

CHAPTER 18

GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Much has been written about the high status of women in Kerala and their central role historically, in social development. However, despite near total literacy and remarkable achievements in education and health, women continue to be in a disadvantageous position in the state, reflected in numerous ways. Little effort has been made to direct literacy towards building up a gender sensitive social environment in the state challenging the survival of feudal-patriarchal attitudes that perpetuate all forms of violence against women. As stated by the Governor of Kerala, Sri R.L.Bhatia, in his Address to the Legislative Assembly (June 16th 2006), “Kerala’s premier position in the country in terms of realising women’s rights is now under challenge. Liberalisation has unleashed ugly forces of exploitation of women. My Government would leave no stone unturned in upholding the status and rights of women and would not hesitate to use all its might to ruthlessly punish the agents and abettors of exploitation of women. Moreover on the development front also gender justice would be ensured. For this purpose gender budgeting would be introduced in phases.”

18.2 A data based review of the status of women in terms of development indicators, helps make gender disparities more visible and facilitates effective policy- making to bring about greater gender equality which we will attempt to do in the following sections.

18.3 Women in Kerala constituted 51.4 percent of the total population of 31.8 million in 2001. The sex ratio (females per thousand males), well above unity, continues to be favourable to women, having 1058, compared to 933 for the country as a whole. Life expectancy at birth for women in 1993-97 is 75.9 years for women while it is 61.8 years at the all India level.

18.4 The proportion of female headed households is significantly high in Kerala, almost double the all India average. It is 23 percent in rural areas and 25 percent in urban areas compared to 11.3 percent and 11.1 percent respectively for the country as a whole. Needless to state, as a number of studies have shown, on several measures of socio-economic status, including income, poverty, housing, and working status, female headed households are disadvantaged and hence need targeted support.

Health

18.5 Health concerns have developed into new dimensions in the state like occupational health, violence-related health issues, mental depression, increasing suicidal tendencies, unattended health problems of ageing women, anaemia among adolescent girls etc.

18.6 The conventional health development indicators over the last few years which are comparatively favourable to Kerala (see Chapter on Health) do not reveal these new health concerns, which are to be addressed with utmost care and urgency both as social and health issues. For instance Table 18.1 shows the proportion of ever-married women and pregnant women who are anaemic. What is more alarming is the fact that the percentages have gone up between 1998-99 and 2005-06.

Table 18.1
Health Indicators

	NFHS-I	NFHS-II	NFHS-III
Ever married women (age 15-49 years) who are anaemic (%)	n.a	22.7	32.3
Pregnant women age 15-49 who are anaemic (%)	n.a	20.3	33.1
Trends in institutional deliveries (%)	89	93	100

Source: National Family Health Surveys; NFHS-I, 1992-93; NFHS-II, 1998-99; NFHS-III, 2005-06. International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai and ORC (Macro) USA

18.7 Indirect estimates of maternal mortality for the state have always pegged at figures above 100 per lakh which is extremely high in comparison to other health indicators in the State, (though much lower than the all-India levels) nor do they show a substantial decline; MMR was 110 between 2001-03 compared to 301 for all India. The figures look graver in the light of the near complete institutional deliveries in the State, 100 percent according to the latest NFHS –III (2005-06). One of the evidences pointed out in many studies has been that most of the deaths occur due to postpartum haemorrhage and they occur in transit or delayed entry at the referral centres. This reflects the weaknesses in handling emergency obstetric services at the first referral units which should be upgraded with provision of specialists.

18.8 Occupational health is another issue drawing some attention now. The women in the informal sector doing manual work, working continuously for long hours and in particular positions, or in scavenging work in urban areas, are prone to health hazards like allergy, back pain, respiratory problems and uterus problems. Coupled with the fact that the ‘care’ economy remains their responsibility even if they are engaged in paid employment, it affects the well being of women. Considerable interest has emerged on studying the health conditions of women workers in fish processing units, in cashew industry etc.

Literacy

18.9 Kerala has the highest literacy rates in the country for both males and females, with 94.20% and 87.86% respectively. This is very much higher than the all India averages (Census 2001). There is however, a rural-urban gap of 4 percentage points in the state: female literacy rates are 86.79% in rural as against 90.87% in urban areas. Intra-state variations in female literacy rates are significant. The lowest rate 79.31 % is in Palakkad district and Kottayam district has the highest rate (94.45%) followed by Pathanamthitta (93.71%), Alappuzha (91.14%) and Ernakulam (90.96%).

18.10 Among the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes women of Kerala, literacy is significantly lower when compared to the general female literacy rates- 65.03% and 43.53% respectively. Considering these low levels, special literacy programmes are being implemented in such areas as Palakkad, Wayanad and Idduki districts where tribal population concentration is the highest (Status of Women, KWC).

