

# STATUS OF WOMAN FARMERS IN UTTAR PRADESH

- SURVEY REPORT -

October 2006

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## **Women's status in Agriculture**

Agriculture is one of the largest sectors of India and the well-being of our economy and society depends on the health and prosperity of this sector. Agriculture has been the primary source of livelihood for the teeming millions of Indians for centuries. Not only is it a source of livelihood but it has influenced our traditions, customs and religions, etc. In other words, we can say that agriculture is enmeshed with the very culture of India. Even today 74% of our population lives in villages. Agriculture, therefore, is and will continue to be central to all strategies for planned socio-economic development of the country. Rapid growth of agriculture is essential not only to achieve self reliance at state level but also for household food security and to bring about equity in distribution of income and wealth resulting in rapid reduction in the poverty levels.

The woman farmer is the kingpin of agriculture and not just a secondary helper. They contribute significantly towards food security, economic development and growth of our country. Their hard work in fields is key to security of the nation right from household to the national level. Indian women in contemporary India do not enjoy an equal status with men. Many reforms have taken place in moving woman closer to equality but they are still far from giving full equality.

**There are high degrees of inter-state and intra-state variations in gender roles in agriculture, environment and rural production.**

Women in agriculture are a particular case of Indian patriarchy. They shared the general destiny of women in the society but also have specific role in the organization of agriculture.

In the number of people involved in agriculture, women constitute a formidable part of workforce. As per the World Economic Profile, they form 50% of the World's population, contribute 60% work force, making up to 30% of official labor and contribute 50% in food production. Traditionally, women have been playing an important and significant role in agriculture, integrating forestry and animal husbandry with farming. Their contribution to agriculture in terms of the number of tasks performed and the time-spent is greater than their male counterparts. Nearly 84% of all economically active women in India are engaged in agriculture and other allied activities Agriculture employs 4/5<sup>th</sup> of 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the agriculture labour force of which there are 48% self employed farmers. There are 75 million women as against 15 million men in dairying and the number of women engaged in animal husbandry accounts for 20 million, as against 1.5 million men. 51% of the work of women, which qualify for inclusion in GDP, is not recognized and remains unpaid.

Women have dual responsibilities where, besides the reproductive activities, if a comparison of household and crop production labor distribution amongst men and women is made, it becomes clear that men's labor hours are 40% less as compared to women although lot of women's time is taken in household activities still about 43% of their labor time is devoted to crop production related activities like weeding, harvesting, threshing, transplanting, fertilizing, etc. Men spend a lot of their time in community obligations, marketing, leisure and earning wages as labor in other's fields and nearby market/cities, etc.

Despite such significant contribution of women in agriculture and its allied activities those engaged in formulating packages of technologies, services and public policies for rural areas have often tended to neglect the productive role of women.

Gender discrimination rooted in law and custom is pervasive and it impedes socio-economic development. While investment in women programs is central to sustainable development women face many barriers in getting benefited from them. Similarly, the situation is not different in the state controlled developmental programs due to prevailing mindset of functionaries where they do not recognize the significant role of women. Their involvement in agriculture is considered as negligible and hence, their contribution is never acknowledged, recognized or rewarded. They have no access and control over agricultural produce, income and expenditure. Hence they are not given any decision-making powers.

Women hold a particular position in society by virtue of their being women. Gender may be defined as a network of beliefs, personality traits, attitudes, feelings, values, behavior and activities that differentiate men from women in society.

**Women farmers' world's most influential supremacy  
but they cannot investigate their individuality.**

Talking especially in context of Uttar Pradesh, about 72% population of this Pradesh is involved in agricultural activities. Women are contribute for more than 80% of these activities but are still a neglected workforce.

## **Status of Woman Farmers in Uttar Pradesh**

Agriculture is one of the largest sectors of India and Uttar Pradesh is India's agricultural heartland. Agriculture is the base of social structure and is often regarded as the economic backbone of the state. The state of Uttar-Pradesh contributes significantly in socio-economic development and total food grains production of India. At present about 72% of state population is involved in agricultural activities and women play an important and significant role in

agriculture. Rural women form the most important productive work force in the economy of majority of the developing nations including India.

Agriculture, the single largest production endeavor in India, is increasingly becoming a Female activity. Beyond the conventional market-oriented narrower definition of 'Productive Workers', almost all women in rural India today can be considered as 'farmers' in some sense working as agricultural labor, unpaid workers in the family farm enterprise, or a combination of the two, moreover, several farm activities traditionally carried out by men are also being undertaken by women as men are pulled away into higher paying employment. Thus rural India is witnessing a process, which could be described as "Feminization of Agriculture".

According to the 2001 census, there are a total of 5 crore workers in U.P. out of which 76% are male and 24% are female. Out of 24% female workers 41% females are agricultural labourers and 34% are cultivators. On the contrary, out of 76% male workers, only 20% are agricultural labourers and 42% are cultivators. These figures show under-recognition of the role of women in farming and they are being denied their rights as farmers which is mainly due to lesser control over assets and decision making processes. The factual situations and grass root experiences have proved that the percentage of women involved in agricultural activities are far more than that of men and hence their contribution of this sector is more than their male counterparts. The census itself proves that despite women's significant contribution in agriculture, their identity is more of an agricultural labourers rather than of a farmer.

**The position of women farmers in Uttar Pradesh is awful in spite of more than 50% of their contribution. The recognition of their individuality is that as of a labour.**

In Uttar Pradesh, agriculture stands as the main source of livelihood for the majority of its population. The small and marginal woman farmers of the state play a major role in serving the livelihood of the people and they constitute 89% of the total farming community. This particular section of farming community also comprises those hard working women who contribute to more than 80% of the agricultural activities. In each and every activity of agriculture, women contribute more than 50% of their labour. Maximum number, of women folks are also engaged in working as agriculture labours and their livelihood is dependent on the meager daily wages that they earn.

Despite the key role of women in agricultural activities, their contribution has always been undermined and neglected. This feeling of neglect is deeply rooted at every dimension such as the society, political state, government schemes, research organization, etc. Statistics also show that although women are responsible for more than 70% of agricultural activities, their share in the agricultural production is only 12.9% despite the work participation rate of 18.4%.

In spite of women's major contribution in agricultural production, woman farmers and woman agricultural labourers have always been the bull's eye for discrimination since ages. There exists a major discrimination in the wage structure of men and women agricultural laborers. Women are not paid equal to men for equal work. The women agricultural laborers stand to be the most unprivileged group. Further more, the condition of woman farmers and agricultural labourers in Uttar Pradesh are worse than those of other states of India. In 1997, the average wage rate for unskilled women labor was Rs. 49 in Uttar Pradesh, whereas it was Rs. 96 in Kerala Rs. 94 in Karnataka and Rs. 87 in Maharashtra. The state of women's control over the land also presents a gloomy picture all over the state only 6% as women are legal owner of land while the joint ownership over the land is only 3%.

**The status of women farmers in Uttar Pradesh represents their identity in agricultural world appreciably.**

Besides, contributing to labour, women possess detailed knowledge of agriculture and use of plant and plant products for food, medicine and animal feed. Women today are central to selection, breeding, cultivation, preparation and harvest of food crops. Apart from their pivotal role in cultivation of staple crops, they are primarily responsible for the production of secondary crops such as pulses and vegetables which are often the only source of nutrition available to their families. Women farmers also often possess unique knowledge about fish farming and handle most of the work associated with it.

So far, very little has been done to strengthen and exploit the capacity of rural women folk who contribute greatly in pre- and post-production processes in agriculture sector. Their contribution in agriculture has always been undermined and ignored.

## **Identification of Woman as "Farmer"**

Traditionally, women have been playing an important and significant role in farming. Their contribution to agriculture in terms of the number of tasks performed and time spent is greater than male. Women have dual responsibilities where, besides the reproductive activities, they also contribute in production activities. Statistical data, experiences, programs and ground reality also indicates women's significant role in agriculture. Despite such significant contribution of women in agriculture and its related activities, those engaged in formulating packages of programs and information for rural areas have often tended to neglect the productive role of women.

**In the face of women's significant contribution in agriculture, their identity is more of an agricultural labour rather than of a farmer.**

They are deprived of the basic rights and most importantly they even do not have the basic identity as a 'farmer'. But in fact, the woman farmer is the solid base of agriculture and not just a secondary helper.

Gender justice is a wide term which takes in its sweep every facet of life. For centuries, in fact, ever since known history, we have lived in a patriarchal and feudal society, which has assigned women a subordinate role. This discrimination against women is spread in all areas including agriculture as well. The term 'farmer' is always related to a male person. This is very strange because women who perform majority of agricultural related activities become even beyond the imagination of being considered as a farmer.

**The feeling of neglect of women's contribution is deeply embedded at every facet of life.**

These gender inequalities have the largest impact on woman farmers and it has wider detrimental impact on productivity and development of nation. When their creative abilities and personal contributions are subjected to constant subjugation, economic progress is bound to be adversely affected.

*The definition of a farmer is assumed as "an adult male..... Who has the right to the produce of a farm.....? Women are not classified as farmers." Investigations conducted in selected states in India show that more than 60 percent of agricultural operations are performed by woman farmers, yet the fact that, "most farmers in India are women"..... Is simply not reflected anywhere in government records or programs.*

## **Aaroh : A Campaign**

Analyzing the problems, it was felt that despite the very significant role in agricultural production, women farmer's contribution has never been acknowledged, recognized and rewarded. They are largely considered to be a non-contributory community. They are deprived from the basic rights and most importantly even do not have the basic identity as a 'farmer'. The face of the Indian farmer that comes in the minds of the people is a man's face. Although large number of NGOs and other voluntary organizations have been making efforts in creating awareness and trying to establish the identity of the women farmers, but not much has been achieved so far and the situation remains almost the same. The agriculture policy of 2005 which has been drafted lately has mention of women farmers as a separate category but this will have to be ensured that the mention and privileges framed for women farmers turn in to practicality.

The importance of this particular issue of non-recognition of women as 'farmer' has been felt and realized by several non-governmental organization, civil society organizations, farmer unions, media, etc. and they have been raising their voices from time to time. It was felt that there is an urgent need to strengthen these efforts to fight for the rights and interests of woman farmers in Uttar Pradesh. In the light of these needs, several NGOs, small woman farmer unions and civil society organizations have initiated a campaign named -AAROH- (October 2006) in order to establish the identity of women as agriculture farmers and to fight for their rights and interests.

