

WOMEN FRIENDLY POLICIES AND TECHNOLOGIES IN AGRICULTURE

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INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is an important component of rural livelihoods. Almost 70% of India's population of 1.2 billion— some 833 million persons lives in rural areas (Census of India 2011). Women play a pivotal role in all agricultural operations from planting-to-harvesting-to-post-harvest operations.

- Women in Agriculture are generally not able to access extension services and production assets like seed, water, credit, subsidy etc.
- As most of them are not recognized as farmers for want of ownership of land, they are not considered as beneficiaries of various government programmes / services.
- The wage differentials between men and women being averse to them, the situation is further aggravated. Some of the tasks performed by the women are not valued adequately and considered less important economically.
- Though women in India have acquired undeniable visibility in the farming scenario of India in the last two decades, the Census 2011 also has reported low employment participation rate for Indian women in farming sector.
- Unfortunately, to establish increase in the work participation of women in the farming sector, the concerned departments of the State do not have any comprehensive database on women in agriculture.
- It is high time to recognize that the work participation of the different categories of women engaged in the farming sector is largely unaccounted due to the inadequate definition of 'farmers' adopted under census and the national sample surveys.



WHY DO GENDER ISSUES IN AGRICULTURE PERSIST?

Land ownership- First, women are less likely to hold statutory land rights, and, when they do own land, their plots are often relatively small. Foreign investors in land tend to reinforce such inequality by dealing with those who do have formal rights to land—men. They also tend to cut off women's access to common lands for household needs, and to exacerbate the patriarchal land rights that underpin many customary land rights systems.

Credit facilities- Gender discrimination in credit markets makes it more difficult for women farmers to acquire labour-saving and innovative production inputs. This can impede women's participation in out grower schemes, although some investors facilitate credit access. Women face access barriers to extension services, which creates a knowledge gap that prevents them from benefiting equitably from new innovations.

Lack of Technology- Women's household labour burden can be improved by social development initiatives, but unfortunately their needs are rarely considered by investors, often resulting in unpaid work. Investments that provide access to laboursaving technologies can reduce women's labour burden in contract farming, but in agro-processing and plantation agriculture, female waged labourers face longer working hours.

Lack of market facilities- Even though India is an agricultural country, still its agricultural marketing has been defective. The Indian farmers are unable to get reasonable prices for the products even after their hard work and are fully exploited by the middlemen.

PRO WOMEN INITIATIVES

Government is taking various measures to increase the participation of women farmers in agriculture sector. This includes providing additional support and assistance to women farmers, over and above the male farmers under few Schemes.

MAHILA KISAN SASHAKTIKARAN PARIYOJANA-

Main objective is:

- To enhance the productive participation of women in Agriculture.
- To create sustainable agricultural livelihood opportunities for women in Agriculture.
- To improve the skills and capabilities of women in agriculture to support farm and non-farm-based activities.
- To improve the capacities of women in agriculture to access the resources of other institutions and

schemes within a convergence of framework

Implementation strategy:

- The program is being implemented by DAY-NRLM in partnership with State Rural Livelihood Missions/Community based Organizations (CBOs)/NGOs, as implementing partners (PIAs) across the country.
- These agencies are expected to support and nurture scalable livelihood models in the MKSP intervention areas.

Expected outcomes:

- Net increase in the incomes of women in agriculture on a sustainable basis.
- Improvement in food and nutritional security of women in agriculture and their families.
- Increased levels of skills and performance by women in agriculture.
- Increased access to market and market information for better marketing of their products.
- Increased soil health and fertility to sustain agriculture-based livelihoods.

AGRICULTURE TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (ATMA)-

Special Provisions (only for women)

A. Support for Women Food Security Groups (FSGs)-

- Groups exclusively of women farmer established and supported under ATMA Cafeteria as a mandatory activity @ Rs.0.10 lakh per group/year to achieve food security at the domestic/household level through setting up of kitchen garden, promoting off farm activities such as piggery, goat-rearing, beekeeping etc.
- Support available for at least 2 FSGs/Block.