Education

18.11 There is hardly any gender gap in school enrolment in Kerala as is seen in other states. Girls constituted 49% of the total enrolment in school education in Kerala. (see Table 2).

Table 18.2
Enrolment of students in schools (stage-wise)-2005-06

LPS(I-IV)			UPS(V-VII)			HS(VIII-X)			Grand Total		
Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
921076	904377	1825453	750052	706513	1456565	762147	732141	1494288	2433275	2343031	4776306

Source: Directorate of Public Institution, 2006

18.12 Out of the total 18.25 lakh students enrolled in LPS, 9.04 lakh are girls (50%); in UPS the number of girls is 7.06 lakh (48.5%) and in High School, 7.32 lakh students are girls (49%).

18.13 In Plus two courses out of the total 3.67 lakh students, 1.90 lakh are girls (51.7%) (*Directorate of Higher Secondary Education, Trivandrum*)

18.14 Gender disparity becomes more visible in technical schools. While in Vocational Higher Secondary Schools girls accounted for 52.32% of the students, they constituted only 10% in Polytechnics and Technical High Schools in 2006-07 (see Appendix 11.44 and 11.49). Similarly in the 2-year courses in ITIs and private ITCs, which impart training primarily in engineering/technical trades, intake of girl students is between 7-10 percent in 2001-02 (*Directorate of Technical Education, Trivandrum*). This lower presence of girls in training schools, which equip students with skills, impacts adversely on their employability since the largest proportion of unemployed women are those with no skill acquisition other than the educational level attained (NSSO 2004-05).

18.15 At the graduate level too, in the choice of subjects for which girls and boys enroll we find gendered differences (see Appendix 11.29). In final year BSc, in 2005-06, while girls outnumber boys in general arts and science courses, in the newly emerging areas of learning like bio-chemistry, polymer chemistry, bio-technology, electronics, analytical chemistry etc girls are much less in numbers.

Employment

18.16 The female work participation rate in Kerala has been the lowest in India, a fact which went almost entirely unnoticed as the state ranks first in terms of the Gender Development Index, given the overwhelmingly high levels of (conventional) education and health indicators. In 2004-05, while 33 percent of the rural female population was recorded as economically active at the all India level, the proportion came to only about a quarter in Kerala; WPRs for urban females have generally been higher in Kerala, i.e. 20 percent in 2004-05 compared to 16 percent for all-India, which however constitute much smaller numbers.

18.17 Women constitute a major chunk of the lowest paid categories of workers which includes traditional industries, household labour, Anganwady teachers, micro enterprise units of Kudumbashree etc (Kerala Padhanam, KSSP 2006). Women engaged as shop assistants, assistants in STD booths, petrol bunks, textile shops, IT/ITEs sector and export processing zones/parks are the other growing areas of urban employment which shows an increase according to the latest NSSO Round (2004-05). However, the inferior economic position of women is reflected in persistent gender wage disparities. For instance the average wage of a woman worker

in regular/employment in urban areas was Rs. 170 per day for women, as against Rs. 203 per day for men; in rural areas it was Rs. 120 per day compared to Rs. 164 for men.

18.18 In casual employment wages for women were Rs. 66 per day in rural and Rs. 67 per day in urban areas compared to Rs. 135 and Rs 137 for men. Disparities are much sharper for casual or unorganised labour sector which employs a larger proportion of female workers (NSSO 2004-05).

18.19 If a single fact were to convey the intensity of gender disparities in employment it is the unemployment rate for females, which is 2-3 times higher than that of males in Kerala; 20.1 percent for rural women (5.1 percent for men) and 33 percent for women in urban areas (6 percent for men). Female *educated unemployment* rates are even higher. The educated unemployment rate for urban women is 47 percent (8.2 percent for men).

18.20 Table 3 shows that out of the total number of 37.93 lakh registered job seekers in 2006, (including professional and general work seekers) 21.98 lakh were female job seekers. (57.94%).

Table 18. 3
District-wise Distribution of Work Seekers as on 31-3-2006

Sl. No.	District	General work seekers	Professional/ Technical work seekers	Total	Female	Male
1	Thiruvananthapuram	518516	30673	549189	336074	213115
2	Kollam	381978	16723	398701	234755	163946
3	Pathanamthitta	336259	13071	349330	196764	152566
4	Alappuzha	140422	6420	146842	89197	57645
5	Kottayam	209019	9773	218792	126910	91882
6	Idukki	113933	3419	227352	68236	49116
7	Ernakulam	345932	25944	371876	210786	161090
8	Thrissur	323966	13868	281622	151015	130607
9	Palakkad	250940	30682	281622	151015	130607
10	Malappuram	252782	7027	259809	137322	122487
11	Kozhikode	350798	17081	367879	212054	155825
12	Wayanad	78983	1692	80675	43439	37236
13	Kannur	213221	7748	220969	129087	91882
14	Kasaragod	90021	2292	92313	49927	42386
	Total	3606770	186413	3793183	2198194	1594989

