

GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN AGRICULTURE

- A Chapter written by NGRCA in Performance Budget Document of DAC for 2005-06.

In order to mainstream gender concerns in agriculture, the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation is making conscious efforts to 'engender the agricultural development process' for which appropriate measures are being initiated. Currently, there are no specific allocations earmarked for women farmers under most of the schemes of the department, however, an attempt has been made almost under each scheme to identify & promote the involvement of women in areas having better potential & scope so as to ensure women's full & equitable participation under these components/areas.

The salient gender specific interventions (Division wise) are as follows:

1. Cooperation Division: The National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI) is implementing a 'Cooperative Education and Development Programme for women' through its 45 Cooperative Education Field Projects & 4 exclusive Cooperative Education & Development Projects for women located at Shimoga (Karnataka); Berhampur (Orissa); Bhopal (M.P.) & Imphal (Manipur). The focus of these programmes besides promoting literacy; generating awareness & educating women to be organized into cooperatives is to advance loans to members for production & consumer purposes. The NCUI also monitors, guides & supervises the Cooperative Education Programme being implemented by State Cooperative Unions under which 16 State Cooperative unions are providing cooperative education to women with the help of 60 cooperative education instructors.

2. Crops Division: The schemes namely 'Technology Mission on Cotton' & 'On farm Water Management for increasing crop production in Eastern India' are neither gender specific nor have any specific allocations for women, however to enable women to take full benefits of the scheme, the States/ Implementing Agencies are being encouraged to give preference to women farmers who head the household/have land holdings in components like distribution of agriculture inputs, trainings & demonstrations.

3. Extension Division:

- (i) **Support to States for Extension Reforms** : A Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Support to States for Extension Reforms" based on Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) Model, which was successfully pilot tested under the National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) has been launched during the current year. The Scheme aims at providing decentralized and demand driven extension services through active involvement of Farmers/Women Farmers/Subject Matter Specialists/ NGOs/ Krishi Vigyan Kendras etc. A total of 218 ATMAs have been set up as against the target of 252 in the Tenth Plan. The gender concerns are being mainstreamed by mandating that 30% of resources on programmes and activities are allocated for Women Farmers and Women Extension Functionaries.
- (ii) **National Agriculture Technology Project (NATP)** : There has been a focused participation of women under the ITD component of National Agriculture Technology Project (NATP), which concluded in June, 2005. A total of 1.27 lakh of women farmers have been benefited in seven States implementing the programme through demonstrations; exposure visits; farm women training, FAC meetings and other such activities.
- (iii) **UNDP National Food Security Programme** : The agreement for UNDP-GOI Food Security programme was signed in 1998. The Sub-programmes included maize based cropping system; promotion of hybrid rice; sustainable dry-land agriculture, natural resource management along with supplementary programme for cyclone affected districts and management support for food security. Under the women specific programmes implemented in the States of Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, 2206 Farm Women Groups(FWGs) have been directly benefited and 49,976 Women Farmers have been directly trained. The programmatic interventions concluded in December 2004, however, the support was being routed through Management Support Sub-programmes up to December, 2005.

- (iv) **Extension Support to Central Institutes/DOE** : Out of 11 components of Scheme, 'Support to Central Institutions/DOE' the budget for gender purposes is allocated only under one component viz. 'National Gender Resource Centre in Agriculture (NGRCA)' wherein the expenditure is made on women specific activities mainly - undertaking macro/micro level studies; action research on critical thrust areas related to Women in Agriculture; developing Gender sensitization modules for programme implementers; arranging exposure visits of extension functionaries to women specific/pro women programmes and developing a separate portal for this Centre. The NGRCA is also housing a Gender Budgeting Cell of the DAC. The Cell has sensitized the subject matter Divisions of DAC to have Divisional Gender Coordinators identified in each Division.

In remaining components of the Scheme, consistent efforts are being made to promote both – organization of specific training programmes for women in agriculture and also improving their participation in all the training programmes.

