

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH & EDUCATION

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 128
ANSWERED ON 02.08.2024

GENDER INEQUALITY IN AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS

*128. Dr. KALPANA SAINI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether gender inequality remains a very significant challenge in agri-food systems;
- (b) whether women agri-entrepreneurs still face challenges that prevent them from moving towards suitable and resilient agri-food systems; and
- (c) whether Government provides assistance to women agri-entrepreneurs to promote fair and resilient agri-food systems?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
(SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN)

(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (C) IN RESPECT OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 128 FOR REPLY ON 02.08.2024 REGARDING GENDER INEQUALITY IN AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS ASKED BY DR. KALPANA SAINI.

(a) to (c): Women play a vital role in India's agriculture sector, contributing to almost every aspect of it, from planting to harvesting to post-harvest operations. They work as paid labourers, cultivators, and managers of agricultural production. As farmers, agricultural workers and entrepreneurs, women constitute the backbone of India's agricultural economy. About 13.96% of the total land holdings are female-operated land holdings in India (Agriculture Census, 2015-16). Based on the total female workforce (Rural and urban), 64.3% of the total female workers in India are involved in agriculture while out of the total female workforce (Rural), 76.2% of female workers are involved in agriculture (Periodic Labour Force Survey, 2022-23). Though women face many challenges viz., limited access to inputs, food insecurity, limited access to education, training, land ownership, finance, technology and markets in agri-food system, the Government has taken several measures to address these challenges. Women agri-entrepreneurs play a key role in developing sustainable and resilient agri-food systems that reduces food insecurity and poverty, and addresses the issues of the gender inequality.

Some of the schemes and programmes of the Government to provide assistance to the farmers and agri-entrepreneurs including women farmers and women agri-entrepreneurs are:

- i. Innovation and Agri-Entrepreneurship Development programme under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY): Under the scheme, about 1708 Agri-Startups have been supported with technical and financial assistance during FY 2019-20 to 2023-24 including 448 women led start-ups. In total, the amount of Rs. 122.50 Crore grants-in-aid have been released in installments for funding to these 1708 agri-start-ups by Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- ii. Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF): Till date, 15,765 projects have been set up by women beneficiaries including women farmers, Women led Agri start-ups and Women Agri-entrepreneurs under AIF scheme with a loan amount of Rs. 10,382 Crore attracting an investment of Rs. 16,480 Crore. This constitutes 22% of the total projects sanctioned under AIF.
- iii. 986 women led Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) have been established under the scheme "Formation and Promotion of 10,000 FPOs till date.
- iv. Under 'Namo Drone Didi' central sector scheme, Govt has approved an outlay of Rs 1260 Crores for providing drones to the Women Self Help Groups (SHGs).
- v. Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) of Ministry of Rural Development nurtured about 1.65 lakhs Krishisakhis to provide handholding support to Self Help Group members on various livelihood activities.
- vi. More than 3.28 Crores women beneficiaries have received benefits of over Rs 76,000 crores under PM KISAN scheme.
- vii. Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) provides assistance to registered member exporters including women entrepreneurs, in three broad areas, namely scheme for infrastructure Development, Quality Development and Market Promotion.
- viii. In some of states, there is rebate for women in the stamp duty and transfer duty for purchase of agriculture land.

ICAR-Central Institute of Women in Agriculture (CIWA), Bhubaneswar addresses gender issues in agriculture and allied fields, gender-equitable agricultural policies/ programmes and gender-sensitive agricultural-sector responses and co-ordinate research on Home Science. This Institute has 13 All India Coordinated Research Project on Women in Agriculture in 12 states. The Institute has designed Gender Sensitive Entrepreneurship Model, established 30 women led small scale Custom Hiring Centres, supported 05 women led FPOs, and formed 12 women Farmer Interest Groups (FIGs) to support women agri-entrepreneurs.