**In this campaign the definition of the woman farmer goes as "any woman occupied in agricultural activities is considered as a woman farmer."**

The main objective of the survey was to investigate the issues that influence the rights and interests of women farmers and expose their real situation in Uttar Pradesh. The focus of the study was to identify social, legal and land related issues as that restrict the rights and interests of women farmers.

**AAROH: A campaign for recognition of women's identity as farmers in agriculture.**

# **WOMAN FARMERS IN UTTAR PRADESH: SURVEY PROCEDURE**

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## **Farmers: Recognition of Identification**

Many volunteers of several organizations and other civil society organizations have concluded that there is an urgent need to evaluate the real situation of women in agriculture in Uttar Pradesh. In lieu of this, several NGOs, small women farmer unions and civil society organizations have initiated a campaign Aaroh in order to establish the identity of women as farmers in agriculture and to fight for their rights and interests. To fulfil, this objective a survey was conducted in Uttar Pradesh to get a clear picture of the real situation of woman farmers in 5 different geographical regions of U.P. A total of 2500 women farmers were surveyed on various dimensions like rights of land ownership, workload, rights to resources, and access to information, etc.

## **Objective of Survey**

The main objective of the survey was to assess the women's rights on land ownership, ownership on other agricultural resources, to evaluate woman farmer's access to information extension and Government policies. One of the main objectives of the survey was to evaluate women's right to take decisions on such important matters in agriculture as crop sowing, crop selling, animals selling, etc.

## **Survey Sample**

The survey was conducted in Uttar Pradesh to get a clear picture of the real situation of woman farmers in 5 different geographical regions of U.P. A total of 2500 women farmers were surveyed on various dimensions related to agriculture. The five geographical regions were as given below:

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>Voluntary Organization</b>	<b>Sample</b>
1	Western Region	Disha, Saharanpur	500
2	Ruhelkhand Region	Vinoba Seva Ashram, Shahjahanpur	500
3	Bundelkhand Region	Samarpan Jan Kalyan, Jalaun	500
4	Central Region	Pani, Faizabad	500
5	Eastern Region	GEAG, Gorakhpur	500
		<b>Total</b>	<b>2500</b>

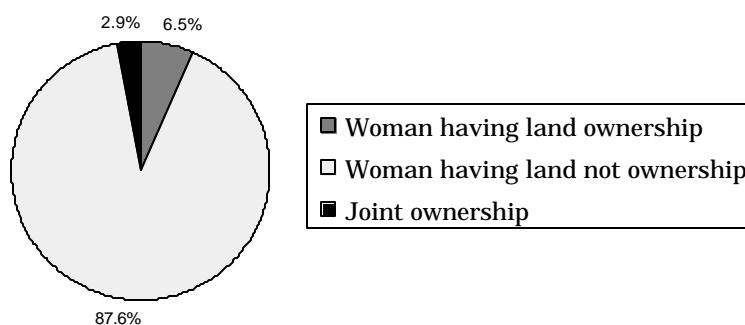


# WOMEN FARMERS IN UTTAR PRADESH

## Land ownership

In the field of agriculture, woman plays a significant role and she also performs agricultural activities more than their counterpart male. In spite of significant contribution in agriculture women have no control over the land. The high feeling of insecurity in men that the women having legal ownership of land will get empowered and run away and the land will be lost. The social norms and old traditional practices are also a major factor that restricts women's ownership of land.

The state of women's control over the land also presents a gloomy picture all over the state. The above pie - diagram clearly shows the landholding status of women in Uttar Pradesh.



The above pie diagram clearly shows that 6.5% women are legal owners of land while male ownership over the land is 87.6% and joint ownership is only 2.9% .

The high levels of gender discrimination in case of landed property in Uttar Pradesh cannot be denied because in U.P. as the results show, only 6.5% women are legal owners of land while male ownership over the land is 87.6%.

**Women's ownership on land is only 6.5%. Out of 6.5%, 81% of women having land ownership are widow and 19% are those who are the only child of their parents.**

It has been also seen that the legal title to land, access to it as a productive resource and the ability to exercise control over it and enjoy the fruits of one's labour on it, have on the whole been denied to women. This denial to a large extent is responsible for the unequal gender inequalities within society and contributes to titling power relations of men against women. These gender inequalities in the society persist to a very large extent that denies women of their

rights and powers. Even the legal and religious provisions regarding land ownership are also not favourable to women.

Women who have unparalleled role in agriculture are straight way neglected and sidelined wherever the question of money and power arises. She performs all the activities from sowing to storage in her piece of land, but when it comes to marketing of produce and the financial gains, the powers are snatched away from her hands.

**The situation of women's ownership on land is very weak and worse in Uttar Pradesh.**

The livelihood opportunities for women are based on their access and control over land. Almost all women had a good and convenient access to work on their husband's land but they exercised no control over it. Hence, it was concluded that the female ownership of land is not directly proportional to the female's control on land.

Another interesting fact that turned out was that if at all female owned land in her name, the reason behind this ownership was not her empowerment factors. The ownership of females on the land was due to some exceptional factors. The results of the survey also supports this fact which are presented in Table: 1

**Table-1**  
**Reasons behind women ownership on land**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Obtained Score (%)</b>
Widow	81 %
Parental property	19 %

Table : 1 shows that 81% females are owners of land because they are widows and after their husband's death the farming was the only source of livelihood, on the other hand 19% females were owners of land because they were only child of their parents. In a nutshell, the concern of empowerment of women and giving them equal property rights was not reflected anywhere in the findings of the survey.

Generally, women's work in fields is that of a `secondary helper' of man and her hard work and labour is under-estimated. As per the World Economic Profile, women's contribution is important and significant a but the situation of women's ownership on land is very weak and worse in the field of agriculture. Land is a significant form of property and is a critical determinant of economic well-being, social status and political power. However, there is substantial evidence that the economic resources are in the hands of male household members which often do not benefit the female members in equal degree. The denial of property rights to women is a significant instrument of patriarchy especially if one sees patriarchy as a historically developed cultural ideological force, giving gender relations their specific character in each situation. Effective access to land is perhaps the single most significant determinant of economic and social status and power in rural

India and "women's unequal access to it is one of the most important forms of persistent gender inequalities in India today."

**Women farmers have no legal information about land related issues.**

In Indian society where patriarchal dictates determine the status of a woman, land policies and laws do not ensure fulfilment of this right. Legal systems are reluctant to interfere with personal laws. This maintains the inequality between a man's and a woman's right to property.

## **Agricultural Resources and Ownership**

In the field of agriculture women's are not only deprived from the right of ownership over the land but are even, underestimated by man and family in other related fields also. Women's have dual responsibilities where, besides the reproductive activities, they also contribute in productive activities. Considering the agricultural activities, if a comparison of household and crop production, labour distribution amongst men and women is made, it becomes clear that men's labor hours are 40%, less as compared to women. Despite the key role of women in agricultural activities, their contribution have always been undermined and neglected.

Women contribute very significantly not only in agricultural and household activities but they also work very hard in agricultural related other activities. In spite of this women's are evaluated only as a labor and they have very nominal ownership on agricultural equipment. The results also have supported this fact of women's ownership.

**Women farmers are always neglected by male dominated society not only on the issue of land ownership but also on the ownership of other agricultural resources.**

The following table clearly shows the position of women's ownership over the agricultural equipments.

Table: 2

### **Agricultural Resources**

<b>Agricultural Resources</b>	<b>Families having agricultural resources (%)</b>
Tractor	0.5
Thresher	0.2
Winnowing Fan	9.9
Bullock Cart	15.1
Pump set	4.1
Trailer	2.0
Fodder Cutter	0.5

By observing Table: 2 it is clear that 0.5% families have tractor, 0.2% families have thresher as an agricultural resources. 9.9% families have so wing machine, 15.1% families have bullock-cart as an equipment of farming, 4.1% families have pump set, 2.0% families have trailer and only 0.5% families have fodder cutter as agricultural resources.

The data present in Table -2 clearly show that although many families have their own agricultural resources like tractor, thresher, etc. but women have no access and control over those resources because women farmers are considered only as a "helping hand" to male dominated agricultural system.

**Total 32% families have agricultural resources but women's ownership is nil.**

The traditional biases against women also restrict them from the use of machines in their work. It is traditionally considered that women cannot handle machines. The access to technology is limited only to men. Also, reducing workloads of women farmer/laborers is a lower priority of research/technology development organizations. In contrast, a study in Uttar Pradesh reports that men "only reluctantly conceded that their womenfolk really work. The researchers in this area repeatedly told that women, hitherto have been like children, simply eat food and do nothing."

**Women farmers significantly contribute in agriculture but have no legal title to ownership.**

Many people maintain that women's economic dependence on men impacts their power within the family. With increased participation in income-earning activities, not only will there be more income for the family, but gender inequality will be reduced.

This issue is particularly salient in India because studies show a very low level of female participation in the labor force. This under reporting is attributed to the frequently held view that women's work is not economically productive.

Where technology has been introduced in areas where women worked, the women laborers have often been displaced by men. Formerly threshing of grain was almost exclusively a female task, but with the introduction of automatic grain threshers- which are only operated by men-women have lost an important source of income.

Combine harvesters leave virtually no residue. This means that this source of fodder is no longer available to women, which has a dramatic impact on women's workload. So too, as cattle dung is being used as fertilizer, there is less available for fuel for cooking.

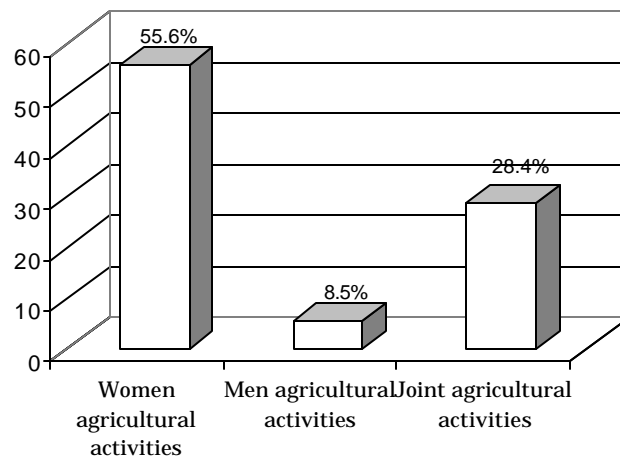
The Indian tradition considered that women cannot handle machines so the ownership on agricultural resources is limited only to men.

Women farmers have no access and control over information and extension mechanisms, technology and machines are discriminated in terms of wages as well.

## Farming and Productivity: Access and Control

One of the main objectives of the study was to evaluate women's contribution in agriculture and other related tasks. After computing the data findings are presented through tables and graphs.

