

# WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN AGRICULTURE: ENTREPRENEURSHIP, EQUITY & EMPOWERMENT



भारतीय कृषि अनुसंधान परिषद, नई दिल्ली - 110 001  
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# **WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN AGRICULTURE: ENTREPRENEURSHIP, EQUITY & EMPOWERMENT**

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## Message

The importance of agriculture in India is evidenced by the sector's contribution to the GDP of the country which accounts for more than 16%. In terms of employment, the sector still provides direct employment to over 42.5 percent of the country's population. Women are the backbone of the sector as they nearly contribute 33% to the agriculture labour force and 48% of the self-employed farmers in the country. With the migration of males outside the villages on the rise, the onus on women for taking care of the livelihood and nutrition of the family is increasing. Their hard work needs due recognition for their sustained and productive contributions in the sector. Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has been closely focusing on increasing the income and nutritional security of the farmers and farm families through policies and programmes directed at creating a conducive environment for the farmers to prosper which intern is essential for ensuring the prosperity of the country.

It is heartening to know that ICAR is bringing out this important publication depicting the success stories of women farmers/entrepreneurs who have contributed immensely towards bringing a positive change in the society. I am delighted to know that the publication is being released during the auspicious occasion of International Women's Day on 8<sup>th</sup> March which is celebrated worldwide to recognize the social, economic, cultural and political attainments of women with a larger focus on removing gender inequality.

Over the years, many innovative and enabling technologies have been developed by National Agricultural Research System under ICAR to provide handholding of the women farmers resulting in improved adoption of various agricultural technologies besides increasing the income of the farm families. This publication captures the stories of farm women who made a change by adopting modern agriculture, animal husbandry, value addition, entrepreneurship, organic farming etc. The publication also throws light on their journey through the COVID 19 pandemic and is sure to inspire all.

I take this opportunity to heartily congratulate all the farm women whose inspiring stories have been depicted here. They are the real harbingers of sustainable growth in agriculture whose efforts will inspire farmers, farmwomen and other countrymen alike.

Narendra Singh Tomar  
Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare,  
Rural Development and Panchayati Raj  
Government of India  
Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi



कैलाश चौधरी  
KAILASH CHOUDHARY



कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण  
राज्य मंत्री  
भारत सरकार  
MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE  
& FARMERS WELFARE  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

## MESSAGE

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has played a key role in addressing the gender issues in agriculture through development of women friendly technologies, efficient extension system and technical backstopping. The Council is striving for their empowerment and capacity building. The COVID 19 pandemic, which shook the entire world, has highlighted the role being played by farm women in shaping the societies.

Women in agriculture sector contribute in multiple roles as cultivators, entrepreneurs, and labourers. They are the caretakers of family nutrition and preservers of local agro-biodiversity. They are also responsible for the integrated management and use of diverse natural resources to meet the daily household needs. To shoulder all these responsibilities, farm women need better access to resources like land, water, credit and technology etc. besides better opportunities for training and skilling.

International Women's Day is the right occasion to celebrate the achievements of the women in their different roles as farmers, entrepreneurs, social reformers and so on. The publication in hand is a glorious example of the efforts and accomplishments of these women. The success stories of farm women from different parts of the country with handholding from the network of ICAR Institutes, KVKs and SAUs have been included in this publication depicting women empowerment through the 3E's of Entrepreneurship, Equity and Empowerment. I am sure, the readers would find the publication useful and take the task forward for the benefit of the agricultural community and the society.

  
(Kailash Choudhary)



परशोत्तम रूपाला  
PARSHOTTAM RUPALA



सत्यमेव जयते

राज्य मंत्री  
कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण  
भारत सरकार  
Minister of State For  
Agriculture & Farmers Welfare  
Government of India  
D.O. No. 332/MOS(A&FW)/VIP/2019-20/

### Message

A large proportion of the agricultural work force in small-scale and subsistence farming is contributed by women. The role of women in Indian agriculture is increasing evidently due to the migration of males to urban and suburban areas, which is having profound and far-reaching effects. In agriculture and food systems around the world, the inequalities in availability of resources adversely affect women, which in turn limits the opportunities to them. The combined loads of productive work and care work cause many women to experience time poverty, which negatively affects their health, economic options, and community engagement.

