



Feminization of Agriculture

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As per the 10th Agriculture Census (2015-16), the percentage of female operational holdings in the country have increased from about 13% percent during 2010-11 to around 14% during 2015-16.

- Agriculture, contributing around 16% of the GDP, is increasingly becoming a female activity.
- Agriculture sector employs 80% of all economically active women; they comprise 33% of the agricultural labour force and 48% of self employed farmers.
- About 18% of the farm families in India, according to NSSO Reports are headed by women.
- According to the Economic Survey 2017-18, a rise in migration of men from rural to urban areas has resulted in feminization of agriculture.

Agriculture Census

- It is conducted at an interval of every five years by the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare.
- Data on structural aspects of operational holdings in the country is collected through the census.
- The first census was conducted with reference year 1970-71.

Operational Holding

All land which is used wholly or partly for agricultural production and is operated as one technical unit by one person alone or with others without regard to the title, legal form, size or location.

Challenges Faced by Women Farmers

- Lack of ownership of land
- Lack of access to financial credit

- Lack of access to resources and modern inputs (most farm machinery is difficult for women to operate)
- Increased work burden (on-farm and off-farm productive activities) with lower compensation

Steps Taken by Government

- **Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP)**
 - Implemented by Ministry of Rural Development, it is a programme exclusively for women farmers.
 - It is a sub-component of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission.
 - It aims to empower women by enhancing their participation in agriculture and to create sustainable livelihood opportunities for them.
 - Upto 60% (90% for North Eastern States) of the funding support for such projects is provided by the government.
 - It is in line with the provisions of the National Policy for Farmers (2007).
- **At least 30% of the budget allocation has been earmarked for women beneficiaries** in all ongoing schemes/programmes and development activities.
- Government has **increased its focus 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.**

Way Forward

- **Provision of credit without collateral** under the microfinance initiative of the **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development** should be encouraged.
- Manufacturers should be incentivised to produce **tools and machineries suited to women's needs.**
- **Krishi Vigyan Kendras** in every district can be assigned an additional task to educate and train women farmers about innovative technology along with extension services.
- Government flagship schemes such as the National Food Security Mission, **Sub-mission on Seed and Planting Material** and the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana should include women-centric strategies and dedicated expenditure.