Source: Directorate of Employment

Political Participation of women

18.21 Politically, the exclusion of women from mainstream politics has been rather surprising. Despite a long history of public action (from below) in which women have participated in large numbers in social movements and working class struggles, women's representation in the electoral arena of Kerala has always been small. While in the State Assembly the numbers elected in recent decades have varied between 8 and 13 in a house of 140 legislators, in the Parliament the proportion of women candidates hovered around one to two members since Independence (see Table 4); no woman candidate from Kerala was elected to the Parliament in 1977, 1984 and 1996.

Table18. 4
Women's Representation in Rajya Sabha, Lok Sabha and
Legislative Assembly from Kerala 1954-2006

Year/Type	No. of Women Representatives
Rajya Sabha	
1954-58	1
1958-64	1
1962-68	1
1974-80	1
Lok Sabha	
1952	1
1967	1
1971	1
1980	1
1989	1
1991	1
1991	1
1998	1
1999	1
2004	1
2004	1
Assembly Election	
1957	5
Interim Election	
1960	5
Assembly Election	
1970	1
1977	3
1982	3
1987	2
1991	9
1996	13
2001	8
2006	7
Total	71

Source: Chief Election Officer, Election (General Dept.), Govt. of Kerala.

18.22 Politically, women became visible in the state in large numbers but only *at the local level* with the enactment of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments which mandated a 33 percent representation of women at all three levels of the local self government institutions (LSGIs), including at the leadership level. Elections to local bodies were held in 1995 in Kerala and the newly elected Left Government in 1996 took a major decision to earmark 35-40 percent of the Ninth Five Year Plan outlay (1997-2002) towards projects and programmes to be drawn up by the local bodies determined by their own priorities. A conscious attempt was made to incorporate gender issues into this *process* of decentralized planning (in each sector), strengthened further by providing for a Women Component Plan (WCP); the LSGIs were advised (later mandated) to set apart 10 percent of the plan grant-in-aid for preparing projects that directly benefit women.

18.23 Kerala's attempt in the Ninth Five Year Plan towards 'gender aware planning', aimed at a more gender equitable outcome within the context of women's political empowerment, appears to be one of the first efforts in the country to engender plans at the local level. The 'feminisation' of political leadership at the local level made possible by the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, opened up considerable space for addressing women's needs and priorities. Conscious attempts were made to alter the conceptual rationale of planning under the decentralized regime by recognizing women's market and domestic roles, and gender differences in needs and interests.

18.24 However, overall plan performance at the local level in relation to women's issues floundered despite these attempts since such recognition remained largely at the level of rhetoric in policy making and was not translated into appropriate projects at the level of implementation. As Moser (1993) has emphasized, where the purpose is to change attitudes (including social norms and practices), solutions are not simple. Perhaps some lessons from this rich experience, in particular the need to go deeper into structures and institutions which tend to subordinate women, would enable us to make state plans more gender responsive.

Women's Priorities in the Budget

18.25 It is in the context of the slow pace of progress in improvements to women's position that gender sensitive budget auditing has assumed significance. Women all over the world had begun to hold governments accountable to their commitments to International Treaties and UN World Conference goals by linking these commitments to the generation and utilization of public resources, of which budget is a critical instrument.

18.26 There was need for new strategies and "mainstreaming" gained currency. Increased interest and work emerged on gender sensitive analysis of government budgets (GB) which offered a new tool for ensuring a better match between policy commitments and their realization. The impact of the budget on women, in particular tracing the flow of resources to women, is assessed through a probing of the quota beneficiary schemes (generally 30 percent), the women specific programmes (100 percent targeted for women) and the estimated potential for women beneficiaries in the 'general' expenditure stream. It is the unravelling of this bundle of resources, which accounts for over 90 percent of government expenditures, as GB exercises have shown, that is the crux of the problem. What assumptions are made about women's roles as consumers and/or producers in sectors like agriculture, industries, transport, energy, housing, public works?

18.27 Despite the comprehensive framework, the most commonly used tools of gender budgeting in practice have been the gender aware policy appraisal and a gender aware budget analysis of government expenditures. Hence GB has got identified generally with an ex-post analysis of budgetary allocations of the Government.

18.28 However, with the growing awareness of the central role of organizational structure and culture of institutions including the government, in the design and delivery of programmes and projects, the need has been felt to go beyond numbers, that is, to assess the implementation of policies, strategies and programmes not only in 'financial' terms but also in terms of structural biases in the functioning of governance structures/public institutions via their assumptions, working procedures and activities that prevent gender equality objectives being taken forward. The importance of gender *auditing* has been derived from a recognition of this.

