



## MAINSTREAMING OF GENDER IN INDIAN AGRICULTURE

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**ABSTRACT** Since long time, gender based bias faced by rural women in terms of limited access to productive resources (Land, Credit, Inputs, Transport, Extension Services, Storage and Technical Assistance) prevent them from adopting new technologies or encoring them economies of scale. The role of women in agriculture of low income countries particularly in Asia is between 60-80%. This paper examines the ways in which greater integration of gender mainstreaming efforts through agricultural impact on women and men differently and ensures implications for sustainable growth. This paper highlights the available policies, schemes, programmes of Indian agriculture to integrate the gender with them. Although, women are more than employed, differences in wages earned by women and men persist in all countries. Women also have less access to productive resources especially in developing countries. Once different impacts are ascertained well designed policy responses may aid women in taking advantage of greater openness to agriculture.

**KEYWORDS :** Agriculture, Gender, Mainstream, Role of women, National policy, Measurements

### Introduction

Agriculture involves both self and wage employment in the form of cultivation and agricultural labour. In fact, the land holding of 75 percent of the farming community being marginal, the number of landless labourers has expanded up over time by working on others farm and especially the role of women is invisible. Gender, therefore, has to be recognized as the social characteristic that cuts across caste, class, occupation, age and ethnicity. It differentiates the roles, responsibilities, resources, constraints and opportunities of women and men in agriculture for which precise gender information is the need of the day. Building gender into agricultural development will lead to: (i) Building inherent strength of women and men to mutually learn (ii) Overcoming gender based prejudices.

In July 1997, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNECOSOC) defined the concept of gender mainstreaming as follows: "Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality."

### Literature review

A few reviews of studies have listed out on mainstreaming of gender as follows: **Singh and Vinay (2012)** summarized in their working paper about the significance of female labour in agriculture and allied activities. The role of women in agriculture as female labour is not highlighted in India so far. Despite of their presence in activities sowing, transplanting and post harvest operations they are considered as an invisible workers. **Damisa et.al (2007)** highlighted that, despite of various social, economic and psychological constraints women have high level participation in agriculture and they have been very committed in their agricultural operations. Overall, the level of involvement of women in farm decision making was found extremely medium or low. The volume of participation and decision making in activities like intercultural operations was 48 percent, harvesting of crops was 45.33 percent, storage of farm produce was 42.67 percent; 42.00 percent in sale of farm produce and in livestock- animal husbandry and dairy business was 38.67 percent and financial management was 36 percent only (**Unati et.al, 2011**).

### Objectives and Methodology

The present study is based on secondary data which was collected from the published reports of Surveys, Annual Reports, Newspapers, Journals, Websites, etc. It was planned with the following objectives:

- To study the status of gender mainstreaming in agriculture
- To study the available gender policies and measurements in Indian agriculture

- To critically examine the implementation of gender policies in agriculture

### Indian Scenario

Nearly half of the world's farmers are women. Most of the agricultural workforce belongs to women in developing countries. Approximately, one third of the rural households in sub-Saharan Africa are headed by women. Women produce on an average more than half of all the food that is produced (up to 80% in Africa, 60% in Asia; and 30 to 40 % in Latin America and Western countries). Agriculture plays a vital role in India's economy. 54.6% of the population is engaged in agriculture and allied activities (census 2011) and it contributes 17.4% to the country's Gross Value Added for the year 2016-17 (at current prices).

Paradoxically, rural women's contribution to building social and economic capital remains concealed because they are invisible in plans and programs. Moreover, denying them access to resources which could enhance their socio-economic contribution to society. Hence, women possess only 2% of the land, and receive only 1 % of all agricultural credit, while only 5 % of all agricultural extension resources are directed towards them. The extremes of poverty and marginalization that the inequitable access to resources exposes women to means that they are disproportionately exposed to shocks such as illness, death, floods and drought.

"Gender Mainstreaming" is one of the important pillars of the National Policy for Farmers' formulated in 2007. The policy is mandated to take appropriate structural, functional & institutional measures to empower women in agriculture and allied sectors by building their capacities and improving their access to inputs, technology and other farming resources. It is being addressed by (i) earmarking 30% of funds for women under various major schemes/ programmes and development interventions; (ii) taking pro-women initiatives to help women derive the benefits of beneficiary-oriented components of various programmes/schemes and missions.

The National Gender Resource Centre in Agriculture (NGRCA) established at the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (DAC & FW), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and supported by Central Sector Component of Sub-Mission on Agricultural Extension (SMAE) which act as a focal point for convergence of all gender related activities & issues in agriculture & allied sectors within and outside the Department. The Centre has also contributing towards mainstreaming of gender in agriculture policies /programmes and rendering advocacy / advisory services to States/ Union Territories.