### Evaluation of Women Contribution in Agricultural Activities



The above bar diagram clearly shows that 55.6% women's are engaged in farming and only 8.5% men's are involved in agricultural activities.

At present there are many families in rural areas where male members of the family are migrated and women have dual responsibilities. Migration of men over a longer duration seems to have had one fallout; it has expanded the socio-economic space for women in agriculture. This has been borne out by a large number of studies that indicate that in the absence of men, women have started performing larger roles, even outside the home space, and thereby assumed greater autonomy in decision-making than before. This apparently, seems to have happened in to sets of households. First, those which experienced a more dynamic growth in agriculture where women have shifted more to managerial tasks. A second set of households represent women of the marginalized class where women have come out of their home spheres and started interacting with different categories of people within as well as outside the villages. Women in the middle strata of peasantry are likely to have experienced lesser gains in terms of an expanded socio-economic space. But, this slow and subdued process is outweighed in many cases by an increase in women's workload. In any case, as Bard Han

(1985) notes if a husband has deserted, migrated or died, the issue of autonomy has little meaning when she must work for any income, however low, for the day-by-day subsistence of her family.

**Women's contribution in agricultural activities is 55.6% but their ownership on land is only 6.5%.**

Migration of men, especially under distress situations, should imply more work burden for women rather than being seen as a positive development towards women's empowerment or gender equity. This is so because, empowerment does not merely come from workforce participation or autonomy in conducting a particular productive task; rather, it emanates from structural changes in ownership and control over productive resources on the one hand, and the loosening of the class/caste based hierarchies within haphazard society on the other. Thus, women's expanding role in agriculture does provide a useful starting point but the role has to be qualified by questions of work quality, class variations as conditions for autonomy and voice (Bard Han, 1985).

The results of the survey also indicate that women were participating in more than 50% works in agriculture but when the question of rights, access and control arises, they were always neglected from this male dominated society and due to that type of society, females, though, they work more than men in agriculture, are not identified as 'farmers'. The mindset of the people of the community is also a big hindrance for women as it is highly male biased. The situation of women's controlling power in any field of life is worse and the following table and bar diagram also presents the clear picture of women control and access especially in context of agriculture.

Table: 3  
**Evaluation of Women's right to take decisions on crop-sowing**

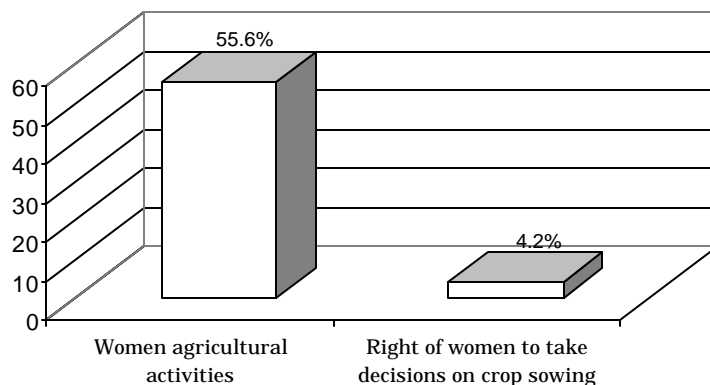
Having right to take decisions	Percentage of control
Husband	47.0
Women	4.2
Joint	45.6

The above table shows that only 4.2% women are those who have the control on decision of crop seeding while that of male's control is 47% and jointly-the control on the decision of crop seeding is 45.6%. The situation is clearer if we compare this result with agricultural activities.

The below bar diagram presents a very clear picture of women's status in agriculture. Their contribution to agriculture in terms of the number of tasks performed and time-spent is greater than their male-counterparts but their this aspect is always neglected. Despite such significant contribution of women in agriculture and its allied activities, the has been often tended to neglect the

productive role of women. Women are responsible for more than 80% of agricultural activities but are still a neglected workforce.

In the present study a comparative analysis between women's work in agriculture and her control on decision of crop seeding is also computed and the result is presents through following bar-diagram.



The above bar-diagram shows that women's contribution in agricultural activities is 55.6% but only 4.2% women have control on the decision of crop seeding.

Woman contributes greatly in pre - and post production processes in agriculture sector but their contribution in agriculture has always been undermined and ignored (Table 4).

Table: 4

Factors	Mean difference	Correlation	T-obtained
Agricultural activities	3.6934	- 0.66	- 18.098
Decision on crop sowing	2.0199		

The above table presents a negative correlation between agricultural activities performed by women and right to take decisions on sowing of crops. It is clear that women contribute very significantly in agricultural activities but have no rights on decision-making. Statistics also show that the way women exercise no rights to take decisions on sowing crops; similarly, they also don't have any control on crop selling.

**Even women's contribution to agricultural activities is 55.6% but only 4.2% women's having right to take decision on crop sowing.**

The findings of the survey report also supports this fact.

**Table No. 5**  
**Evaluation of Women's right to take decisions on crop selling**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Obtained in Percentage</b>
Women taking decision on crop selling	28.40

The above table presents a very clear picture of women's control and rights to take decisions on various aspects of agricultural activities. The figures of the above table show that only 28.4% of the women have rights to take decisions on crop selling.

Women have dual responsibilities where, besides the reproductive activities, they also contribute in productive activities. Their contribution to agriculture is greater than their male counterparts. Women have extensive workloads with dual responsibility for farm and household production. Many studies indicate that in the absence of men women have started performing larger roles, even outside the home-space and thereby assumed greater autonomy in decision-making than before. Considering the agricultural activities, if a comparison of household and crop production, labor distribution amongst men and women is made, it becomes clear that men's labor is 40% less as compared to that of women. Even lot of women's time is taken in agricultural activities except that they have no rights to take important decisions related agriculture activities.

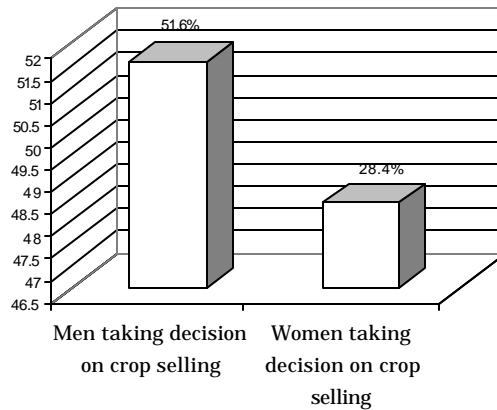
**55.6% women's have significantly contributed in farming but women's control on crop selling is only 28.4%.**

Despite such significant contribution of women in agriculture they are considered only as a "helping hand" to male dominated agricultural system. Gender discrimination rooted in law and custom is pervasive and it impedes socio-economic development. Because of this gender inequality women's involvement in agriculture is considered as negligible and hence, their contribution is never acknowledged and recognized. This discrimination against women is spread in all areas including agriculture as well. Men have always dominated women in terms of control and rights to take decisions.

The following bar- diagram also clarifies that women have no or very meagre control on crop selling.



## Comparison of men and women's control on taking decision on crop selling



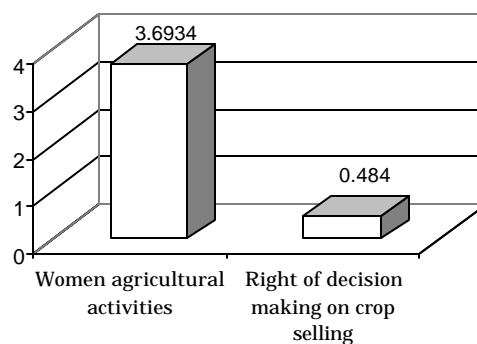
The above graph shows that whereas men's right to take decisions on crop-selling that of women is 51.6%, only 28.4%. The above graph presents a very clear picture of significant difference between men and women's control on crop selling. But besides the present study also tries to investigate the relation between agricultural activities performed by women and women's control on crop selling. The findings of the study are shown in Table: 6

Table: 6

Groups	Means
Women agricultural activities	3.6934
Right of decision making on crop selling	.4840

The above table shows a significant mean difference between agricultural activities performed by women and women's right to take decisions on crop selling. The table presents that mean of agricultural activities is 3.6934 while mean of women's control on crop selling is .4840. This difference is also presents through a bar-diagram and the graph below given below which shows that where women perform a large number of agricultural activities independently they have only a few access rights to crop-selling decisions.

## Presentation of Mean differences between farming and crop selling



In the sequence of statistical analysis a correlation is computed between agricultural activities and women's control on crop selling. The finding is given in Table-7.

Table: 7

Groups	Mean difference	Correlation	T-obtained
Agricultural activities	3.6934	- 0.73	11.895
Decision of crop sowing	0.4840		

The above table shows a negative correlation between agricultural activities performed by women and women's control on crop selling which states that even women perform maximum agricultural activities but have no control on crop selling. Women have no rights to take decisions on crop selling and other important decisions.

**Men taking decision on crop selling is 51.6% while women's control on decision is only 28.4%.**

Women have been playing an important and significant role in agriculture. Their contribution to agriculture in terms of time spent is greater than men but they have no control on income -expenditure. It was found in the survey that very few women have control on income expenditure as indicated in the following table:

Table: 8

**Evaluation of women's control on Income Expenditure**

Groups	Obtained Score
Women having right to income expenditure	7.9%
Men having right to income expenditure	31.3%
Family having right to income expenditure	60.5%

The above table shows that 71.3% men have rights to income expenditure while 7.9% of women are those who have rights to income expenditure and 60.5% families have rights to income expenditure. Many maintain that women's economic dependence on men impacts their power within the family. With increased participation of women in income - earning activities, not only will there be more income for the family, but gender inequality will be reduced. This issue is particularly salient in India because studies show a very low level of female

participation in the labour force. This under reporting is attributed to the frequently held view that women's work is not economically productive.

**The shift from subsistence to a market economy has a dramatic negative impact on women....**

If all the activities- including maintenance of kitchen gardens and poultry, grinding food grains are taken into account, then 88% of rural house wives and 66% of urban housewives can be considered as economically productive. Women's employment in family farms is rarely recognized as economically productive, either by men or women and, the men generally have control on any income generated from this work. Such work is unlikely to increase women's participation in allocating family finances.

**Women contribute considerably to household income through farm and non-farm activities as well as through work as landless agricultural labourers.**

It was also found in the survey that women perform maximum agricultural activities and they have very significant contribution to agriculture but they have no or very meager control on income-expenditure, as indicated in the following table.