(v) Mass Media Support to Agriculture Extension : The Central Sector Scheme "Mass Media Support to Agriculture Extension" envisages utilization of existing infrastructure of Doordarshan and All India Radio to produce and transmit programmes covering wide spectrum of topics in agriculture and allied fields for bringing the latest information and knowledge to the farming community viz. farmers/women farmers. Special programmes are being produced and telecast under the Doordarshan - Narrow Casing programmes to transfer information and technology in areas in which women farmers are pre-dominantly engaged such as vermin-compost, nursery-raising, seed treatment, floriculture, kitchen garden, gender friendly tools etc. Also under the Doordarshan – National/Regional Agricultural Programmes, the areas of women interest such as organic farming, vermin-compost, nursery-raising, seed treatment, floriculture, kitchen gardening as well as their success stories are included. The existing infrastructure of FM Transmitters of All India Radio is being used to broadcast half an hour Kisan Vani Programme daily, six days a week from Monday to Saturday, from 96 rural areas FM Stations.

These FM Stations are also producing special programmes to transfer information and technology in areas of women's involvement.

(VI) Establishment of Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business Centres (ACABC): The Scheme is open to all eligible Agriculture Graduates including women. As an outcome of the special efforts, 870 women have been trained as against the total of 9461 (9.02%). Also, 37 trained women candidates have taken up enterprises against 2729 (1.35%) ventures set up across the country.

4. Seeds Division: Specific financial targets have been fixed for women farmers under the Central Sector scheme titled 'Development & Strengthening of Infrastructure facilities for Production & Distribution of Quality seeds' under its following components

- Seed Village Scheme
- Human Resource Development
- National Seeds Research & Training Centre (Varanasi)
- Use of Bio Technology in Agriculture & Public Awareness Campaign.

The implementing agencies have been advised to allocate specific amount for women farmers.

5. Horticulture Division: Women as a work force contribute to the coconut cultivation & industry especially in the making of coir which is widely used. Keeping this in view, under the scheme 'Expansion of Area under Coconut' being implemented by Coconut Development Board, conscious efforts are made to extend the benefits of the scheme to women farmers. During 2004-05, in Kerala state, 228 women beneficiaries out of a total of 945 were women (24.12%) while in 2005-06, their number is 231 out of a total of 1036 (22.29%).

Under the schemes of National Horticulture Board namely 'Development of Commercial Horticulture through Production & Post Harvest Management' & 'Technology Development & Transfer for Promotion of Horticulture', 174 & 107 women have been benefited during 2004-05 & 2005-06 respectively.

6. International Cooperation Division: FAO Regional Office for Asia & Pacific decided to honor a model female farmer who had

done an exemplary work in the field of 'Heritage/ Conservation Agriculture' on the occasion of World Food Day 2005. the Division has nominated a model female farmer for this purpose.

7. Machinery & Technology Division: A number of agricultural implements and hand tools suitable for farm women have been developed by Research & Development organizations under ICAR. These gender friendly tools are being promoted through Macro Management scheme. The feedback from the State Govts. indicate that 20,380 women farmers have been benefited under this scheme during 2004-05.

Under the Central Sector Scheme 'Promotion and Strengthening of Agricultural Mechanization through Training, Testing and Demonstration', the skill development aspect among women farmers has been adequately taken care of by earmarking 10% of the funds and fixing up of separate physical targets for women. Under the 'Training and Testing component', Farm Machinery, Training and Testing Institutes(4) have organized short duration training & testing programmes – both institutional & On site for farmers in the areas of selection, operation, maintenance and management of agricultural implements. A total of 309 women have been trained against the target of 400 during 2004-05 and 217 against a target of 500 during 2005-06.

Though, there are no specific targets for women farmers under 'Demonstrations', however, the women farmers have been actively made to participate in the demonstrations (app.3000) organized during 2004-05. During 2005-06, 961 demonstrations have been organized in the farmers' fields including the fields of women farmers. The State Govts. have been requested to earmark 10% of the funds for women and furnish their reports separately on gender disaggregate basis.

Under a new component 'Outsourcing of Training' during the 10th Plan to train large number of farmers in nearby places', despite no separate target being for training of women. The State Govts. have been requested to earmark 10% of the funds under this component for training of women farmers.

