parallel tracks.

MUMBAI – STATE OF PLAY

Mumbai, the business and financial capital of India, is the most populous city in India, and the seventh most populous city in the world. Mumbai's economy contributes approximately 6% of the country's GDP and has an estimated GDP of nearly USD 310 billion.⁶ The city is home to several industries and sectors, chief among which are finance and banking, textiles, IT, entertainment, gems and jewellery, and leather processing. All of which are put at risk by climate vulnerabilities. A 2019 IPCC report states that by 2050 many coastal megacities and small island countries may face severe extreme weather events: tropical cyclones, heavy rain, floods, extreme waves and other coastal hazards. Four Indian cities, including Mumbai are among places that could be the most severely impacted, with its urban population at risk of flooding.⁷

Mumbai Climate Vulnerability

1. July 2005, Mumbai experienced its worst ever flood which resulted in damages worth INR 4500 million and 900 deaths.⁸
2. Between 1973–2020, Mumbai has experienced temperature increase of 0.25 degree celsius per decade, 10 heatwaves, and 2 extreme heatwave events.⁹
3. Between 2011–2020, data gathered from 37 weather stations, showed 6 heavy, 5 very heavy, and 4 extremely heavy rain events per year.¹⁰
4. By 2040, 60% of the year will be high-heat days i.e. exceeding temperatures of more than 33 degree celsius.¹¹
5. Mumbai has one of India's highest national standards for per capita water supply (3850 MLD). Mumbai's water supply is primarily reliant on the monsoons, and any delays in precipitation, coupled with inadequate infrastructure and poor management lead to regular cuts in water supply.¹²

Climate crisis and its outcomes impact low-income communities disproportionately. For example, when water supply is scarce, it is often delivered at odd times during the day, and working women suffer as they become primary managers of household needs. Similarly, extreme weather events affect the quality and continuity of education.¹³ The effects of climate change will also have an impact on workforce participation.¹⁴ In Mumbai in particular, women's workforce participation is largely determined by factors such as public transport, access to water and sanitation, inclusive infrastructure, etc.¹⁵ All these factors will face the cascading effects of climate change. Gender and inclusivity therefore are intrinsically linked in the climate conversation.

Mumbai and Gender

1. The district of Mumbai has a total population of 3,085,411¹⁶, out of which 1,400,803 are female.
2. Sex Ratio of Mumbai district is 832 women to 1000 men.¹⁷
3. Mumbai has an average literacy rate of 89.21 for urban regions; male literacy rate of 83.74% and the female literacy rate of 78.41%¹⁸.
4. Despite a high female literacy rate, as of 2019, only one-fifth of women in Greater Mumbai (including Mumbai City, Mumbai Suburban, Palghar, Thane and Raigad) were employed.¹⁹
5. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) 2017 elections saw 57% women leaders elected.²⁰

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) revised Draft Development Plan, 2034²¹ and Mumbai Climate Action Plan (MCAP) are moving the needle in terms of acknowledging the importance of gender and inclusivity for urban planning. Although more needs to be done in terms of recognizing women beyond the vulnerable category as important stakeholders in decision-making²² of the city. The MCAP, through initial mapping and assessment of the vulnerabilities of women, the elderly, persons with disabilities, children, low-income communities, and informal communities (residents and workers), has significant gender considerations. These are presented through sectoral priorities (including sustainable mobility, sanitation, air quality, urban flooding and water resource management), identification of vulnerability and adaptive capacity, and actions proposed to further gender-responsiveness. The table below provides a brief overview of existing gender considerations, actions proposed and areas where ideas and plans are missing.

SECTORAL PRIORITIES (MCAP)	GENDER CONSIDERATIONS	VULNERABILITY & ADAPTIVE CAPACITY	ACTIONS PROPOSED
Sustainable Mobility	<p>Incorporating women-friendly policies for public transport accessibility and non-motorised transport (NMT) planning.</p> <p>Women's safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training women drivers, women only compartments and panic buttons. <p>Women, children and the elderly safety and accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve public transport ridership. <p>Women, children and low income groups – multi-modal integration and equitable access and affordability identified as key priorities.</p>	<p>Women & children – Increasing adaptive capacity and reducing vulnerability through access to mass transit, enables access to jobs and resources, which can help improve household incomes.</p>	<p>Gender & income disaggregated data for number of public transport trips, transit stations and last mile connectivity.</p>