Table: 9

Groups	Mean differences	Correlation	T-Obtained
Agricultural activities- control on income expenditure	2.5478 - 1-6933	- 0.50	-14.895
Other works- control on income expenditure	2.5878 - .7048	- 0.27	- 67.313
Agriculture based other activities- control on income expenditure	2.5481- .52224	- 0.65	- 68.190

Moreover, there exists a negative correlation between agricultural, based other activities performed by women and control on income-expenditure which states that although they women perform maximum agricultural activities but have no or very meagre control on income expenditure. Even when women earn well, they do not always have control on it as it is seen often as a part of her family responsibilities.

From the above results it is clear that in spite of women's contribution of labour time, she is only evaluated as an agricultural labour. The question of evaluation of women farmers', labours, and time is always neglected.

**91.7% women farmers are engaged in agricultural activities all the year round, 50.5% of women are those who also perform agricultural based other activities but their control on income expenditure is only 7.9%.**

## **Animals: Responsibilities and Control**

Men have always dominated women in terms of ownership of any asset. although the responsibility of looking after and taking care of that asset has always fallen in women's court. Similarly, women are fully responsible for taking care and looking after domestic animals.

**Table: 10  
Animals**

<b>Animals</b>	<b>Families having (%)</b>
Cow	25.2
Buffalo	24.2
Hen	24.9
Bullock	8.6
Goat	5.2

The above table clearly shows that 25.2% families have cow, 24.2% families have buffalo, 24.9% families have hen and 8.6% families have bullock as domestic animals.

**Table: 11  
Animals Responsibility**

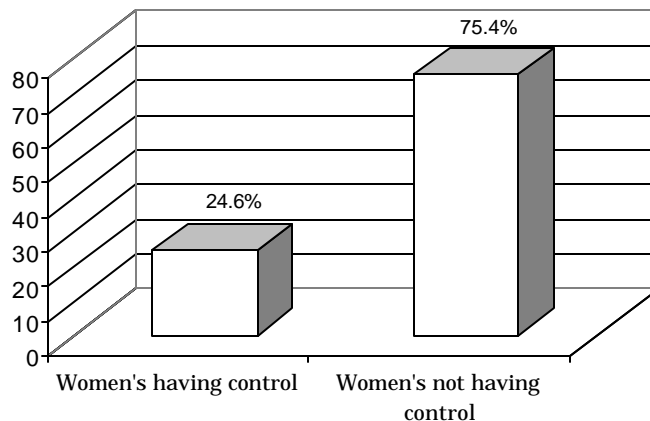
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Women's Percentage</b>
Responsibility of animals	60.4
Control on selling off of animals products	24.6

The above table also indicates that large number of women's have full responsibility of taking care and looking after domestic animals. The figures of the table show that 60.4% of women are those who are responsible for looking after domestic animals but only 24.9% of women have control on selling off of their products.

**85% women are responsible for taking full care of domestic animals but have very meager or no control on selling off of the animal's products.**

This inequality between women's responsibilities and their control is also clarified in the following bar.

### Evaluation of Women's control on selling off of the Animals Products



Women are responsible for taking full care of domestic animals but have no control on selling off of their products as indicated in the following table.

Table: 12

Groups	Mean differences	Correlation	T-Obtained
Responsibility of animals	2.2394	- 0.79	- 24.927
Animals selling	1.0698		

We see that a negative correlation has been obtained between responsibilities of animals and control on selling off of the animals products which indicate that women carry out all the responsibilities of taking good care of animals but when it comes to their selling off and earning monetary benefits, they have no control or say on it.

### Agriculture Work load on Women

Agriculture is one of the largest sectors of India and the well being of our economy and society depends on the health and prosperity of this sector. In the sheer number of people involved in agriculture, women constitute a formidable part of that workforce. As per the world economic profile, they form 50% of the world's population, contribute 60% work force, making up to 60% of official labour and contribute 50% in food-production. Traditionally, women have been playing a significant role in agriculture, integrating forester and animal husbandry with farming.

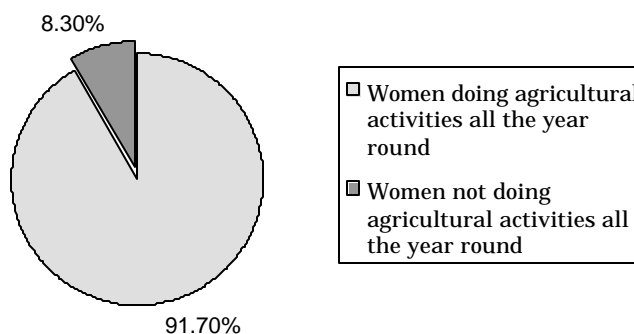
Women have dual responsibilities where, besides the reproductive activities, they also contribute in productive activities. Beyond the conventional market-oriented

narrower definition of “productive workers” almost all women in rural India today can be considered as “farmers” in some sense, working as agricultural labour, unpaid workers in the family farm enterprise, or a combination of the two.

In each and every activity of agriculture, women contribute more than 50% of their labour. The maximum number of women folks are also engaged in working as agriculture labours and their livelihood is dependent on the meagre daily wages that they earn.

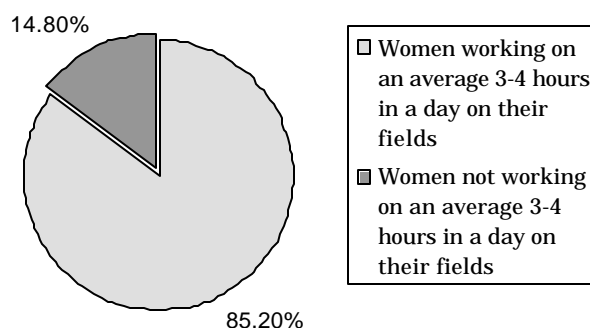
Despite the key role of women in agricultural activities their this aspect has always been undermined and neglected. This feeling of neglect of women’s contribution is deeply rooted at every dimension such as the society, political stage, government schemes and research organizations. The findings of the present survey are indicated in the following pie -diagrams.

### Evaluation of women's work contribution in agriculture all the year round



The above pie diagram shows that, normally women are engaged in agricultural activities all the year round. Only 8% of women are those who are engaged only for a few months of the year in agricultural activities and 91.7% women's are those who work in fields from July to April.

### Evaluation of women's daily work doing in agriculture



Also, it is worth mentioning that not only women's perform agricultural activities all the year round, but they also work for 4-5 hours daily on their own fields. The above pie also indicates women's agricultural activities, which are done by them.

**91.7% of women are those who significantly contributed in agricultural activities all the year round.**

Women perform not only agricultural activities but they also perform more or less all other activities related to agriculture and their contribution in these activities is shown below:

Seed Processing	Sowing	Irrigation	Weeding	Hawing	Harvesting	Threshing	Storage	Transport	Paddy Transplantation	Application of Manure	Application of Pesticides
83.9%	72.6%	64.2%	69.7%	58.6%	62.7%	54.8%	86.7%	54.9%	68.9%	42.4%	52.5%

The above table shows that 83.9% women's are involved in seed processing, 72.6% women are contributing in sowing of crops, and 64.2% women's are involved in irrigation. The table also presents that 69.7% and 58.6% women contribute relatively in weeding and sowing of crops. 62.7% women's are involved in harvesting, 54.8% women's devoted their time to threshing. 86.7% women contribute their labor and time in storage, 54.9% women's are involved in transportation of products. 68.9% of women's labor time is devoted to paddy transplantations. 42.4% women's are involved in application of manure and 52.5% women contribute their time in application of pesticides.

It is clear from the above table that women contribute a lot in carrying out agricultural activities but in the present survey it has also been tried to investigate the percentage of those women who are engaged in more than one or two agricultural activities at a time. The findings are presented in Table-14.

**Table: 14**  
**Evaluation of agriculture based other activities performed by Women in groups**

Seed processing, sowing, irrigation, weeding, hawing, harvesting, storage, paddy-transplantation, application of pesticides.	Done by 55.8% women
Seed processing, sowing, storage, application of manure, application of pesticides.	Done by 25.3% women
Sowing, irrigation, storage, paddy transplantation.	Done by 18.9% women

The above table shows that 55.8% women are engaged in maximum agricultural activities as- seed processing, sowing, irrigation, storage, paddy transplantation,

etc. 25.3% women perform application of pesticides like activities and 18.9% women are involved in sowing, irrigation, storage and paddy transplantation.

**Women have extensive workload with dual responsibility for farm and household production.**

Women's contribution in agriculture is always greater than male. Nearly 84% of all economically active women in India are engaged in agriculture and other allied activities. There are 75 million women as against 15 million men engaged in dairying and animal husbandry. Lot of women's time is also taken in household activities; about 43% of their labor time is devoted to crop production related activities like weeding, harvesting, threshing, transplanting, fertilizing, etc. Women besides the household and agricultural activities, are also contribute in other field working as agricultural labourers. Survey figures indicated in the following table.

**Table: 15**  
**Evaluation of women's work as agricultural labour**

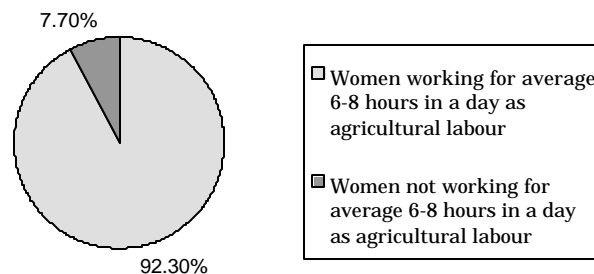
<b>Group</b>	<b>Obtained Score (%)</b>
Women working as agricultural labour	70.4

The above table shows that 70.4% of women work as agricultural labourers also. In each and every activity of agriculture, women's contribute is more than 50%. Maximum number of women folk is also engaged in working as agriculture labourers and their livelihood is dependent on the meager daily wages that they earn. Beyond the conventional market- oriented narrower definition of productive workers, almost all women in rural India today can be considered as "farmers" in some sense, working as agricultural labour, unpaid workers in the family farm enterprise, or a combination of the two.

**Women's work is getting harder and more time consuming due to ecological degradation and changing agricultural technologies.**

It was also seen that women not only perform activities on their own fields, but also work in other's fields as agricultural labourers to feed their families. Besides the survey also indicates that out of 70.4% women 92.3% women work as agricultural labourers for about 6-7 hours in a day. Their working hours also depend on the availability of work. The following pie- diagram also clarifies these findings of the survey.