18.29 A major achievement of the gender budgeting/auditing framework is the centre staging of the critical contribution of women in the 'care' economy by establishing a link between budget

allocations, public services provided through them and the way in which men, women and children use their time in the household. The manner in which the budget and its underlying policies are in fact relying on women's unpaid labour is revealed starkly by household time use surveys.

Box 18.1

Gender issues pervade the lives of women and men and have economic as well as social implications. Gender shapes our opportunities, access to resources and needs. There is a growing awareness around the world that policies and plans need to be designed accordingly.

(Hedman, Perucci and Sundstrom 1996:13)

18.30 Below (see Table 18.5) we give data on the sector wise WCP for the Local Self Governing Institutions (LSGIs) in the year 2005-06.

Table 18.5
Sector-wise Distribution of Plan Grant under WCP
Category for the year 2005-06 (Rs in lakh)

Sector Type	Formulation		Expenditure	
	No. of Projects	Plan Fund	No. of Projects	Plan Fund
Productive	1082	2146.50	697	1042.86
Service	2658	5767.99	2100	3968.39
Infrastructure	89	131.01	57	66.26
Others	3	1.35	2	3.05
Total	3832	8046.86	2856	5080.57

Source: IKM-2006

18.31 Seventy two percent (72%) of projects formulated were in the service sector followed by 27% of projects in the productive sector and a marginal proportion in infrastructure. However, only about two thirds of the WCP allocation could be spent during the year.

18.32 Work on gender auditing has been initiated in the state since the last (revised) Budget (2006-07) as envisaged by the Governor and the Finance Minister and will be carried further and strengthened during the 11th Five Year Plan. Two flagship programmes, one on 'Gender Awareness' to promote a more gender sensitive social environment, and another on 'Finishing Schools for Women' (for employment skill upgradation) will be initiated in Kerala during the course of the Plan as part of efforts to engender state Plans.

Women Development Agencies

Kudumbashree

18.33 Kudumbashree, the women oriented programme, with a wide network of 163036 NHGs has a thrift collection of Rs. 717.16 crore up to October 2006. Nearly half of these women groups have been linked to loan facilities and programmes like Lease land Farming. During the last five years, 367270 families have benefited from the farming activities in 57872.14 acres of land.

18.34 The micro enterprises enable poor women in seeking a livelihood. There are altogether 11474 women entrepreneurs up to May, 2006, who have started 1615 group and 802 individual enterprises. Performance improvement programme has benefitted 3060 entrepreneurs up to May 2006. The enterprises in urban areas benefitted 3005 women and 4736 women were trained in entrepreneurial skills. Attempts are also being made to organize certain units into clusters and strengthen common facilities.

18.35 Despite problems like weak accounting systems, marketing issues, inadequate quality upgradation mechanisms, the wide net work of Kudumbashree as a cohesive unit of women has been advantageous to women's confidence building, self reliance and enhancing their self worth. The women force linked to the LSGIs, serve as a supportive group for the training, awareness and social empowerment programmes of the Government.

Box 18. 2

Kollayil Handloom Cluster- A Model Project

In 2004, a Handloom Cluster Development Programme known as "Eco-Tex" was initiated in Kollayil Panchayat (Neyyattinkara, Trivandrum). The project has been implemented with the participation of 625 selected women weavers and other ancilliary workers from 25 women organisations of this panchayat. Nearly 1000 women are employed. The cloth woven from the looms installed in the common workshed have a permanent market (mainly at Trivandrum) and hence these women are fully employed. Each women's organisation gets an assistance of Rs. 12.40 lakh out of which Rs. 8.10 lakhs is grant and 4.30 lakh is bank loan. Each year, textile materials worth Rs. 25 lakh is being manufactured and sold; the main marketing centre is Trivandrum. The consortium received an award for its best performance from the President during this year.

Source: Handlooms and Textile Director, Thiruvananthapuram

Kerala State Women Development Corporation

18.36 The economic empowerment activities of the Kerala State Women Development Corporation, functioning since 1988, are limited to the task of providing loans for self-employment ventures and training to women below the poverty line. The fund for women, belonging to backward, minority communities and physically handicapped classes are from NBCFDC*, NMDFC* and NPHC*, GOI respectively, whereas funds for the general category are met from the budgetary provisions of state government. Beneficiary contribution forms 5% of the loan assistance. While financial assistance to the extent of Rs.164.1 lakh was provided to 254 beneficiaries, with the assistance of NBCFDC during 2005-06, the amount provided to 439 beneficiaries was Rs. 295.1 lakh using the aid of NMDFC. The loan amount of Rs.126.2 lakh with the assistance of the state government benefitted 151 persons (see Table 18.6).

