

# GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN AGRICULTURE

The Department of Agriculture and Cooperation has addressed gender issues in agriculture through 'women-specific training and extension programmes' and has facilitated the formulation of over 28000 SHGs and imparted training to approximately 13.88 lakh women farmers of 143 districts in 21 states in India. There has now been a shift in the Department's approach from executing stand-alone programmes to gender mainstreaming as per the National Agriculture Policy, 2000.

24.2 The NGRCA has accordingly been set up as a unit of the Directorate of Extension of the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation to serve as a focal point for convergence of all gender-related issues in agriculture and mainstreaming gender concerns in agriculture. The important gender-specific interventions within various subject matter areas are briefly mentioned below:

24.3 **Horticulture:** The State Horticulture Missions have been directed to earmark at least 30 per cent of the budget allocation for women beneficiaries in all ongoing programmes under the National Horticulture Mission and Technology Mission for Horticulture in North-Eastern states, Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand (TMNE).

24.4 **Agriculture Extension:** The scheme, 'Support to States Extension Programme for Extension Reforms', aims to provide demand-driven extension services through the active involvement of farmers/women farmers/subject matter specialists/NGOs/KVKs, etc. It also ensures that gender concerns are being mainstreamed, by mandating that 30 per cent of resources on programmes and activities be allocated for women farmers and extension functionaries.

24.5 **Watershed Development Programmes:** The watershed development programmes provide for the involvement of women farmers in the constitution of watershed associations and other institutional arrangements and formation of women SHGs and UGs.

24.6 **Crops:** Under the centrally-sponsored Mini Mission – II of the Technology Mission on Cotton, a subsidy is provided for the distribution of sprinkler sets to women farmers and other weaker sections. ISOPOM, for oilseeds, pulses and maize development programmes provides subsidy/assistance to the women farmers for sprinkler sets and pipes for carrying water from source to the field.

24.7 **Seeds:** Under the central sector scheme, 'Development and Strengthening of Infrastructure Facilities for Production and Distribution of Quality Seeds', the

implementing agencies have been directed to fix specific targets and allocate funds for women farmers.

**24.8 Mechanisation and Technology:** Under the scheme, ‘Outsourcing and Demonstration of Newly-developed Agricultural Equipment including Horticultural Equipment at Farmers’ Fields’, the gender friendly equipments are distributed among farm women. Besides, the farm women are also benefited through the subsidy/component of gender-friendly agricultural implements and hand tools. The central sector scheme ‘Promotion and Strengthening of Agricultural Mechanisation through Training, Testing and Demonstration’, provides for the skill development of women farmers. Under the Macro Management of Agriculture Scheme, the state governments are advised to promote the purchase of gender-friendly farm equipment and tools.

**24.9 Integrated Nutrient Management:** There are 25 per cent seats reserved for the training of farmers on organic farming.

**24.10 Cooperation:** Four exclusive projects are being run under the special scheme ‘Intensification of Cooperative Education in the Cooperatively Under-developed States’ for bringing rural women into cooperative folds.

**24.11 Agriculture Census:** The data on ‘operational land holdings and land-use pattern’ on gender disaggregate basis has been collected, collated and documented in the Agriculture Census, 1995-96.

24.12 Further details indicating the involvement of women in agriculture are given in **Annexure – 24.1.**

**24.13 The Way Forward:** The foremost mandate of the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation is to improve production, productivity and agricultural growth rate. Action has been initiated to revisit the schemes / programme to learn the current status of ‘gender impact’ of these programmes; identify components having better potential for involvement of women; earmark specific targets and allocations for involvement of women in those components and revise related reporting formats.

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