Being the core producer of food, working for longer hours in the field and thereby largely contributing to the national food security of the country, the women farmers have merely remained only as agricultural labourers. Their identity has been transformed from that of farmer to labourer. Yet women's sustained contribution continues to be systematically marginalized and undervalued in conventional agricultural and economic analysis and policies, while men's contribution remains the centurial often the sole focus of attention. Women do domestic labour while men do not do so or do little of it. Men consume the products of women's domestic labour, in other words, women's work being men's property. Women even in landed families, perform a great deal of productive activities within the household managing agro processing and supervising labour.

**85.2% women's are engaged in agricultural activities for 3-4 hours daily with other household activities.**

All these factors and findings of survey conclude that women are just helping hands in agricultural activities. Women contribute their labour time not only in agricultural activities but also in performing many other agricultural based activities like Fishery, Dairying and Animal husbandry.

**70.4% women are working as labourers in the field of agriculture.**

It was also found in the survey that a large number of women perform agriculture based other activities as indicated in the following table :

**Table: 16**  
**Evaluation of agriculture based other activities performed by women**

Group	Obtained Score (%)
Women's agriculture based other activities	50.5

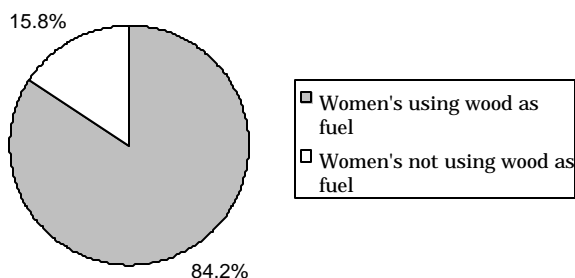
The above table shows that 50.5% women devoted their labour time to agriculture based other activities. Despite such significant contribution of women in agriculture and its allied activities, society workers, administrators typically still

assume that men are the farmers and women play only a supportive role as farmer's wives. In the Indian Himalayas, a pair of bullock's works 1064 hours, a man 1212 hours and a woman 3485 hours in a year, this figure also illustrates women's significant contribution to agricultural production. (Singh in Shiva, 1988).

**50.5% of women's are those who are also performing agriculture based other activities.**

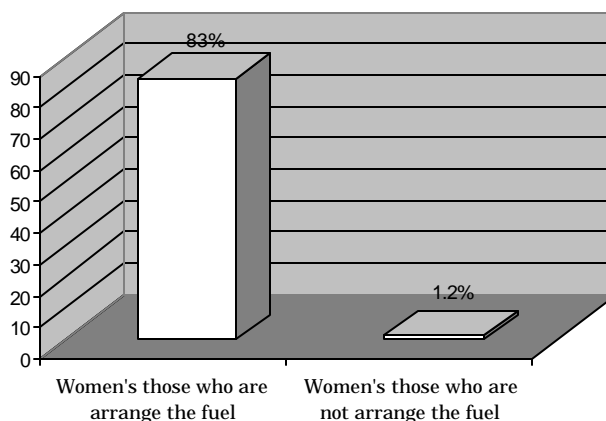
The present survey also tries to clarify that women are not only significantly contributing in agricultural activities but they have other household responsibilities also. Women have dual responsibilities where, besides reproductive activities, they also contribute in household activities. Survey figures also support this fact.

**Evaluation of Women's contribution in household activities**



**Women have an active role and extensive involvement in livestock production, forest resources use and fishery processing.**

The above pie presents that 84.2% women use wood as fuel and the above bar diagram clarifies that out of 84.2% women, 83% of women are those who arrange the fuel themselves.



**Wood in the form of fuel is used by 84.2% of women out of whom 83% of women themselves arrange the fuel wood for cooking.**

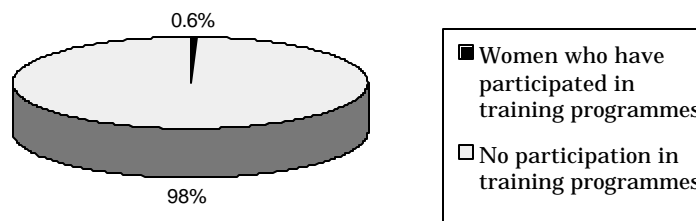
## **Women Farmers and Information Extension**

The above findings of the survey are related to women's ownership on land, women's access and control on assets and their right to take decisions in agriculture. Besides that another very significant objective of the survey was to evaluate the women's knowledge of new informations and technologies related to agriculture. To fulfil this objective many statistical analysis are computed and the major findings of the survey are presented with the help of observation table's pie and bar diagrams.

**Table: 17**  
**Women's membership in Land Management Committee of Gram Panchayat**

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Obtained Score (%)</b>
Women who are members	0.5
Women who are not members	98.10

**Agricultural extension services still do not attach much importance to reach women farmers or women on the farm.**



By observing Table: 17 its clear that women's participation in Land Management Committee of Gram Panchayat is only 0.5% and that in Government training programmes only 0.6%. So we can say that women's participation in government training programmes is almost nil.

**Only 0.6% women's participated in government training programmes.**

Women's substantial contribution continues to be systematically marginalized and undervalued in conventional agricultural and economic analyses and policies, while men's contribution remains the central, often the sole, focus of attention. Agricultural extension services still do not attach much importance to reaching women farmers or women on the farm. Policy makers and administrators typically and women play only a "supportive role" as farmers wives (Samanta, 1994).

Similar investigations conducted in selected states in India show that more than 60 percent of agricultural operations are performed by women farmers, yet the fact that "most farmers in India are women", (Shiva, 1991) is simply not reflected in extension provision or training.

Agricultural extension strategies traditionally have focused on increasing production of cash crops by providing men with training, information, and access to inputs and services. This male bias is illustrated in farmer training centers, which have been established to provide residential training on technical subjects.

**Table: 18**  
**Knowledge of Mandy Samiti**

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Obtained Score (%)</b>
Women's having knowledge of Mandy Samiti	9.10
Women's not having knowledge of Mandy Samiti	89.50

**Table: 19**  
**Women's Participation in Mandy Semite**

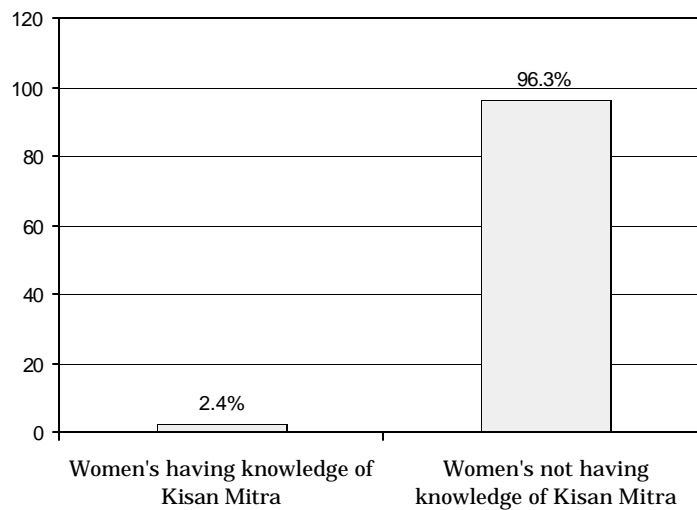
<b>Groups</b>	<b>Obtained Score (%)</b>
Women's participation in Mandy Samiti	5.30
No participation in Mandy Samiti	93.4

The above tables also show that only 9.1% women had the knowledge of Mandy Samiti out of which 5.3% women have ensured their participation on it from time to time. Most of the Mandy Samities do not provide separate washing and sleeping accommodations for men and women and do not provide facilities for the care of babies or young children. These factors may prevent women from attending the centers. Secondly, women's daily workloads do not usually allow them to be absent from home not only for residential training, but even attending short courses as this may cause insuperable problems in arranging substitute care for children or the home. And lastly even where the attendance of women is quite high they are given instruction mainly in home economics and craft subjects and not technical agriculture.

**Table: 20**  
**Women's Knowledge of Agricultural Policies**

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Obtained Score (%)</b>
Women having knowledge of Agricultural policies	7.60
Women not having knowledge of Agricultural policies	91.10

**Women's Knowledge of Kisan Mitra**



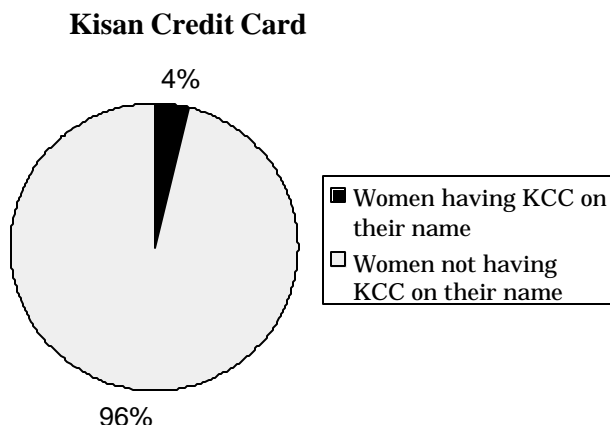
By observing the above table and bar diagram it is clear that only 7.6% women are aware about the government agriculture policies like crop insurance, etc. Survey statistics also shows that 2.4% of women are those who have knowledge of Kisan Mitra.

**9.1% women's have knowledge of Mandy Samiti out of which 5.3% women's participated in Samiti.**

Further, in the overwhelming majority of countries, extension services have been staffed predominantly by men. Only in countries such as Philippines women field staff has been deployed in sufficient numbers and with sufficient resources to become effective agents of change among women farmers. In a study conducted on the participation of women in Agriculture Extension System in Eastern U.P., in the year 2004, it was found that there were a total number of 250 Kisan Mitras who are the village level functionaries and responsible for the delivery of extension services to the needy farmers. Out of these 250 Kisan Mitras, there was only one female Kisan Mitra. The situation has worsened further as the 2006 data show that now there are 100% male Kisan Mitras. The male dominance in the

staffing structure of extension mechanisms is another important reason why extension services tend to reach only men.

In the present survey women's knowledge about Kisan Credit Card was also evaluated. The findings are presented in the following table and pie diagram.



**Table: 21**

Groups	Obtained Score (%)
Women's availing loan facilities on their KCC	3.7

The survey figures mentioned in the above table show that only 4% women are Kisan Credit Card holders. It is worth mentioning that out of these Kisan Credit Card holders 3.7% women have availed loan facilities on their Kisan Credit Card. Therefore, it is clear that given the facilities and proper information, women farmers can also draw benefits out of it to improve their efficiency in agriculture.