Gender Budgeting Cell (GBC) has been constituted in the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare for looking up the budgetary commitments of various schemes of DAC & FW, bringing gender concerns to the focal point in all aspects of public expenditure and policy and ensuring a proportionate flow of the public expenditure benefiting women farmers. Nodal officers/ Gender Coordinators in

various divisions have been sensitized about the concept of gender budgeting. Formats of all the beneficiary oriented schemes of the Agriculture Ministry are being revised to generate gender disaggregated data.

#### **Current gender mainstreaming efforts of the government: Horticulture**

The horticultural schemes are promoting holistic growth through area based regionally differentiated strategies. Keeping in view of all social objectives and directives, the implementing agencies i.e. State Horticulture Missions and National Level Agencies have been directed to ensure that at least 30% of the budget allocation is earmarked for women while giving subsidies as well as for imparting training for skills development to women farmers for growing horticulture crops and post harvest management.

#### **Agriculture Extension**

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Support to State Extension Programmes for Extension Reforms (ATMA) elicits decentralized farmer-driven and farmer-accountable extension system through an institutional arrangement for technology dissemination in the form of an Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) at district level. ATMA programme makes that minimum 30% resources has to be allocate women farmers and at least 30% scheme beneficiaries should be women farmers. Besides, the scheme provides for enhanced involvement of women as 'Farmer Friend' in a mechanism promoted under 'Farmer-to-Farmer' extension. Farm Women's Food Security Groups (FSGs) @ least 2 per block are to be formed annually for ensuring household food and nutritional security providing assistance of Rs.10,000/ per group. From starting of the scheme, 24.05% of the total benefited have participated in farmer oriented activities like Exposure Visits, Training, Demonstrations & Kisan Melas including 58% of women farmers benefited during the year 2017-18 (up to 30th November, 2017).

#### **Crops**

'National Food Security Mission (NFSM)' is being implemented in 29 states of the country for increasing productivity of food grains. Besides, Bringing Green Revolution to Eastern India (BGREI) is also implementing in 7 eastern states of the country of those districts only in which neither NFSM-Rice, nor NFSM-Wheat covered states. Both, at least 30% of funds of NFSM and 33% BGREI will be for women farmers.

#### **Agricultural Marketing**

All the ongoing six Plan Schemes implemented during the XI Plan period have been put under one umbrella called "Integrated Scheme for Agricultural Marketing (ISAM). It aims; particularly women are eligible for subsidy @ 33.33% as against 25% for others.

#### **Cooperation**

The Cooperative Education Programme for women is being implemented by National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI) through the State Cooperative Unions from Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. NCUI is now running four exclusive women development projects located at Shimoga (Karnataka), Aska (Odisha), West Imphal (Manipur) and Bhopal (M.P.), by Intensification of Cooperative Education in cooperatively under-developed states (UDS). During the year 2016-17, a total of 1,27,000 women were imparted education under various educational activities. Women cooperatives are now covered under Weaker Section Programme for the purpose of availing subsidy and concessional funding during the remaining period of the 12th Five Year Plan programme by Central Sector Integrated Scheme on Agricultural Cooperation.

#### **National Policy**

The National Policy for Farmers (NPF) 2007 announced by the Government envisages the following measures aimed at women's empowerment:

- Asset reforms under land, water and livestock for an equitable share to women farmers.
- Better access to inputs and services, science and technology, implements, credit and support services like creches, child care centers, nutrition, health and training.
- Encouragement to women for participating in group activities aimed at achieving economies of scale through farming groups.

- Involvement of women in conservation and development of bio-resources.

Many of the provisions of NPF are being operationalised through various schemes and programmes by Central Government Departments and Ministries. Further, an Action Plan has been finalized and circulated to the Ministries and Departments of all States and UTs for necessary follow up action. An Inter-Ministerial Committee constituted to monitor the progress of Plan of Action for the operationalisation of NPF.

#### **Conclusion**

In line with National Agricultural Policy-2000 and provisions under National Policy for Farmers-2007, the strategy of the Government is to focus on farmers' welfare by making friendly farming both for men and women. This might improve farm women's access to productive resources including agricultural extension services thereby bringing overall improvement in the lives of rural women. This may not only enhance the production and productivity of agricultural sector and improve overall national food security. But, also smoothen the transition of women from being beneficiaries of the programmes/schemes and supports shaping their sustainable empowerment. However, these programmes have been a nib of the social fabrication and need to relook into the constructive methods instead of awareness provided. Above, mentioned policies and programmes have been not aware by the most of rural women and not found that much of implications in rural areas. Just, policies would not make a difference in the lives of rural women other than a proper and constructive implementation.

But, Indian social structure and legal aspects does not accept women as farmers. To address this, need to provide property right to women, joint name on agriculture land along with husband, issue of Kishan credit card to women at household level. Protection, preservation and development of seed and bio fertilizer, bio herbicide basically came into women domain. All these activities are important for sustainable agriculture of India. So we need to frame a system for building women as stakeholder in agriculture production, marketing and decision making system.

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