Table 18.6
Details of Physical and Financial Coverage during the Reference Period

(in lakh)

Particulars of women development schemes	Annual coverage of physical targets				Annual financial targets covered			
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Loan schemes of NBCFDC, GOI	316	306	188	254	95.315	120.02	98.02	164.1
Loan schemes of NMDFC, GOI	441	345	317	439	129.383	101.28	180.05	295.1
Loan schemes of GOK for other social groups	70	74	130	151	28.239	32	60.25	126.2

Source: Kerala State Women Development Corporation Ltd, 2006

*NBCFDC- National Backward Caste Finance Development Corporation

*NMDFC - National Minorities Development Finance Corporation

*NPHC - National Physically Handicapped Corporation, GOI.

18.37 The Corporation has been functioning as a nodal agency for providing training programme of STEP and NORAD *.

18.38 NORAD- assisted Production-cum-Training Centres conduct a vocational training programme where women are grouped to form co-operative societies for starting production centres. Fifteen centres have been started so far in office management, data processing, garment designing, hosiery, knitting and computer training. Altogether 3070 women benefited from this scheme.

18.39 STEP- Projects (support for training and employment programme)

- Training in food processing unit in collaboration with State Fisheries Department was provided to 200 women in Malappuram and Kozhikode.
- Note Book and Plastic welded items manufacturing unit at Alappuzha and Kasaragode.

(*NORAD-Norwegian Agency for International Development.)

18.40 Fifty women are trained yearly in book making and plastic welded items. Altogether, two hundred women benefited from this programme up to 2006.

18.41 However in the absence of monitoring it is not clear to what extent the programmes have benefited women in seeking a livelihood. This is equally true of the loan schemes which had doubled over the last two years. These training programmes ceased to function from 2006, when the scheme was wound up by GOI, with effect from 1-4-06.

18.42 There are 8 working women's hostels functioning under the administration of KSWDC. Four of them are in own building and the rest in rented buildings. The corporation provided retail outlet facilities in various exhibition-cum-trade fairs for promoting sales of products produced by beneficiaries of their schemes. Thirteen centres are functional at present.

18.43 In order to provide non-traditional employment opportunities to women, KSWDC is operating a scheme known as 'Nagara Sahayi Scheme' in which urban women are provided with technical and financial assistance to drive and manage autorickshaws.

18.44 The corporation has also been assisting NGOs and women's organisations for conducting awareness programmes and training programmes for women. However, since 2006, the activities of KSWDC are confined to loan assistance and efforts to revive the training programmes are being undertaken.

Kerala Women's Commission

18.45 The Women's Commission has been set up for conducting enquiry into unfair practices against women, adopt settlement and counselling methods for solving cases, with however, no legal powers. The commission conducts Forums and Adalaths in every district for the speedy redressal of petitions.

18.46 In 2005-06, 82 adalaths were conducted and 24 DNA tests were carried out since a number of cases were related to the paternity of the child. The commission received 5345 petitions in 2006 which were higher by 144 cases compared to 2005, in which the commission received 5201 complaints (Table 18.7). The severity of these cases and their rising number reiterates the need for the effective implementation of Domestic Violence Act, 2005 as well as the need for separate courts for speedy settlement of such cases.

18.47 Out of the complaints received complaints of harassment by husband stood first (758), followed by property related (472) and beating by husbands (472), abusive language (265), anti social nuisance (201), employment related (191) and 172 cheating cases. A rather detailed Table on subject-wise categorization of petitions regarding offences against women is given below.

Table 18.7
Subject-wise details of petitions received

Sl. No	Category	2004	2005
1.	Harassment of women	785	634
2.	Dowry Harassment	539	156
3.	Harassment by husband	930	758
4.	Cheating	214	172
5.	Divorce	0	73
6.	Suspicious death	103	107
7.	Property related	437	472
8.	employment related	133	191
9.	Threatening to life	158	0
10.	Sexual harassment	146	185
11.	Abusive language	326	265
12.	Neighbours nuisance	86	0

13.	Atrocities	154	0
14.	Against Police	100	92
15.	Theft	9	0
16.	Beating	27	472
17.	Anti-social nuisance	176	201
18.	To get divorce	56	34
19.	Nuisance after drinking	135	0
20.	To get alimony	96	120
21.	To get economic help	41	90
22.	Path problems	160	125
23.	Doctors negligence	10	8
24.	Child marriage	15	7
25.	Miscellaneous	906	1039
	Total	5742	5201

Source: Kerala Women's Commission, November 2006

18.48 Awareness camps for empowerment of women, seminar on women's issues, Domestic Violence awareness camps, seminar on sensitizing against dowry, seminar for journalists etc were also conducted in 2006.