**Most farmers in India are women but not reflected in extension provision or training.**

A World Bank study in 1991 reveals that the assumption made by extension workers is that information within a family will be transmitted to the women by the men, which in actual practice seldom happens. The male dominated extension system tends to overlook women's role in agriculture and proves ineffective in providing technical information to women farmers.

Women in the farm sector stand to benefit from new agricultural technologies and other innovations only if they have some control over household income from land, labor and other income generating assets.

Today, women farmers do not seem to have meaningful access to new farm technologies as agricultural extension services are favorably exposed to men. Information has an important role to play in the field of agriculture but the ill-

fated women farmers are neglected in the overall information-extension mechanism. They are not considered worth enough to be included in their training and other programs. According to a study conducted on women's participation in agriculture extension system, it was found that the agricultural activities related to women are performed by old technologies inherited from their forefathers and elderly people. In the changing environment, these methods are becoming obsolete and do not fulfil the requirement, moreover, during the survey conducted for the study, it was found that women are not even aware of any government extension mechanisms or about the grass root functionaries who are responsible for organizing trainings and other information providing programs for the farmers in the villages. Women's information needs are basically centered on activities such as seed processing, sowing, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, income generation activities, etc and the extension system does not centre their trainings on these subjects. The governments training programs are ineffective as they are not need based and only supply driven. Moreover, there is no participation of women in these programs.

**The male dominance in the staffing structures of the extension mechanism is another important reason why extension services tend to reach only men.**

The figures and analysis of the survey indicate that neglect of the valuable contribution of women farmers in the field of agriculture influences their rights and interests to a very large extent. These factors also keep women away from the mainstream of development. Therefore, there is a need to make the women farmers aware of their rights and help them in realizing that they are the real hardworking 'Farmers' of our nation.

## **Women Farmers: Category wise Evaluation**

The above findings and figures of the survey clarify women's status in agriculture, women's control on agricultural assets and crop products, their right to take decisions and their knowledge of governmental policies in the field of agriculture. Besides the present survey also tries to show the differences between very marginal and small women farmers. The present study also evaluates the contribution in agricultural activities of very marginal, marginal and small women (farmer groups) independently.

For satisfying all these curiosities, in the survey, farmers were divided on the basis of their landholdings into three categories- very marginal, marginal and small farmers. These three categories were compared with the working hours of women as below:

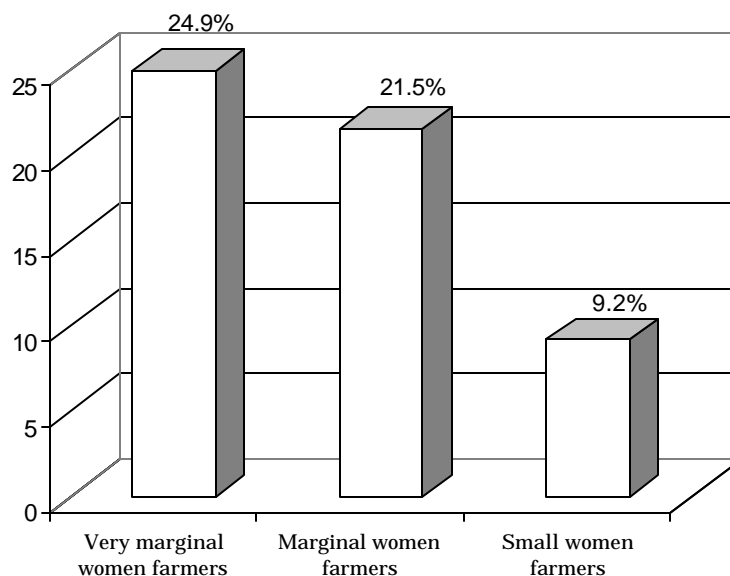
**Table: 22**

<b>Pairs</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>	<b>Correlation</b>	<b>T-Obtained</b>
Very marginal farmers- working hours	.4304 - 5.9524	- 0.022	- 43.074
Marginal farmers- working hours	1.2810-5.6762	- 0.062	- 30.361
Small farmers- working hours	2.8905- 4.6476	- 0.54	- 11.296

We see that negative correlation has been obtained between the working hours and different categories as- very marginal, marginal and small women farmer groups. It was concluded from the above table that women of very marginal families spend more time on their fields by working for 6-8 hours in a day. Since they have less landholding and limited access to resources, they themselves work for longer hours in the field. Contrary to this, those farmers who have more landholding have a negative correlation with working hours. This means that farmers with more land holding spend more time in their fields. In the nutshell, it can be said that the agricultural workload is more on very marginal and marginal farmers. The following findings also support this fact.

**52.7% very marginal and 25.8% marginal women farmers engaged in agricultural activities all the year round.**

**Evaluation of agricultural activities performed by very marginal, marginal and small women farmers**



The above bar diagram shows that 24.9% very marginal women farmers, 21.5% marginal and 9.2% small women farmers contribute in agricultural activities.



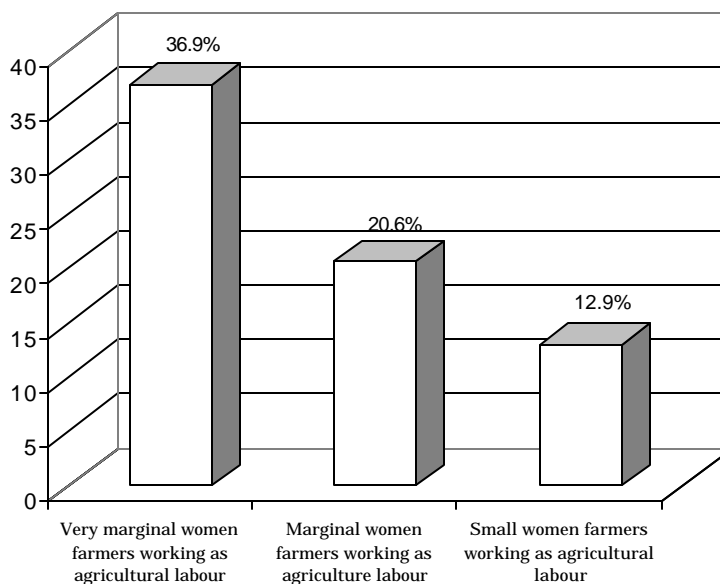
Statistics also show that very marginal and marginal women farmers are those who significantly contribute in the field of agriculture. Very marginal and marginal women farmers perform a large number of agricultural activities independently, while the small women farmers' contribution in agricultural activities is very meager or nil.

Also, the majority of the farming communities fall under the marginalized category. Marginal and small farmers constitute 74% and 16% respectively, holding 31% and 24% of total cultivable land in the state, respectively.

It was also seen that very marginal and marginal women farmers not only perform agricultural activities on their own fields, but also work in others fields as agricultural laborers to feed their families.

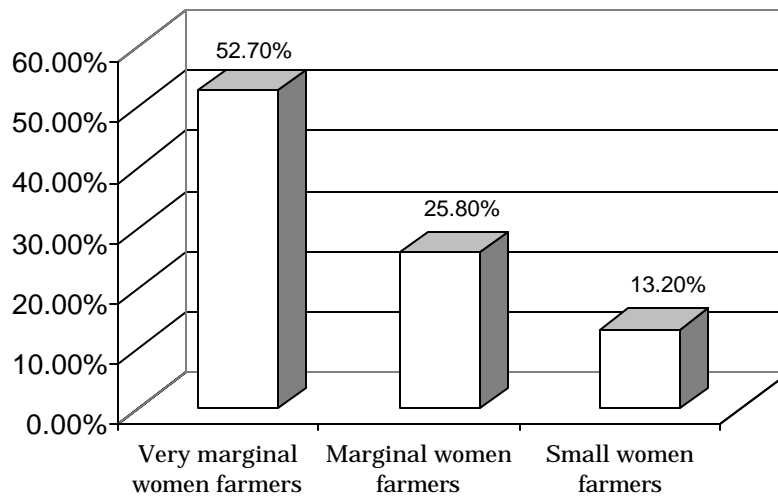
**36.9% very marginal and 20.6% marginal women farmers working in fields as agricultural labour. So it can be concluded that the agricultural workload is more on very marginal and marginal women farmers.**

**Evaluation of women's work as agricultural labour in different categories**



From the above bar diagram it is clear that 36.9% and 20.6% of very marginal women farmers and marginal women farmers work as agricultural laborers respectively, while on the other hand, only 12.9% of those small women are farmers who work in others field as agricultural laborers.

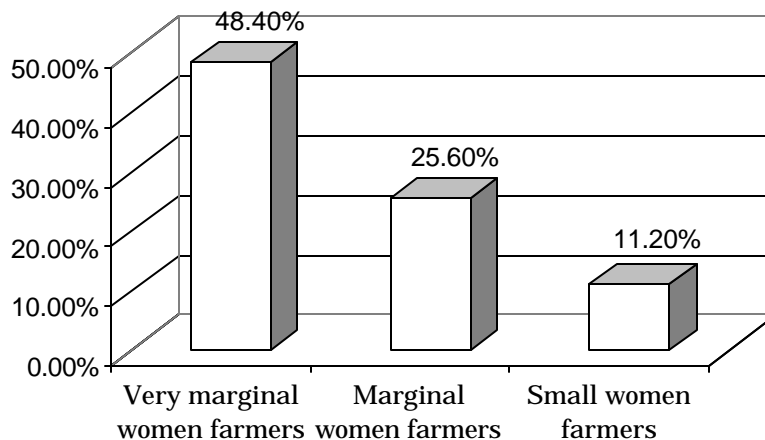
### Evaluation of Agricultural Activities performing all the year round



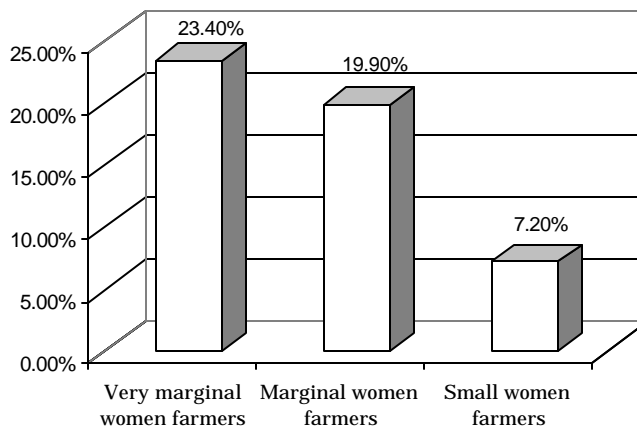
The findings of the survey clarify that 91.7% of women are those who are engaged in agricultural activities all the year round and out of these women 52.7% of women are those who are engaged in agricultural activities all the year round and belong to very marginal farmers group. 25.8% are those marginal group women farmers who are engaged in agricultural activities all the year round. While the percentage of small farmers who are engaged in agricultural activities all the year round is only 13.2%.