8. Integrated Nutrient Management (INM) Division: As per the guidelines of 'National Project on Organic Farming (NPOF)', there are no gender specific activities/allocation. However, 25% seats for training of farmers on organic farming have been reserved for women farmers.

9. Technology Mission on Oilseeds & Pulses (TMOP) Division:

There is no separate provision for gender based budgeting. However, under the NOVOD Board's schemes on 'Integrated Development of Tree Borne Oilseeds', the implementing agencies have been advised to ensure maximum participation of women in the programme.

10. Plant Protection Division: Under the scheme 'Strengthening and Modernization of Pest Management Approach in India', there are no separate provisions/budget allocated for women. However, under the sub-component 'Integrated Pest Management', the Farmers' Field Schools are organized in collaboration & support of the State Govt. on different crops in which women farmers actively participate in the training activities / programmes.

11. Natural Resource Management (NRM) Division: Under the 'Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSCA)', there is no specific component exclusively allocated for women farmers, however, under the scheme 17.5% of the total allocation is earmarked for rehabilitation component which enable the beneficiaries to take up agriculture & allied activities such as Production of short duration crops like banana, papaya, etc.; Animal Husbandry/ Piggery/ Poultry/ Duckery/ Purchase of milch cows ; Pisciculture ;Sericulture – Plantation of mulberry, Supply of mulberry seed worm ; & House hold activities --Basket/Rope/Mats making, Tailoring, embroidery, Carpentry, black smithy, Small house hold food processing units, Cottage industries and many other activities suitable to the locality with the approval of the DWDC.

These activities are mainly done by women.

12. Rain fed Farming System (RFS) Division: Under the 'National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPRRA)' which has been subsumed with Macro Management scheme for funds, there is an active participation of women in different activities. In a Watershed Development Team (WDT), one out of four members is a women; Each Watershed Committee has two women members to facilitate active participation of women in the programme. The women oriented Users Groups(UGs) are formed at each watershed. Also, for income generating activities, exclusive women SHGs as well as general SHGs with adequate participation of women are formed.

13. Agricultural Marketing Division: Under the scheme 'National Institute of Agricultural Marketing', the provisions have been made to organize training programmes for women in the field of modern

marketing system, export of horticulture produce from north-east, orientation of SHGs for women during 2005-06 and 2006-07. While, it is not possible to make women specific allocations in view of the scheme being demand driven, however, as and when the project proposals from women entrepreneurs are received, they are processed on priority basis.

14. Agriculture Census Division: The 'Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Agriculture Census' is not a development oriented programme & involves only statistical operations. As such, it has not been possible to fix any target/allocation for women in the scheme. However, the Division has collected, collated & documented the data on 'operational land holdings and land use pattern' on gender disaggregate basis in its Agriculture Census conducted during 1995-96.

15. Macro Management Division: The Centrally Sponsored Scheme-supplementation / Complementation of States efforts through Work Plans (Macro Management) is a step towards achieving decentralization in pursuance of restoring primacy of states in agricultural development planning. Since, the scheme is being implemented through the Work Plan being prepared by the states themselves, there is no separate allocation of funds from DAC. However, some states themselves have provided funds for the benefits of women.

16. IT Division: The IT Division's scheme "strengthening / promoting agricultural information systems" is inherently gender neutral. However, it is anticipated that proportionate benefits accrue to women employees/users. The following benefits accrue to women through the scheme

- Women employees at the Headquarters as well as in the field offices of the Department get computer facilities in proportion to their strength among all employees, which is about 15 percent.
- Similarly, the benefits from websites / portals, kisan call centers etc. flow to women.

Further, to encourage flow of benefits of this scheme to women farmers / beneficiaries, the following initiatives are being taken within the overall framework of the scheme:

- It is proposed to include in the guidelines scheme issued to the states under AGRISNET Scheme that adequate benefits of the scheme should flow to women farmers/ beneficiaries.
- In training courses, women participation to be encouraged. It would also be ensured that they are represented in training courses relating to IT at least in proportion to their number among employees.