B. Support for Gender Coordinator-

- One 'Gender Coordinator' /State in the team of committed extension personnel under ATMA to ensure that funds and benefits for training/ capacity Handbook for Women Farmers 4 building and extension support etc. are provided to them in proportion to their numbers

C. Representation of Women farmers in decision making bodies-

- Provision for mandatory representation of Women Farmers in State, District, Block Farmer Advisory Committees
- ATMA Governing & ATMA Management Committee at District Level

D. As Beneficiary-

- At least 30% of total scheme beneficiaries are to be women
- Minimum 30% of resources meant for programmes and activities are to be allocated to women farmers and women extension functionaries.

AGRI CLINICS AND AGRI BUSINESS CENTERS (ACABC)-

Back-ended Composite Subsidy

- 44% Back-ended composite subsidy towards cost of project to women as compared to 36% to men.

Celebrating the role of women in agriculture

This Women's Day, let's take a quick glance at how women have dedicated their lives to nurture agriculture in India.

78% of India's employed women work in agriculture

70% of farm work is led by women

50% of rural women are agricultural labourers

60% of world food volume is grown by women

Sources: FAO, WHO, The International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD)

MISSION FOR INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT OF HORTICULTURE (MIDH)–

Special Provisions (only for women)

A. As Beneficiary-

- Specific coverage of Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, and women beneficiaries for programmatic interventions.
- Assistance for horticulture mechanization also available grower associations/ farmer groups/ Self Help Groups/ Women farmer groups having at least 10 members, who are engaged in cultivation of horticultural Handbook for Women Farmers 6 crops, provided the balance 60% of the cost of machines and tools is borne by such groups. SHM to enter MoU with such association /groups to ensure proper upkeep, running and maintenance of the machines and tools.

B. Provisions (where women get benefits either over & above/ along with men)-

- **Tractor-** 35% of cost, subject to a maximum of Rs. 1.00 lakh per unit for women as compared to 25% of cost, subject to a maximum of Rs. 0.75 lakh/unit for men.
- **Power tiller (8 BHP and above)-** Subject to a maximum of Rs. 0.75 lakh/unit for women as compared to a maximum of Rs.0.60 lakh/unit for men.
- **Sowing, planting reaping and digging equipment-** Subject to a maximum of Rs. 0.15 lakh/unit for women as compared to a maximum of Rs.0.12 lakh/unit for men.
- **Self-propelled Horticulture Machinery-** Subject to a maximum of Rs. 1.25 lakh/unit for women as compared to a maximum of Rs. 1.00 lakh/unit for men.

COCONUT DEVELOPMENT BOARD (CDB) UNDER MIDH–

Adoption of technologies (Backend credit facilities)

- 33.3% of the project cost for women as compared to 25% of the cost for men.

INTEGRATED SCHEME FOR AGRICULTURAL MARKETING (ISAM)–

Storage Infrastructure

- 33.33% Subsidy (on capital cost) for women as compared to 25% for men.
- Subsidy ceiling (Up to 1000 MT is Rs. 1166.55), More than 1000MT and up to 30000 MT is Rs. 1000.00, Maximum ceiling of Rs 300.00 Lakhs) for women and Subsidy ceiling (Up to 1000 MT in Rs/MT-875.00, More than 1000MT and up to 30000 MT in Rs /MT750.00), Maximum ceiling (Rs 225.00 Lakhs) for men.

For Infrastructure Projects Other than Storage Infrastructure

- 33.33% Rate of Subsidy (on capital cost) for women as compared to 25% for men.
- Maximum Subsidy Ceiling is Rs. 500.00 lakhs for women as compared to Rs. 400.00 lakhs for men.

CONCLUSION

- To familiarize women with the latest techniques in agriculture and allied sectors, trainings are being imparted to women farmers under schemes of DAC&FW and DAY-NRLM.
- Develop and adopt—with partners along the value chain—an explicit gender strategy for the empowerment of women.
- Embed gender commitments in contracts with host government, customers, and suppliers.
- Ensure female participation in community consultations (equal to men, if possible) and any other stakeholder groups with which you engage. Conduct additional women-only consultations.
- Ensure participation of women in local farmer or employee training programs; do not assume the knowledge is passed from participant men to non-participant women.



Mission for Integrated Development
of
Horticulture

MIDH