The findings of the present survey show that not only very marginal women farmers perform agricultural activities all the year round, but they also work for 3-4 hours daily on their fields. The above bar diagram also presents that 48.4% very marginal women farmers and 25.6% marginal women farmers work for 3-4 hours on an average daily on their fields respectively. Besides, that, only 11.2% of small women farmers work on their field's 3-4 hours daily.

### Evaluation of activities performing daily in agriculture



Normally 85.2% women work for 34 hours daily on their fields. Out of these 48.4% women represent very marginal group of farmers, 75.6% women represents marginal group of farmers and only 7.2% of women represent small group of farmers. So we can conclude that very marginal and marginal women farmers contribute more of their labor time in agricultural activities. They also work effectively in the field of agriculture. Very marginal and marginal women farmers not only perform significantly in agricultural activities but they also contribute in agriculture based other activities as indicated in the following bar diagram.



From the above diagram, it is clear is that 23.4% very marginal women farmers and 19.9% marginal women farmers, perform in agriculture based other activities and the percentage of small farmers on the other hand is only 7.2%.

**Table: 23**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Very marginal women farmers</b>	<b>Marginal women farmers</b>	<b>Small women farmers</b>
Kisan Credit Card	-937**	-762**	0-034
Loan on Kisan Credit Card	-818**	-603**	0-045
Membership of Gram Panchayat Committee	0-036	0-045	0-048
Knowledge of Mandy Semite	-595**	-603**	-715**
Participation of Mandy Semite	-689**	-669**	-597**
Knowledge of Kisan Mitra	0-031	0-049	0-034
Participation in Training Programs	0-048	0-036	0-039
Knowledge of policy	-630**	-762**	-583**
Animals selling	-638**	-647**	0-037
Crop selling	-892**	-748**	0-04

\*\* : Significant at .01 levels

\* : Significant at .05 levels

From the above table it can be analyzed that the group of very marginal and marginal women farmers is highly correlated with the knowledge of Kisan Credit Card knowledge of Mandy Samiti, participation of Mandy Samiti, knowledge of crop policies, etc.

The above findings show that very marginal and marginal women farmers have the knowledge of Mandy Samiti, crop policies and other issues related to agriculture. So we can conclude that very marginal and marginal women farmers significantly contribute in agriculture and other allied activities.

Besides that Table- 23 also shows that small women farmers are correlated with knowledge and participation of Mandy Samiti, and knowledge of crop -policies, etc. It means that small women farmers have knowledge of only these factors.

The above results indicate that very marginal and marginal women farmers are very effectively working in agriculture and other allied activities and thus have been playing an important and significant role in agriculture. We can now say that they are the real and effective farmers.

**Very marginal and marginal farmers significantly contribute in agriculture and they are the real effective farmers.**

## **■ FACTORS RESTRAINING THE NON-IDENTITY OF WOMAN AS FARMERS**

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Difficulties in determining the nature and extent of women's participation in agricultural activities have been recognized and debated since long. However, more than proper estimation of women's work, what is at issue is the recognition of their status as independent workers or farmers. Certain major factors, which limit their from getting this status, is discussed below:

### **Reproductive roles**

Women's income poverty status and hunger as well as their low status in the family and community are central causes to their low maternal health. A much lower proportion of women (45 percent), however, are involved in making decisions about their own health care. Only 23 percent of women do other work than their own housework, and less than half of these women work for cash. Only half of women who earn cash can decide independently as how to spend the money that they earn. Thirty-nine percent of working women report that their earnings constitute at least half of the total family earnings, including 16 percent who report that the family is entirely dependent on their earnings.

### **“Helping Hand” in agriculture**

Women provide one half of the labour in rice cultivation in India (Unnerve and Stanford, 1986). In the plantation sector women are the crucial laborers (Shivaram, 1988). Depending on the region and crops, women's contributions vary but they provide pivotal labor from planting to harvesting and post-harvest operations. Traditionally, women had rights to the community land, but after the land reforms, land titles were given to men, denying women's access to land. Yet women's substantial contribution continues to be systematically marginalized and undervalued in conventional agricultural and economic analyses and policies, while men's contribution remains the central, often the sole focus of attention. All these factors show that women are just 'Helping Hands' in agricultural activities.

Women are typically, and wrongly, still characterized as "economically inactive" in statistical surveys of agriculture, a result that tells us more about survey methodology than about reality (Jane lid, 1975). Agricultural extension services still do not attach much importance to reaching women farmers or women on the farm. Policy makers and administrators typically still assume (in the face of the empirical data) that men are the farmers and women play only “supportive role” as farmers' wives (Samantha, 1994).

## **Limited Mobility**

The territorial gendering of space reduces a woman's mobility and participation in activities outside the home, especially the market interaction that limits her knowledge of the physical environment and disadvantages her in seeking information on new agricultural technologies and practices, in purchasing inputs, and in selling the product.

## **Prevailing norms and prejudices**

In Indian Society where patriarchy dictates determine the status of a woman, land policies and laws do not ensure fulfilment of this right. Legal systems are reluctant to interfere with personal laws. This maintains the inequality between a man and a woman's right to property.

## **Male Migration/Left**

Migration of men over a longer duration seems to have had one fallout; it has expanded the socio-economic space for women in agriculture. This has been borne out by a large number of studies that indicate that in the absence of men, women have started performing larger roles, even outside the home space, and thereby assumed greater autonomy in decision-making than before. This apparently, seems to have happened in two sets of households. First, those that experienced a more dynamic growth in agriculture where women have shifted more to managerial tasks (like that in Punjab; or in the case of dairy development in Gujarat; or in fishery sector in Kerala; or in the hilly regions of Northern States). A second set of households represent women of the marginalized class where women have come out of their home spheres and started interacting with different categories of people within as well as outside the villages. Women in the middle strata of peasantry are likely to have experienced lesser gains in terms of an expanded socio-economic space. But, this slow and subdued process is outweighed in many cases by an increase in women's workload. In any case, as Bardhan (1985) notes if a husband has deserted, migrated or died, the issue of autonomy has little meaning when she must work for any income, however low, for the day-by-day subsistence of her family.

Migration of men, especially under distress situations, should imply more work burden for women rather than being seen as a positive development towards women's empowerment or gender equity. This is so because, empowerment does not merely come from workforce participation or autonomy in conducting a particular productive task (in absence of men); rather, it emanates from structural changes in ownership and control over productive resources on the one hand, and the loosening of the class/caste based hierarchies within society (Sharma, 1980) on the other. Thus, women's expanding role in agriculture does provide a useful starting point but the role has to be qualified by questions of work quality, class

variations in double burden, and whether productive labor works as a sufficient or even necessary condition for autonomy and voice (Bard Han, 1985).

Women's contribution to agriculture — whether it be subsistence farming or commercial agriculture — when measured in terms of the number of tasks performed and time spent, is greater than men. A study on time and energy spent by men and women on agricultural work (Batliwala 1982) found that women as compared to 31 percent by men contribute 53 percent of the total human hours per household. The remaining contribution comes from children.

### **Specified activities (no ploughing, etc.)**

The linking of agricultural activities to male dominance is described by Roy Barman (in Men on 1991) as:

***The anxiety of man to monopolize his skill in plough culture is reflected in the taboo that is observed almost all over India, against the women's handling the plough. In many societies, she is not even allowed to touch it.***

It is further observed that "whereas operations performed by men were those that entailed the use of machinery and draught animals, thereby using animal, hydraulic, mechanical or electrical energy, women almost always relied on manual labor, using only their own energy." Rice transplantations, the most arduous and labor intensive task in rice cultivation, is carried out entirely by women without the help of any tools.

"Girls learn to assist their mothers in almost all tasks, and from the tender age of 10 years participate fully in the agricultural work done by women. Boys on the other hand were seldom seen transplanting or weeding though they did help out in plugging or watering the fields."

"Not only do women perform more tasks, their work is also more arduous than that undertaken by men. Both transplantation and weeding require women to spend the whole day and work in muddy soil with their hands. Moreover, they work the entire day under the intensely hot sun while men's work, such as ploughing and watering the fields, is invariably carried out early in the morning before the sun gets too hot. Miles argues that because women's work, unlike men's, does not involve implements and is based largely on human energy, it is considered unskilled and hence less productive. On this basis, women are invariably paid lower wages, despite the fact that they work harder and for longer hours than do men."

### **Machines are for men!**

The traditional biases against women also restrict them from the use of machines in their work. It is traditionally considered that women cannot handle machines. The access to technology is limited only to men. Also, reducing workloads of

women farmer/labourers is a lower priority of research/technology development organizations.

**In contrast, a study in Uttar Pradesh reports that men "only reluctantly conceded that their womenfolk really work. The researchers in this area were repeatedly told that women, like children, simply eat food and do nothing."**

Many maintain that women's economic dependence on men impacts their power within the family. With increased participation in income-earning activities, not only will there be more income for the family, but gender inequality will be reduced. This issue is particularly salient in India because studies show a very low level of female participation in the labor force. This under-reporting is attributed to the frequently held view that women's work is not economically productive.

If all activities : including maintenance of kitchen gardens and poultry, grinding food grains, collecting water and firewood, etc. are taken into account, then 88% of rural housewives and 66% of urban housewives can be considered as economically productive.

Women's employment in family farms or businesses is rarely recognized as economically productive, either by men or women. And, the men generally control any income generated from this work. Such work is unlikely to increase women's participation in allocating family finances.

**The shift from subsistence to a market economy has a dramatic negative impact on women...**

According to Sandy Venkateswaran, citing Shiva, the Green Revolution, which focused on increasing yields of rice and wheat, entailed a shift in inputs from human to technical. Women's participation, knowledge and inputs were marginalized, and their role shifted from being "primary producers to subsidiary workers."

Where technology has been introduced in areas where women worked, men have often displaced women labourers. Threshing of grain was almost exclusively a female task, but with the introduction of automatic grain threshers, which are only operated by men, women have lost an important source of income.

Combine harvesters leave virtually no residue. This means that this source of fodder is no longer available to women, which has a dramatic impact on women's workload. So too, as cattle dung is being used as fertilizer, it is less available as a fuel for cooking.