SECTORAL PRIORITIES (MCAP)	GENDER CONSIDERATIONS	VULNERABILITY & ADAPTIVE CAPACITY	ACTIONS PROPOSED
Urban Flooding & Water Resource Management	Women, children, informal and low-income communities – Easy access to safe and affordable water to reduce time spent, burden of procuring water and increasing time for job opportunities.	NA	NA
Sanitation	Women, young girls, informal and low-income communities – Improved access to toilet and sanitation facilities to improve living environment and provide health benefits.	Women, children and persons with special needs – Access to safe sanitation within the premises at all times to reduce dependency on public toilets, curtail the risk of public health hazards and ensure access even during disaster events.	NA
Air Quality	Women, children, elderly from low-income settlements – identified as stakeholders in medium and long term actions forward/community-level awareness generation program for the prevention of adverse effects of air pollution and for organizing awareness and outreach programs for better dissemination of information regarding health advisories, preventive measures and forecasting.	Vulnerability assessment based on gender for climate & air pollution induced risks at household level.	Gender & income disaggregated data for mortality and morbidity rates due to air pollution.
Urban Greening and Biodiversity	Women, children, and the elderly – Increasing per capita green cover would increase accessibility to open spaces, thereby improving health and liveability.	NA	NA

As of September 2022

The MCAP is progressive on many fronts: it acknowledges households using fire for cooking to be at the highest risk of indoor air pollution. Climate change and air pollution are intrinsically linked.²³ The impacts of air pollution on human health are devastating, including adverse influence on women's reproductive health,²⁴ with vulnerabilities depending on socio-economic sensitivities, physical environment, and access to infrastructure and essential services. The nature and complex reality of climate change are fast evolving, and the full extent of how it affects Mumbai is still being understood. The rise in temperatures vary according to areas, where higher density informal settlements with very low vegetation cover are 6-7 degrees warmer than their neighbouring residential areas.

Multiple actors such as the government, civil society, policymakers, and grassroots organisations have pioneered efforts on climate action, but there is still more to be done, and some gaps that are emerging. Representation and participation are not the same. Women's representation in local bodies has significantly increased through constitutional and legislative mandates from 73rd & 74th Constitutional Amendments and Maharashtra State Assembly in 2011.²⁵ Further, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's revised Draft Development Plan, 2034²⁶ and Mumbai Climate Action Plan have taken the baton ahead by acknowledging gender and inclusivity for urban planning. However, much still needs to be done to foster women's full and meaningful participation in the decision-making processes with agencies to raise and facilitate women's concerns across the policy making spectrum.

The MCAP, while integrating many gender-differentiated impacts into the policy making, falls short on recognizing women's leadership as an integral component of climate action²⁷ and risks reducing gender-inclusion as a mere check-box. A broader gender lens can be an entry point towards building solutions that can then be potentially intersectional.



THE NEED FOR INCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

Urban policymaking has an important role to play in mitigating climate change, preventing air pollution and ensuring gender justice. The concept of FFP highlights the importance of addressing structural deficiencies in traditional policy making, which bringing a gender lens may help overcome. A cross-sectoral gender-responsive approach to the demographic context of Mumbai will foster in advancing home-grown solutions for the city's climate goals and its gender goals as well. The solutions however must integrate in a cohesive manner on the one hand with the needs of the city, and on the other with the goals of the country.

For effective policies, cities must incorporate full, meaningful participation of all genders into planning, implementation, and monitoring stages. The demographic context of Mumbai shows wide inequality gaps which can only be bridged through collective decision-making on policies of common concern. Climate policy therefore becomes a fit case for ushering inclusion across different governance sectors. Gender equity and social inclusion approach leads to better outcomes in all stages of decision-making by ensuring holistic integration of climate risks, vulnerabilities, adaptation, and resilience measures into governance. A few key pathways ahead include:

1) Data Collection and Analysis

The modalities and impacts of climate change are constantly evolving, as must our understanding of the issue as a multifaceted one. This requires greater data collection as well as more inclusive data collection in terms of sources, researchers, scientists, class, and geography. Gender disaggregated data is necessary to understand and address gender inequality. It is commendable that the MCAP mentions the need for gender-disaggregated data collection in two sectoral priorities – Sustainable Mobility and Air Quality. This needs to be extended to all sectors to better understand the differential impacts on gender. Using gender as an entry point for inclusion, data must also take into account the experiences of marginalised sections of society such as lower caste and underprivileged communities, and the LGBTQ community.

Equal time and effort must also be made with regards the effective analysis of data. We need to understand how communities are prone to climate risks and determine various degrees of vulnerabilities. The vulnerability mapping and assessment that was conducted while formulating the Mumbai Climate Action Plan marks a great first step in understanding the differentiated impacts of climate change and must be continuously revisited, especially using a class and geographical lens, given the extremes of a city like Mumbai.

2) Education and Community-Led Initiatives

Once there is knowledge on a particular issue, education and citizen awareness initiatives must follow, and in a continuous manner. Climate literacy is the first step towards sensitizing people about the impacts of climate change, and empowering communities to take the lead in mitigation and adaptation strategies. MCAP has provisions in place to empower vulnerable communities especially with regards to early warning systems in the event of disasters. While these communities can and should be empowered, they also need to be a part of the long term solution and understand their role in developing community resilience action plans. It is equally important to sensitize higher income privileged communities of their contribution to a changing environment, where methods of information sharing needs to be targeted and unique. Education at all levels and across all forms of institutions, and awareness campaigns are needed, keeping in mind the diversity of language, levels of literacy, and global awareness of the city.