18.49 The Kerala Women's Commission has been reconstituted with effect from January 24th 2007.

Women's Cell

18.50 Women's Cell in the Police Department, deals with cases of atrocities against women registered in the state including action against police in case of any laxity in handling cases. The cell maintains liaison with Women forums and voluntary organizations and organizes sensitization programmes for police men and women. There are altogether 17 District women cells in addition to the State women's cell in Thiruvananthapuram.

18.51 An analysis of its activities reveals that on an average 800 cases are brought before the State and District cells in a month, out of which 97% are settled without much delay. Only 3% of the cases are referred to police stations or courts. (Source: State Women's Cell, TVM.(2006)

Social Welfare Department

18.52 SWD is the major nodal department for implementing programmes for women and children. It was formed on 9-9-1975 for providing needed care and protection and such other services to women, children, physically and mentally challenged, destitute, orphans, aged, infirm and juvenile delinquents. ICDS service has been universalised in the state.

18.53 The department is implementing the Integrated Women Empowerment Programme (*Swayam Sidha*) a 100 percent centrally sponsored scheme under which women will be encouraged to form self-help groups for:

- creating confidence and awareness among women regarding women's status, health and hygiene, legal rights, economic upliftment and other socio-political issues;
- Strengthening and institutionalizing the saving habit of rural women and their control over economic resources;
- Improving access to women in local level planning; and
- Convergence of similar services of different departments.

18.54 The IWEP has been fully implemented in 18 selected ICDS blocks; 2416 SHGs have been formed with 41261 members.

18.55 Apart from the developmental programmes the Social Welfare Department has to discharge some statutory functions for the protection of women and children. The Director of Social Welfare is the Chief Dowry Prohibition Officer responsible for implementing the Dowry Prohibition Act. The Department has arranged awareness programmes against dowry at the Block, District and State level with the participation of LSGIs. Cases have been attended by the dowry prohibition officers in Trivandrum, Ernakulam and Kozhikode.

18.56 Government of India have sanctioned the implementation of 'Kishori Shakti Yojana' in all 163 ICDS blocks in the state which is a 100 percent Centrally Sponsored Scheme meant for the development of adolescent girls. Till date, 634825 girls in the age-group 11-18 years have benefited from this scheme.

18.57 Balika Samridhi Yojana' is also a 100 percent Centrally Sponsored Scheme implemented by the local self-government department since 1997-98 meant to change the negative attitude of the community towards a girl child and improve her enrolment and retention in schools; assist girls in income generating activities. The number of beneficiaries has grown over the years (see Table 18.8).

Table 18. 8
Balika Samridhi Yojana (BSY)-Beneficiaries

2001-02	2810
2002-03	39994
2003-04	57699
2004-05	100000
2005-06	150629

Source: Social Welfare Dept, 2006-07

18.58 There is a scheme of financial assistance for the marriage of physically challenged girls and the daughters of physically challenged couples; Rs. 10,000 per person will be given to those persons whose annual income does not exceed Rs. 36000/-.

18.59 A Special Nutrition Programme, announced by the government has been implemented by the SWD, for unmarried women and widows above 50 years of age. The scheme is being implemented in the 2940 Anganwadi centers of the 18 IWEP Blocks and has benefited 14700 women. Beneficiaries of the programme are provided with rice and green gram (100 gm rice and 20 gm green gram per day).

18.60 Twenty five Welfare Homes are functioning under the department for the welfare and rehabilitation of women. There are special Homes for children (children directed from the juvenile court aged above 5 and below 18 years), Juvenile Home (age above 5 and below 18 years

who need care and protection), Observation Home (age above 5 & below 18 years) temporary residence of juvenile in conflict with law during the pendency of an enquiry, After care home for Adolescent girls (age 16-23 years), and Home for physically handicapped (16-60 years). There are Mahila mandirs and Rescue homes for the age group (13-55 yrs), Day care centre for those aged above 55 years and home for all age groups who are mentally cured patients (Ashabhavan). See Table 18.9 below for details on welfare institutions.

Table 18.9
Welfare Institutions for women: Inmates and Sanctioned Strength

Sl.No.	Institutions	Numbers	Inmates (Nos)	Sanctioned Strength (Nos)
1	2	3	4	5
1	Mahilamandiram	12	221	300
2	Home for physically handicapped	2	45	100
3	After Care Home	2	75	200
4	Rescue Homes	2	32	200
5	Observation Homes	1	10	25
6	Juvenile Homes	1	110	200
7	Special Home	1	5	25
8	Home for mentally cured patients (Ashabhavan)	3	125	150
9	Day care Centre and Old Age Home	1	24	50
	Total	25	647	1250

Source: SWD, 2006-07

18.61 It is essential to examine why these facilities are underutilized, given the growing need for such support.

Violence Against Women

18.62 Gender-based violence, is a clear manifestation of women's inequality. The crime profile of the state as recorded in the state Crime Records Bureau, is a testimony to women's subordination and victimisation in Kerala. Ranking 7th among the states in gender based violence, the women are nonetheless first in suicides, provoked by harassment. (Source: Crime Records Bureau, 2006)

18.63 The number of atrocities against women in Kerala, has increased from 7228 in 2003 to 7681 in 2004, and 8087 in 2005. In the nature of offence the number of complaints on cruelty by husband or relatives stood first (3283).