"Commercialization and the consequent focus on cash crops have led to a situation where food is lifted straight from the farm to the market. The income accrued is controlled by men. Earlier, most of the produce was brought home and stored, and



the women exchanged it for other commodities. Such a system vested more control with the women."

## **Food Security**

Women are food producers but their own food security is a serious problem consume (rural women 1500-1800 cal/day against required 2300-3500 cal/day). They are always the last persons in the family to eat the leftovers after the whole family has eaten up to their appetite. Hence, they often get inadequate food to eat. Women also become the targets for starvation during difficult times of food insecurity during the year. The unavailability of nutritious food affects their ability to work and earn.

## **Legal Factors**

Women make up a considerable portion of the agricultural labour force in Uttar Pradesh, as men often migrate from rural areas and/or are employed in non-agricultural occupations (a phenomenon referred to as "feminization of agriculture").

Agricultural labour rights are mainly determined by labour law, and particularly by two broad groups of norms:

- ? Those concerning all workers, both male and female (minimum wage; safety and hygiene; trade union rights; etc.), and
- ? Those specifically concerning women (non-discrimination; maternity leave; "protective" legislation; etc.).

The focus here is on the latter. While some labour-law issues are relatively uncontroversial (e.g. non-discrimination), others are debated. For instance, "protective" legislation prohibiting women from working in certain occupations or at night, enacted to protect women workers, limits women's freedom to choose their occupation and may hinder their access to employment. On the other hand, where the bargaining power between employer and employee is particularly unbalanced, allowing women to choose may leave them unprotected (e.g. on night work).

Beyond labour law, other norms are also relevant. The case law on women's labour rights rarely refers directly to agricultural workers. It more commonly relates to urban occupations (secretaries, civil servants, etc.), especially in developing countries, where access to courts for rural women is usually very limited.

In examining the labour rights of women agricultural workers, the following outline will generally be followed:

- Applicability of labour legislation to the agricultural sector;
- Norms concerning access to employment (both under labour law and under family law);
- Norms concerning treatment (remuneration and other terms and conditions of employment); maternity protection;
- Norms on social security; and sanctions.

## CONCLUSION

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The figures and analyses indicate that neglect of the valuable contribution of women farmers in the field of agriculture influence their rights and interests to a very large extent. These factors also keep women away from the mainstream of development. Therefore, there is a need to make the women farmers aware of their rights and help them in realizing that they are the real hardworking 'Farmers' of our nation.

Rural women form the most important productive work force in the economy of majority of the developing nations, including India. Beyond the conventional market-oriented narrower definition of productive workers, almost all women as agricultural labor, unpaid workers in the family farm enterprise, or a combination of the two. Moreover, women are also undertaking several farm activities traditionally carried out by men as men are pulled away into higher paying employment avenues. Thus rural India is witnessing a process, which could be described as "Feminization of Agriculture". More than simply supplying labor, women possess detailed knowledge of agriculture and use of plant and plant products for food, medicine and animal feed. Women today are central to the selection, breeding, cultivation, preparation and harvest of food crops. Apart from their pivotal role in cultivation of staple crops, they are primarily responsible for the production of secondary crops such as pulses and vegetables, which are often the only source of nutrition available to their families. Women farmers also often possess unique knowledge about fish farming and handle most of the work associated with it. In Uttar Pradesh, agriculture stands as the main source of livelihood for the majority of its population. The small and marginal farmers of the state play a major role in serving the livelihood of the people and they constitute 89% of the total farming community. This particular section of the farming community also comprises of those hard working women who contribute in more than 80% of the agricultural activities. In each and every activity of agriculture, women contribute more than 50% of their labour. Maximum number of women folks are also engaged in working as agriculture labours and their livelihood is dependent on the meager daily wages that they earn.. The factual situations and grass root experiences have proved that the percentage of women involved in agricultural activities is far more than that of men and hence their contribution of this sector is more than their male counterparts. Despite women's significant contribution in agriculture, their identity is more of an agricultural labourer rather than of a farmer.

**Women contribute 8% towards food production but receive only 2-10% extension support.**

Gender justice is a wide term, which takes in its sweep every facet of life. For centuries, in fact, ever since known history, we have lived in a patriarchal and

feudal society, which has assigned women a subordinate role. Women may be respected and loved, but have not been treated equal to men. Women do most of the unpaid work. Their socio-economic dependence leads to their exploitation.

**Woman, who performs the majority of agricultural related activities becomes even beyond the imagination of being considered as a Farmer.**

These gender inequalities have the largest impact on woman farmers and it has wider detrimental impact on development. When their creative abilities and personal contributions are subjected to constant subjugation, economic progress is bound to be adversely affected.

Women's substantial contribution continues to be systematically marginalized and undervalued in conventional agricultural and economic analyses and policies, while men's contribution remains the central, often the sole, focus of attention. Women are typically and wrongly, still characterized as "economically inactive" in statistical surveys of agriculture, a result that tells us more about survey methodology than about reality. Agricultural extension services still do not attach much importance to reaching women farmers or women on the farm. Policy makers and administrators typically still assume (in the face of the empirical data) that men are the farmers and women play only "supportive role" as farmers' wives.

Today, woman farmers do not seem to have meaningful access to new farm technologies as agricultural extension services are favorably exposed to men. Information has an important role to play in the field of agriculture but the ill fated woman farmers are neglected in the overall information-extension mechanism. They are not considered worth enough to be included in their training and other programs. According to a study conducted on women's participation in agriculture extension system, it was found that the agricultural activities related to women are performed by old technologies inherited from their fore fathers and elderly people. In the changing environment, these methods are becoming obsolete and do not fulfil the requirements. It has been also seen that the legal title to land, access to it as a productive resource and the ability to exercise control over it and enjoy the fruits of one's labor on it, have on the whole been denied to women.

**Woman may be respected and loved, but have not been treated equal to men.**

This denial to a large extent is responsible for the unequal gender inequalities within society and contributes to tilting power relations of men against women. Women, who have unparalleled role in agriculture, are straight way neglected and sidelined wherever the question of money and power arises. She performs all the activities from sowing to storage in her piece of land, but when it comes to marketing of produce and financial gains, powers are snatched away from her hands.

Despite the key role of women in agricultural activities, their contribution has always been undermined and neglected. This feeling of neglect of women's contribution is deeply rooted at every dimension such as the society, political stage, government schemes, research organizations, etc.

On the basis of the discussions in previous chapters, it will be in no way wrong to say that **“the face of the Indian farmer is a woman's face”**. The woman farmer is the kingpin of agriculture, not just a secondary helper. She is also the major and significant partner in agriculture. This is the truth that prevails about woman farmers but it varies largely from the real factual situations. Contributing more than 70% in the whole process of agricultural production, the woman farmers are still kept aloof from the mainstream of development. Their labor and efforts are not recognized to be considered as a farmer. This discrimination against women is spread in all areas including agriculture as well. With the word-‘Farmer’, the picture that comes in our minds is the face of a male person having a turban on his head with a plough in his hand. The term- farmer is always related to a male person whether it has been mentioned in the Agriculture Policies or in general talking terms. In the schoolbooks and storybooks of children also, the farmer is depicted as a man ploughing his field. This is very strange because women are not recognized as, ‘farmer’.

**Today, there is a need to aware the women farmers and getting them realize that they are the real hardworking `Farmers' of our nation.**

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## COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS IN SURVEY

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### **Eastern Region**

1. Yuva Chetna Kendra, Deoria
2. Nari Kalyan Sewa Sansthan, Kushinagar
3. Shashwat, Maharajganj
4. Shohratgarh Environmental Society, Siddharthnagar
5. Bhartiya Manav Samaj Kalyan Sewa Sansthan, Shrawasti, Bahraich
6. Gramin Vikas Sewa Samiti, Basti
7. Swami Vivekanand Shiksha Evam Samaj Kalyan Samiti, Sant Kabirnagar
8. Daud Memorial Krishtian Grameen Vikas /Samiti, Gorakhpur
9. Grameen Vikas Sansthan, Hathini, Mau
10. Bhartiya Jan Kalyan Evam Prashikshan Sansthan, Gazipur

### **Middle Region**

1. Vikas Bhartiya, Unnao
2. Pani Sansthan, Lucknow
3. Manav Vikas Parishad, Barabanki
4. Paras Foundation, Faizabad
5. Nari Sansthan, Pratapgarh
6. Lok Vikas Samiti, Sultanpur
7. Gram Vikas Sansthan, Pratapgarh
8. Baba Jharkhandeshwar Mahadev Shiksha Samiti, Rai Bareli
9. Dehat, Bahraich
10. Pes, Gonda

### **Ruhelkhand Region**

1. Nav Jyoti Sewa Sansthan, Sitapur
2. Gram Swaraj Mishan Ashram, Lakhimpur
3. Vinoba Jan Kalyan Sansthan, Shahjahanpur
4. Sanjeevani Kalyan Sanstha, Peelibheet
5. Rashtriya Yuva Vikas Shodh Sanstha, Bareli
6. Swami Dayanand Saraswati Sewa Samiti, Badaun
7. Nai Padhati Berojgar Sewa Sansthan, Mainpuri
8. S.D. Kindder Garden Samiti, Kannoj
9. Arthik Vikas Evam Jan Jagran Sansthan, Farukhabad
10. Kalyanam, Hardoi

## **Western Region**

1. Disha Samajik Sangthan, Saharanpur
2. Adarsh Sewa Samiti, Muzaffarnagar
3. Grameen Samaj Vikas Kendra, Meerut
4. Society for Agro Industrial Education in India, Muradabad
5. Grameen Sarvadaliya Manav Utthan Samiti, Bijnaur
6. Adarsh Gram Vikas Samiti, Rampur
7. Social Welfare Organization, Bulandshahar
8. Madad Sanstha, Gaziabad
9. Bhartiya Grameen Vikas Sansthan, J.P. Nagar, Amroha
10. Shiksha Vikas Sabha, Aligarh

## **Vindhya-Kaimur Region**

1. Samparan Jan Kalyan, Konch, Jalaun
2. Sumitra Samaj Sevi Sansthan, Hameerpur
3. Grammonati Sansthan, Mahoba
4. Gram Unnes Sansthan, Banda
5. Adivasi Samaj Sewa Sansthan, Chitrakoot
6. Sai Jyoti Sansthan, Lalitpur
7. Aarthik Anusandhan Kendra, Mirzapur
8. Paryavaran Prodhogiki Utthan Samiti, Allahabad
9. Gram Swaraj Samiti, Sonbhadra
10. Bundelkhand Development Foundation, Jhansi