

ORGANIZATION ROLE

Research Scientist I

PROJECT ROLE / FOCUS AREAS

Transformative Scenario Planning

Science communication

Project management and communication

Evidence synthesis

Stakeholder modeling

Quantitative and qualitative analysis

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Resource Policy and Behavior, University of Michigan, 2023

Master of Technology, Climate Change and Sustainability Development, Center for Environment and Planning and Technology, 2014

Bachelor of Technology, Civil Engineering, Visvesvaraya, 2011

DIVYA SOLOMON, PH.D.

Research Scientist I

Divya Solomon, Research Scientist I at The Water Institute, is a committed interdisciplinary researcher focused on how vulnerable communities can adapt and build resilience to the effects of climate and environmental change. Her research draws from sociology, economics, geography, and gender studies to offer insights into community vulnerability, risk responses and adaptation to identify policy levers to accelerate the shift toward more sustainable and resilient systems.

Divya employs mixed methods in her research, strategically combining quantitative tools such as surveys and spatial analysis, and qualitative methods to map emergent processes and understand how communities respond to short-term and long-term risks and implications for livelihoods and well-being. By utilizing an interdisciplinary mixed methods approach to develop a model for decision making, she proposes solutions that address structural contextual barriers to adaptation while also considering the lived experiences and perspectives of communities.

She began her career at the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, contributing to interdisciplinary, multi-institutional research on climate adaptation in semi-arid regions. As a senior research associate, she led a mixed-methods study on groundwater's role in adaptation and the impacts of groundwater overdraft on community vulnerability. Grounded in a participatory, community-centered approach, her research was published in leading journals and informed climate adaptation policy at local and national levels.

As an Atkinson Postdoctoral Fellow at Cornell University, Divya led collaborative research on climate-smart agriculture in the Indo-Gangetic region, identifying how policy incentives and technology adoption shape groundwater sustainability and climate resilience while engaging policymakers and stakeholders to translate findings into action.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2026–Present: Research Scientist I, The Water Institute
2023–2026: Cornell University, Atkinson Fellow
2021–2026: Consultant Research Analyst, Global Warming Mitigation Project
2023–2024: Consultant Evidence Expert, Havos Ai and Rockefeller Foundation
2023–2024: Consultant Evidence Expert and Subject Matter Expert, Juno Evidence Alliance
2018–2023: Graduate Student Research Assistant, University of Michigan
2014–2018: Senior Research Associate: Climate Adaptation and Research in Use, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment
2016–2017: Consultant, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies and EeMausam

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

1. Solomon, Divya Susan, and Nitya Rao. "Wells and Well-being in South India: Gender dimensions of groundwater dependence." Economic and Political Weekly 53, no. 17 (2018): 38-45.
2. Singh, Chandni, Divya Solomon, Ramkumar Bendapudi, Bhavana Kuchimanchi, Soundarya Iyer, and Amir Bazaz. "What shapes vulnerability and risk management in semi-arid India? Moving towards an agenda of sustainable adaptation." Environmental Development 30 (2019): 35-50.
3. Rao, Nitya, Chandni Singh, Divya Solomon, Laura Camfield, Rahina Sidiki, Margaret Angula, Prathigna Poonacha, Amadou Sidibé, and Elaine T. Lawson. "Managing risk, changing aspirations and household dynamics: Implications for wellbeing and adaptation in semi-arid Africa and India." World Development 125 (2020): 104667.
4. Jain, Meha, Divya Solomon, Hagan Capnerhurst, Anthony Arnold, Alice Elliott, Andrew Kinzer, Collin Knauss et al. "How much can sustainable intensification increase yields across South Asia? A systematic review of the evidence." Environmental Research Letters (2020).
5. Ricciardi, Vincent, Abdrahmane Wane, Balsher Singh Sidhu, Cecile Goode, Divya Solomon, Ellen McCullough, Florian Diekmann et al. "A scoping review of research funding for small-scale farmers in water scarce regions." Nature Sustainability (2020): 1-9.
6. Susan Solomon, Divya, Chandni Singh, and Farjana Islam. "Examining the outcomes of urban adaptation interventions on gender equality using SDG 5." Climate and Development (2021): 1-12.
7. Agrawal, Arun, Sidney Brandhorst, Meha Jain, Chuan Liao, Nabin Pradhan, Divya Solomon. “From environmental governance to governance for sustainability” One Earth. (2022)
8. Jain, Meha, Christopher B. Barrett, Divya Solomon, and Kate Ghezzi-Kopel. "Surveying the evidence on sustainable intensification strategies for smallholder agricultural systems." Annual Review of Environment and Resources 48, no. 1 (2023): 347-369.
9. Umashaanker, Maanya, Divya Solomon, Preeti Rao, Sukhwinder Singh, Asif Ishtiaque, Shishpal Poonia, Arun Agrawal, and Meha Jain. "Groundwater irrigation is critical for adapting wheat systems to warming temperatures in the Eastern Indo-Gangetic Plains in India." Environmental Research: Food Systems 1, no. 2 (2024): 021002.
10. Solomon, Divya, Asif Ishtiaque, Arun Agarwal, Joshua M. Gray, Maria Carmen Lemos, Ignatius Moben, Balwinder Singh, and Meha Jain. "The role of rural circular migration in shaping weather risk management for smallholder farmers in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh." Global Environmental Change 89 (2024): 102937.
11. Penny, Gopal, Gopal Penny, José M. Rodríguez-Flores, Angel Santiago Fernandez-Bou, Elizabeth A. Koebele, Anna Schiller, Divya Solomon, Katie Carlson, Leticia Classen-Rodriguez, Molly Daniels, Robyn Grimm, Maurice Hall, Michael Kiparsky, Stephanie Mercado, Karina Mudd, Sonia Sanchez. “Enhancing water security and landscape resilience through Multibenefit Land Repurposing” Frontiers in Water (2025). In print.