



Women Rice Farmers to be Trained in the Philippines

Eight women farmers have been selected to visit the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines to learn about new rice farming techniques.

- This is an initiative by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science and Technology.
- At the forthcoming workshop, the women are expected to be exposed to “advanced farming experiences and technological advancements.”
- Earlier at the IRRI’s Bhubaneswar centre, the women were taught about crop planning, stages of rice cultivation, pest and weed management, use of crop calendar, land selection, crop monitoring, post-harvest management and seed management.

The International Rice Research Institute

- (IRRI) is the world’s premier research organization dedicated to reducing poverty and hunger through rice science; improving the health and welfare of rice farmers and consumers; and protecting the rice-growing environment for future generations.
- It is an independent, nonprofit, research and educational institute, founded in 1960 by the Ford and Rockefeller foundations with support from the Philippine government.
- The institute is headquartered in Los Baños, Philippines.
- Recently, the IRRI South Asia Regional Center (ISARC), was inaugurated Varanasi, India. ISARC will serve as a hub for rice research and training in South Asia and the SAARC region.

Feminisation of Agriculture

- As per Census 2011, the workforce participation rate for females is 25.51% against 53.26% for males. Among female workforce participation, 55% of women workers were agricultural labourers and 24% were cultivators.
- However, only 12.8% of the operational holdings were owned by women, which reflect the gender disparity in ownership of landholdings in agriculture.
- Moreover, there is concentration of operational holdings (25.7 per cent) by women in the marginal and small holdings categories.”
- According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger), there would be an increase in output by 20-30% if women farmers had the same access to resources as men, which would translate into dramatic reduction in hunger.
- This requires that women farmers should have enhanced access to resources like land, water, credit, technology and training which warrants critical analysis in the context of India.
- Towards this, Government has been implementing various schemes which help improve the entitlements of women farmers, which will prove to be advantageous in bridging the policy gaps which exists in the sector.
- The following measures have been taken to ensure mainstreaming of women in agriculture sector:
 - Earmarking at least 30% of the budget allocation for women beneficiaries in all ongoing schemes/programmes and development activities.
 - Initiating women centric activities to ensure benefits of various beneficiary-oriented

- programs/schemes reach them.
- Focusing on women self-help group (SHG) to connect them to micro-credit through capacity building activities and to provide information and ensuring their representation in different decision-making bodies.
 - Recognizing the critical role of women in agriculture, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has declared 15th October of every year as Women Farmer's Day.

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