Table 18.10
Atrocities committed against women in Kerala

OFFENCES	2003	2004	2005
Rape	394	480	478
Molestation	1947	2260	2339
Kidnapping & Abduction	102	142	175
Eve-teasing	68	133	129
Dowry death	33	31	21
Cruelty by Husband or Relatives	2930	3222	3283
Others	1754	1413	1662
State Total	7228	7681	8087

Source: State Crime Records Bureau, Trivandrum

18.64 In the district wise analysis, Trivandrum district stood first (Table 18.11) with a total of 1025 complaints followed by Kozhikode (898), Malappuram (869) and Kollam (791).

Table 18.11
Crimes Against Women reported in Kerala during 2005

Sl. No.	Name of District	Rape	Kidnapping	Sexual Harrassment (Eve-teasing)	Dowry deaths	molestation	Cruelty by husband or relatives	Other offences	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.	Thiruvananthapuram	47	24	35	2	472	387	58	1025
2.	Kollam	47	19	4	2	321	369	29	791
3.	Pathanamthitta	14	6	2	1	139	120	8	290
4.	Alappuzha	22	7	4	1	165	201	9	409
5.	Kottayam	25	13	16	1	168	150	12	385
6.	Idukki	28	5	10	2	125	107	7	284
7.	Ernakulam	22	6	14	4	168	171	245	630
8.	Trissur	38	11	28	2	161	270	217	727
9.	Palakkad	53	6	4	1	66	279	71	480
10.	Malappuram	50	8	5	0	130	449	227	869
11.	Kozhikode	49	13	16	4	171	339	306	898
12.	Wayanadu	33	2	13	1	60	93	137	339
13.	Kannur	25	5	18	0	121	215	189	573
14.	Kasaragode	25	4	6	0	72	133	147	387
15.	States Total	478	129	175	21	2339	3283	1662	8087

Source: Same as Table 18.10

18.65 Kerala is one of the states, with the highest suicide rate in the country. The numbers reported have increased from 9053 cases in 2004, to 9244 cases in 2005. The highest number of suicides were reported from Trivandrum district (1257) followed by Kollam (1128) and Palakkad (973). See Table 18.12.

Table 18.12
No. of Suicides in Kerala (District wise)

Sl. No	Districts	2004			2005		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Thiruvananthapuram	857	340	1197	956	301	1257
2	Kollam	841	244	1085	894	234	1128
3	Pathanamthitta	345	65	410	308	85	393
4	Alappuzha	360	122	482	397	106	503
5	Kottayam	323	126	449	353	109	462
6	Idukki	352	136	488	336	131	467
7	Ernakulam	523	209	732	519	220	739
8	Trissur	675	272	947	697	275	972
9	Palakkad	645	243	888	713	260	973
10	Malappuram	348	140	488	325	145	470
11	Kozhikode	445	188	633	450	218	668
12	Wayanadu	222	80	302	236	84	320
13	Kannur	454	214	668	447	178	625
14	Kasaragode	208	76	284	199	68	267
	States Total	6598	2455	9053	6830	2414	9244

Source: Same as Table 18.10

Table 18.13
Number of Suicides in Kerala (cause wise)

Sl. No	Causes	2004			2005		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Failure in examination	32	39	71	38	31	69
2	Poverty	5	1	6	9	1	10
3	Love affairs	45	45	90	37	44	81
4	Insanity/Mental illness	971	410	1381	929	466	1395
5	Family problems	1482	546	2028	1982	667	2649
6	Property dispute	9	0	0	0	5	14
7	Dreadful diseases	996	444	1440	934	412	1346
8	Unemployment	158	61	219	108	28	136
9	Bankruptcy/sudden change in eco status	799	89	888	758	73	831
10	Death of dear person	54	36	90	55	39	94
11	Fall in social reputation	11	3	14	10	2	12
12	Dowry dispute	0	15	15	0	17	17
13	Illegitimate Pregnancy	0	6	6	0	1	1
14	Causes not known	909	280	1189	652	200	852
15	Other causes	1127	480	1607	1309	428	1737

18.66 This scenario, underlines the need for the effective implementation of Domestic Violence Act 2005, which came into force in October 2006. The definition of DV has been made wide enough to encompass every possibility of abuse/harm to the woman. It has been welcomed by all since it provides for the first time civil remedies to women by way of protection orders, residence orders and orders for monetary relief in the event of a domestic violence incident.