Development of agro-industries in the villages, upscaling of rural innovations and empowerment of people through skill development and education are central to the prosperity of rural areas and poverty reduction. Empowerment of women through agripreneurship will ultimately serve our purpose of gender equality besides enabling food security. To attain this, women farmers need to be made aware, motivated and trained about diverse agripreneurial opportunities. The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, through its Departments and Institutions is continuously striving for women empowerment in agriculture.

I am pleased to know that ICAR is publishing a book depicting the success stories of women farmers/entrepreneurs who have contributed significantly towards agricultural development and are bringing about a positive change in the society. The publication is being released on the occasion of International Women's Day on 8th March being celebrated worldwide. I congratulate ICAR for this very good initiative.

(Parshottam Rupala)

2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2021

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TRILOCHAN MOHAPATRA, Ph.D.  
SECRETARY & DIRECTOR GENERAL



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## FOREWORD

Women play an indispensable role in Indian agriculture. They are silently adorning myriad roles in the agriculture sector - from homemaker to labourer to cultivator and even entrepreneur. They have started to predominate every level of agriculture and its value chain, particularly as large number of rural menfolk is migrating towards urban areas for employment.

Women can propel India towards Second Green Revolution provided they get opportunities, adequate facilities and technical backstopping. ICAR through its R&D network is making efforts towards mainstreaming women workforce in agriculture. One of the ICAR Institutes, namely ICAR-Central Institute for Women in Agriculture, Bhubaneswar is dedicated to address issues related to women in agriculture in the areas of integrated farming system, integrated pest management, drudgery, livestock, fisheries, extension methodologies and entrepreneurship development. Empowerment of the women in agriculture has been one of the key themes in the approach of ICAR while conducting research, education and extension.

The relentless efforts of Council have begun to bear fruits which is evident from the plethora of inspiring stories resonating from the different parts of the country. These stories have been documented. There are exceptional women farmers, agro-based entrepreneurs, scientists, agri-professionals, CEOs of agri-business houses, agricultural extension officers and many more whose perseverance and determination need to be celebrated. They have proved to be the leaders for change through their tireless and inspiring lives.

I compliment the authors for bringing out this publication which serves as the mirror of the efforts of ICAR in bringing about gender parity in our country on the occasion of International Women's Day, a day to celebrate the accomplishments of women.

Dated the 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2021  
New Delhi

  
(T. MOHAPATRA)



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## Preface

International Women's Day is celebrated every year on 8<sup>th</sup> March to honour the achievements of women all across the globe and is typically a day for people from all over the world to work for greater empowerment of women for holistic and equitable development of the country. It is a time for reflection of how far women have come, advocacy for what is still needed, and action to continue breaking down barriers. International Women's Day is a growing momentum centered around unity and strength. The United Nations theme for the observance of the IWD 2021 is: "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world." ICAR in close agreement in this theme has decided the Theme as "Women Leadership in Agriculture: Entrepreneurship, Equity & Empowerment (3Es)". The theme imbibes the tremendous efforts of women around the world in shaping a equal future during COVID-19 pandemic which is evident from the fact that 70 percent of health and social care workers are women. It is also aligned with the priority theme of the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, "Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls", and the flagship Generation Equality Campaign, which calls for women's right to decision-making in all areas of life, equal pay, equal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work, an end of all forms of violence against women and girls, and health-care services that respond to their needs.

Women are the backbone of any developed society. They play an indispensable role in Indian agriculture. With the increase in rural men migrating to cities for better employment, women are silently adorning myriad roles in the agriculture sector - from homemaker to labourer to cultivator and even entrepreneur.

'Farmwomen' is an important partner for sustainable development of agriculture, and hence, they should be considered as the pivot of research paradigms in agriculture. Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has played a key role in addressing the gender issues in agriculture through development of women friendly technologies, efficient extension system and technical backstopping of farm women thereby making them competent enough not only to be self-reliant but also to be leaders or motivating agents to their peers and future generation. The vast network of research institutes, AICRP's, SAU's and KVK's have made this possible through their research and extension activities. ICAR-Central Institute for Women in Agriculture is trying to address issues related to women in agriculture in wholistic manner and establish interface with different stakeholders.