3) Wider Involvement of Stakeholders

Multiple stakeholders bring multiple perspectives, which lead to better problem solving. There are several stakeholders in the effort to fight climate change including women and marginalized communities. Women, however, are not a homogenous entity and bring diverse perspectives and knowledge. Everyday struggles and ground experiences teach us how communities are dealing with and preparing for climate change. There is much to learn from them by involving them in decision making. For example, Mumbai's Koli fisherfolk community has been bearing the brunt of climate change along coastal areas for several years now. They face the unique challenge of both their lifestyle and livelihood being affected by climate. We need to ask if their voices are heard by all in the decision making ecosystem and governance structures. As stakeholders in ensuring that Mumbai's coast is not affected by rising sea levels, what mechanisms exist for them to communicate their needs to the government?²⁸ It is necessary for the government, think tanks, policymakers, urban planners, media, and citizens to be able to interact and interface in a more structured way. Regular consultations, held in multiple languages, can facilitate this knowledge sharing and sharpen the listening ability of decision makers. Some sensitization is also required for decision makers to be more aware of their own biases through cultural norms and social conditioning.

4) City Level Partnerships Integrated with International Frameworks

Climate policy encompasses a vast number of topics, right from addressing global warming and CO₂ emissions, to transitioning towards renewable energy. These topics often exist in silos, where the broader climate action context is often not apparent. More frequent collaborations and a cooperative apparatus that include organizations and actors from diverse backgrounds will lead to a more fruitful exchange of ideas.

Local efforts on climate action are important and must also be mapped back to existing relevant frameworks, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, or India's Net Zero by 2070 commitment. Here is where international partners, whether governments, the private sector, or non-profit organizations can strengthen local/national efforts. Collaboration between stakeholders, between the public and private sector, and between local and international actors, all of whom contribute to the economic fabric of the city, is essential for a coordinated climate action plan. Collaboration can range from sharing of best practices and experiences, resources both as knowledge and financial, technology and creation of networks that bring in new innovations and ideas.

ABOUT KUBERNEIN INITIATIVE

Kubernein Initiative is an independent, female led, geopolitical advisory firm based in Mumbai (India) working to mainstream issues that need greater intellectual capacity and focus. Our vision is to build an organisation that considers critical questions with a perspective that balances traditionally 'western' thought in the field of international relations and diplomacy with new and emerging ideas from the global south.

ABOUT THE BRIEF

This policy brief is an outcome of a half day conference, 'Collaborative Conversations around Gender in Climate Action', hosted by the Consulate General of Canada to India in Mumbai* along with the Consulates of Germany, France, Spain (countries that have a Feminist Foreign Policy), Sweden, and knowledge partners Kubernein Initiative. Held on 14 September 2022, participants included diplomats, leaders and thinkers from government and industry, as well as the research and practice space. The list of invited participants (in alphabetical order) :

Aadya Khatavkar	Harish Iyer
Anand Pendharkar	Inakshi Sobti
Andrea Horcas	Kartiki Naik
Anshuman Gupta	Lubaina Rangwala
Arti Soni	Marina Soria
Ashwini Bhide, I.A.S.	Ms. Antje Berger
Avni Agarwal	Mukta Salunkhe
Bart De Jong	Narinder Nayar
Caroline Pais	Niraali Parekh
Chintan Girish Modi	Prof. Arpita Mondal
Daniel Odisho	Rahul Bajoria
Disha Shetty	Rohan Hingmire
Dr. Bodean Hedwards	Sahil Kanekar
Dr. Kamal Kumar Murari	Sameer Unhale
Dr. Susanne Milcher	Shreya Joshi
Dr. Vibhuti Patel	Stephanie Miranda
Elsa Marie D'silva	Sumaira Abdulali
Faisal Farooque	
Farmeen Mistry	

*The Government of Canada has used Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) to explore the changing realities and inequalities of diverse groups of people. To learn more about GBA Plus click [here](#). To take the GBA Plus training course click [here](#).

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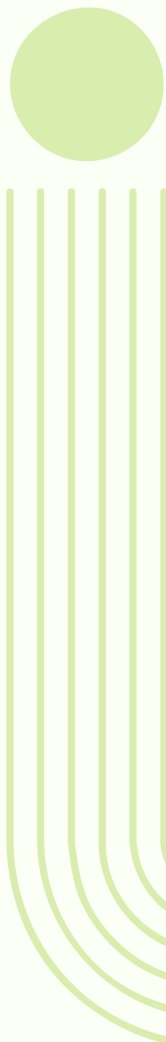
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This report has been designed by **Kokila B** drawing from the intersectionality (the weft and warp) of the elements at play in the face of the climate crisis.

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