Box 18.3**Main Features of the Act**

- Definition of Domestic Violence- it includes physical, sexual, verbal, emotional and economic abuse that can harm, cause injury to, endanger the life, limb, health, safety, or well-being, either mental or physical of the aggrieved person.
- Definition of aggrieved person – covers not just the wife but a woman who is the sexual partner of the male irrespective of whether she is his wife or not.
- Any woman residing in the house, mother, widowed relative, daughter who is related in some way to the respondent is also covered by the Act.
- Information regarding an act of domestic violence can be lodged by any person who has reason to believe that such an act has been or is being committed and not necessarily by the aggrieved person
- Magistrate has the powers to permit the aggrieved woman to stay in her place of abode and cannot be evicted by the husband even if she has no legal claim or share in the property
- Allows magistrates to impose monetary relief and monthly payments of maintenance
- Penalty of breach of protection order or an interim protection order is punishable with imprisonment of a period which may extend to one year or with fine which may extend upto Rs.20,000 or both
- Act ensures speedy justice as the court has to start proceedings and have the first hearing within 3 days of the complaint being filed
- Every case has to be disposed of within a period of 60 days of the first hearing.

18.67 For its effective implementation the necessary mechanisms have to be put in place and the modalities of redressal firmed up.

18.68 A campaign on Domestic Violence Act (2005) has already been initiated by the Social Welfare Department, women's organisations, Kudumbashree, LSGIs and NGOs in Kerala and some domestic incident reports have already been filed.

Female Emigration

18.69 Emigration from Kerala is essentially a male phenomenon. There are very few lone female migrants; most of them emigrate as wives or relatives of male emigrants.¹ Besides the Gulf countries, the other major destinations for Kerala emigrants are the USA, England, Singapore, and Maldives Islands. Within the Gulf region, the UAE and Saudi Arabia account for more than two-thirds of all emigrants in the Gulf.

18.70 According to the South Asian Migration Survey (SMS), in 2004 there were 15.29 lakh male emigrants and 3.09 lakh female emigrants. Females constituted 16.8 percent of the total. In 1999, based on the Kerala Migration Survey (KMS) the numbers were 12.35 lakh male emigrants

¹ On the other hand, in Sri Lanka, the situation is just the opposite. While only 17 percent of the emigrants from Kerala were females, as much as 70 percent of the emigrants from Sri Lanka were females (Zachariah and Irudaya Rajan 2005). Most of the information in this section is based on two major studies, the Kerala Migration Survey (KMS) in 1999 and the South Asian Migration Study (SMS) in 2004 undertaken by the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum

and 1.27 female emigrants. Female emigrants were 9.3 percent of the total. Thus during 1999-2004 there has been a substantial increase in female emigrants.

18.71 The larger proportion of female emigrants were from Christian community and primarily from Kottayam district; Ernakulam and Pathanamthitta are two other areas of high female emigration. While 32 percent of the emigrants were Christians, the proportion of Muslim women migrants was just 8 percent.

18.72 Among female migrants, nearly three-fourths were married, only 25 percent were unmarried. The number of unmarried female emigrants increased very considerably during 1999-04, the proportion was about 7 percent in 1999. This very large increase in the number of unmarried women leaving Kerala to foreign countries is a relatively new phenomenon and the trend suggests a further acceleration in the emigration of young unmarried women from Kerala in the coming years.

18.73 Female emigrants are very much more educated than their male counterparts. As much as 45 percent of the female emigrants were degree holders compared with only 15 percent among the male emigrants. About 80 percent of female emigrants have a secondary level education or higher, while the corresponding percentage among male emigrants was only 45 percent.

18.74 Emigration has certainly helped women to procure employment, since the proportion unemployed before emigration was very high which declined considerably at the destination point.

18.75 On the whole, conditions in Kerala and across the world favour increased female emigration. First of all, in the Gulf region, and elsewhere in the world the demand is now growing for educated skilled work seekers. The future does appear to be for the emigration of educated and skilled persons, for women largely as nurses, saleswomen, in office support jobs, or live-in care givers (which also mandate a certain level of education in the Western countries) or at higher levels in the legal, art and design, computer or business operations.

18.76 While it is true that certain types of job opportunities do exist for educated/skilled female emigrants, the concern here is the need to recognize the vulnerability of lone female migrants, (for instance the often reported ill treatment and abuse of maids, or trafficking in the name of entertainment industry), and provide security/safety to such women. Efforts should be made to maintain records of all emigrants, with follow up in the destination countries to ensure their well being and eliminate any type of atrocities against them.

18.77 Some sort of a safety net or protection for female (and male) emigrants is essential given the unpleasant problems they often face at the point of destination. Perhaps they could be included under a Welfare Fund and their interface with the local Indian diplomatic authorities could be strengthened.