International Women's Day is the appropriate occasion to celebrate the achievements, resilience and leadership exhibited by farm women. This publication pays respect to all the farm women whose determination and foresightedness is motivating the future generation. Their confidence in agriculture will keep agriculture the mainstay of economy. The stories of self-reliance demonstrated by these women gives impetus to the goal of Gender Equality (SDG 5) and development of women leadership in the country.

Dated : 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2021

  
(A.K. Singh)



## Acknowledgements

The importance of agriculture in India is evidenced by the sector's contribution to the Gross Value Added (GVA) of the country which still accounts for more than 16.3 percent in the overall economy of the country. In terms of employment, the sector at present provides direct employment to around 42.5 percent of our population. Women are the backbone of the sector as they nearly comprise 33 percent of the agriculture labour force and 48 percent of the self-employed farmers. Women are contributing in every level of agriculture production and its value chain.

To recognize the social, economic, cultural and political attainments of women with a larger focus on removing gender inequality, United Nation has identified 8<sup>th</sup> March every year as International Women's Day. The Theme decided by ICAR in line with the UN Theme is "Women Leadership in Agriculture: Entrepreneurship, Equity and Empowerment to commemorate the event,

Present publication is about the contribution of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) particularly an outcome of a detailed exercise by the ATARI, ICAR Institutes, KVKs and AICRPs from a range of disciplines engaged in research and extension as well as women empowerment on various aspects of agriculture. The editors gratefully acknowledge their support and help which enable us to bring out the present publication.

This publication captures the success stories of farm women who made a change in the society by adopting modern technologies in various spheres of Animal husbandry, Fisheries, Agriculture, Horticulture, Integrated farming, Value addition and marketing, Women empowerment, Commodity Interest Group etc. and contributed immensely towards bringing a positive change in the society.

The success stories have mainly been contributed by KVKs through their respective ATARIs besides ICAR Institutes and we are extremely grateful to each one of them for their timely help & contribution. The editors take this opportunity to express their gratitude to all the contributors for developing this publication in a comprehensive manner. We are grateful to the Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj; and Hon'ble Ministers of State of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Govt. of India, Secretary DARE and DG, ICAR, Additional Secretary DARE & Secretary, ICAR and DDGs of Subject Matter Division of ICAR for their guidance and support in bringing out this publication.

We are thankful to the Scientific Team of ICAR-Central Institute for Women in Agriculture, Bhubaneswar for its kind support for formatting and developing cover page of the publication.

We hope that the publication would be useful to the researchers, teachers, policy makers, planners, administrators, farmers and students of agriculture.

**Editors**





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- **Category:** IFS with Agri-Preneurship
- **Brief background:** Mrs.Kavitha age of 36 years, owned 3 acres and cultivates sugarcane, turmeric, mixed fodder and nursery. She is practicing new technologies of integrating crops with allied enterprises like dairy cow, desi birds, dogs, goat rearing and bee rearing. She also produce value added products in millets, masala powders and edible oil.
- **Awards & recognitions**
  - Invited as Resource person for KVK, Colleges and Departments of Agriculture
  - Member in Technology Incubation at TBI, TNAU, Coimbatore
  - Her experiences documented by Doordharsahan and telecasted
  - Master trainer in Value addition and Marketing by KVK
  - Member in Agri Entrepreneur Service Centre (AESC) for market linkages.
- **Training and motivational support:** ICAR KVK, Myrada supported her to learn about the Integrated farming system and also post-harvest and value addition in millets, fruits and vegetables. She expertized in Desi bird rearing and managing parental stock unit in Aseel breeds. She enrolled in DAESI one year diploma course to strengthen her farming and business activities.
- **Impact in the area:** She has reduced her cost of cultivation by adopting integrated farming system. She has developed an Innovative formula for Masala Powder preparation and is doing direct marketing of agri and value added products with the brand name of “Aara”. She has made an attempt to export the quality products to abroad (Singapore) following all compliances. She earns Rs.6,12,000 per annum from IFS and Agri-Preneurship activities and employees 10 rural women. 32 rural women entrepreneurs developed and 28 IFS farmer adopted her farm technology after visiting farm.
- **Contributing/enabling factors:** The technical support by ICAR KVK Myrada

