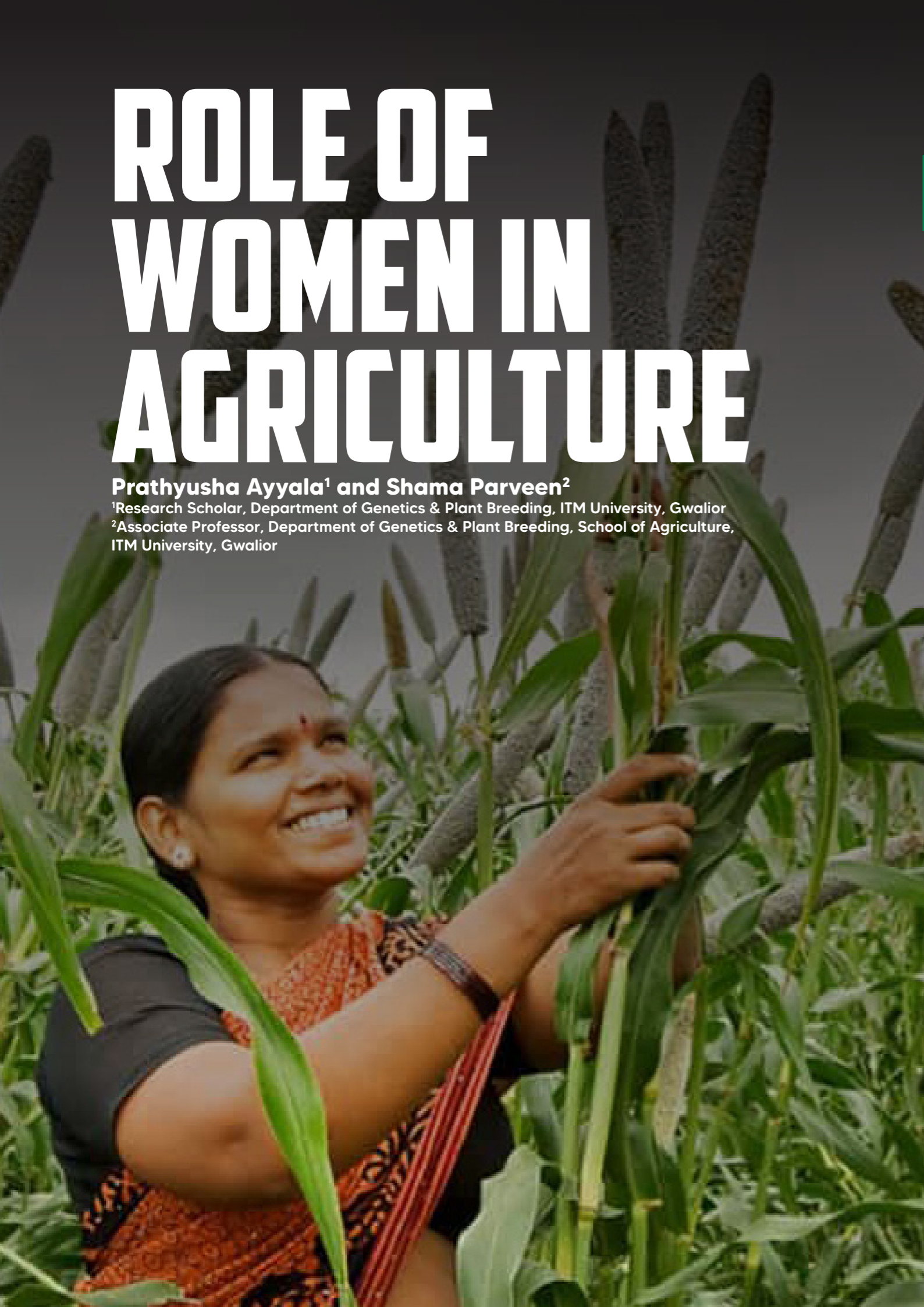


ROLE OF WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

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INTRODUCTION

Agriculture was essential for the growth of sedentary human civilization because it produced an abundance of food that allowed people to survive. Around the world, agriculture offers a wide range of employment and subsistence opportunities. In addition, it also reflects the unequal distribution of wealth and the gender gap. In their particular fields, women labor as farmers, business owners, and employees, yet practically everywhere they are subject to more restrictions than males. According to the census of 2011, agriculture employs sixty-five percent (65%) of all female employees in India.

Although their continuous contribution to agriculture is clearly recognized and evident, it is frequently overlooked. In India, the

proportion of women who work full-time in agriculture and depend on it for their livelihood is as high as 84% (2022). The role of women in agriculture is accurate given how production is hampered by gender inequality. They include gathering fuel and water, storing and processing grain to make domestic waste, and constructing walls and flooring, among other things. These activities have not been included in official statistics that track economic and agricultural output since they involve unpaid labor. The lack of representation of women in agricultural ownership and management, which is still a problem despite the fact that between 60% and 80% of small farmers are women.

WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURE

In India, Agriculture employs about 80percent of rural women. Including and empowering rural women in agriculture can lead to a paradigm change in favor of economic expansion. It will improve the security of food and nutrition while reducing hunger and poverty.

