

Dr. Aswathy S.

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Profile summary:

Dr. Aswathy S. is a development professional and academic with multidisciplinary experience spanning government systems, academia, and grassroots development across India. Her expertise lies in gender-inclusive and rights-based development, decentralised governance, participatory social policy, and community-based research.

She has worked with several national and state-level institutions including the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IITM), Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Kerala State Women's Development Corporation, and Kerala Kudumbashree Mission (a women-led poverty eradication and empowerment movement in Kerala, India, uniting millions through self-help groups to promote entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and local development.).

Her doctoral research at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai, explored *Women Farmers of Kerala: Experiences in the Kudumbashree Programme*. In the wake of 2024 landslide in Wayanad, Kerala, she worked with the WASH Institute and Suchitwa Mission to draft the Kerala Disaster Waste Management Protocol, introducing evidence-based, gender-sensitive, and climate-resilient measures into state-level disaster response planning.

Areas of Expertise

- Gender and Development; Women's Economic Empowerment
- Decentralised Governance and Participatory Institutions
- Rural and Tribal Development; Community-Based Social Audits
- Climate-Resilient WASH and Disaster Management
- Applied Research, Policy Analysis, and Capacity Building

Selected Professional Experience

Assistant Professor, School of Behavioural Sciences, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala (2025–Present)

External Consultant – WASH Institute for Suchitwa Mission, Government of Kerala (2024)
Led the development of Kerala's *Disaster Waste Management Protocol*, addressing policy and operational gaps in post-disaster waste response. Conducted stakeholder consultations, policy reviews, and framework development integrating gender and inclusion dimensions.

Research Associate – Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IITM) (2023–2024)
Conducted research tasks such as (i) literature reviews, (ii) processing the primary and secondary data, and (iv) assisting in report writing.

Assistant Professor – Department of Social Work, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham University, Kerala (2013–2016)

Project Coordinator – Kerala State Women's Development Corporation (2012)

Conceptualised initiatives under the *Gender Park* project and ICT awareness programmes, self-defence for young women in colleges and higher education institutions.

Young Professional (CAPART – Ministry of Rural Development – Govt of India) – placed at State Social Audit Cell, Government of Kerala (2011)

Led social audit exercises under *MGNREGS*, strengthening accountability and community participation. Designed capacity-building programmes for women village social auditors.

Young Professional (CAPART-Ministry of Rural Development-Govt of India)- Placed at Kudumbashree and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MGNREGS), Government of Kerala (2008-2011).

Education

- PhD in Social Work, *Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai* (2023)
Thesis: Women Farmers of Kerala: Experiences in the Kudumbashree Programme
- UGC–NET Qualified, March 2013
- Master of Social Work (MSW), *Rajagiri College of Social Sciences, Mahatma Gandhi University* (2008)
- Bachelor of Social Work (BSW), *Rajagiri College of Social Sciences, Mahatma Gandhi University* (2006)

Publications

1. Aswathy, S., & Kumar, S. (2020). Women Farmers in Kudumbashree Programme: Gendered Ownership and Control over Productive Resources. *Journal of Social Work Education and Practice*, 5(4), 65-78.

2. Aswathy S and Shewli Kumar, 'Women Farmers in Kerala, India and the Gendered Division of Labour: The Kudumbashree Experience,' *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific* 47(July) 2022, online:

http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue47/aswathy_s.html.

The URL is: http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue47/cont_issue47.html.

3. Ramesh, A., **Aswathy, S. I.**, Nagaraju, P., Hemalatha Devi, D., & Ganga, R. S. (2025). *A study on climate-resilient WASH in disasters: Addressing gaps in disaster waste management in Kerala, India*. In *Proceedings of the Global South Academic Conclave: WASH and Climate*. The URL is:

https://cwas.org.in/resources/file_manager/GSAC%202025%20Abstract%20Book.pdf

Selected Engagements and Professional Development

- Contributed to the development of the modules for the course on 'Gender and Social Work' as part of the e-PG Pathshala.
- Speaker & Panelist, Vruthi 2025 – Clean Kerala Conclave, Govt. of Kerala Presented “Proposed Disaster Waste Management Protocol for Kerala” during the session on *Climate Resilient Waste Management System* (April 12, 2025)
- Completed Gender and Intersectionality, a course of study offered by UicelandX, an online learning initiative of University of Iceland.
- Completed online course, I know Gender 1-2-3 Gender Concepts; Gender Concepts to get Started; International Frameworks for Gender Equality; and Promoting Gender Equality throughout the UN System offered by UN Women Training Centre.