By geography, age, ethnicity, and social class, the roles and position of women in agriculture and rural areas vary greatly, and in some parts of the world, these roles and

status are changing quickly. Women perform duties in a variety of fields, but the majority includes agriculture, forestry, livestock management, fisheries or aquaculture, rural labor markets, and agricultural production. Women have an essential job in the rural economy by raising small animals and poultry, which accounts for 60% to 80% of food production in underdeveloped nations. Women are the primary keepers of knowledge about crop varieties in rural communities.

WOMEN IN AQUACULTURE (FISHERY)

Aquaculture for subsistence, artisanal and industrial processing, equipment maintenance and trade, and retail fresh fish all employ a significant number of women. Women represent 47% of the 120 million individuals who directly make a living from fishing and processing. Female employees make around 70 percent of the aquaculture industry and are heavily involved in fishing, processing, and marketing.



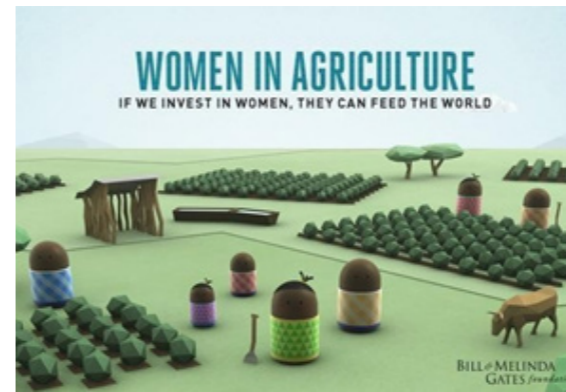
The fact that aquaculture involves less work than other accessible livelihoods is another reason why women prefer to practice it. The contribution of aquaculture to the diversity of the poor's livelihoods is being recognized more and more. Women have made considerable strides as fish processors in various nations; in fact, the majority of fish processors are women either as wage laborers in the large-scale processing sector

or in their own household-level industries. Studies on women in aquaculture, particularly in Asia where the industry has a long history, show that they frequently provide more labor than males. According to reports, women make up 33% of the global aquaculture employment in China, 42% in Indonesia, and 80% in Vietnam.



WOMEN IN LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

Women are highly involved in livestock farming, which plays an integral part in supporting women and enhancing their financial status. Women perform 45% of the necessary labor in the cattle production industry, which is their principal responsibility. Women are in charge of all tasks other than shearing, including milking, caring for animals, feeding them, making cheese, and producing other dairy products. Livestock is a significant sub-sector of the agricultural economy and accounts for close to 50% of agricultural revenue. A lot of rural women's roles can be improved by enhancing and expanding microcredit support programmes, promoting private sector involvement, and focusing on rural women's roles in livestock management. Women are in charge of cutting fodder, cleaning out sheds, milking dairy cows, processing animal products, and keeping an eye on the herd's wellbeing. In the agricultural industry, livestock not only gives work to males but also to 50% of the women in the family.



WOMEN IN FORESTRY

The biological richness of trees and forests, their proper care and use for a variety of purposes, and conservation techniques are all areas in which many women have quite specialized knowledge. Women are aware of the nutritional and therapeutic benefits of organic products, which are crucial during times of food shortages.

Food security, nutrition, and the sustainable management of forests all benefit significantly from policies and practices that empower women in the forest sector. Women's participation in forest user groups, their access to conventional energy sources, and their access to markets have all been found to greatly enhance the lives of those who depend on the forest and their society.

The majority of the labor that women contribute to the forestry value chains, especially when it comes to the collection, processing, and selling of non-wood forest products (NWFPs), tends to have very poor returns. This is partly due to the lack of attention given to the potential of NWFPs for local markets by several important stakeholders (such as policy-makers, market participants, and extension services). This relative neglect is made worse by the dearth of data and research on gender disparities in forestry value chains.



WOMEN IN CROP PRODUCTION

Farm management involves tasks including seed sowing, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, threshing, winnowing, and drying procedures, all of which involve women. Farm women conduct physically demanding tasks such as planting, caring for, and managing crops. In recent years, awareness of women's contributions to crop production in agriculture has grown.

Women typically have limited access to opportunities and resources, and their potential for production is lower than that of men. Weeding by hand for several hours in the sun, rain, and cold; drying products while standing in the hot sun; winnowing while standing in the sun; parboiling rice using ancient difficult methods; pounding, grinding, and dehusking cereals and pulses by hand; and using a hand-operated chakki.

Some of the special provisions for women farmers in National Schemes that include:

1. **ATMA:** Agriculture Technology Management Agency
2. **NMOOP:** National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm
3. **MKSP:** Mahila Kisan Sasha Ktikaran Pariyojana
4. **SMAE:** Submission on Agricultural Extension

CONCLUSION:

As farmers, employees, business owners, and contributors to agricultural growth and development through their lab our in horticulture, aquaculture, forestry, animal husbandry, and cattle production, women are heavily involved in agricultural operations. Due to the gender difference, women experience more consequences than males. Even though the percentage of women working in agriculture has decreased, they still make up a sizable share of the industry. Women have been locked in a cycle of low productivity by gender-based access to and control of resources, which highlights the steady depletion of women's potential. The objective for the involvement of cooperative societies in implementation includes unique provisions for women farmers, through which women receive benefits either above and beyond those of males. The good news is that there has been progress in this area towards gender equality. It is a significant task to equip women with new information and technology, especially in light of socioeconomic and environmental developments.

