



## Empowering Women for Sustainable Change in India's Climate Change and Agri-food System

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Gender equality and climate change are two urgent global challenges with far-reaching consequences for long-term development. Women have an especially important role in agri-food systems since they not only contribute considerably to agriculture and food production but are also disproportionately affected by climate change and gender inequities. Women's empowerment in the agri-food system is critical for attaining long-term sustainability and resilience in India, a country heavily reliant on agriculture and suffering with the effects of climate change. This article explores into the complex interplay between gender, climate change, and the Indian agri-food system, examining the inequality faced by women, their roles in sustainable agriculture, and the necessary steps to empower women to drive sustainable change in the face of climate challenges. Gender equality in India's changing climate and agri-food systems is a multifaceted issue that needs an integrated approach.

Here are some crucial ideas and data on establishing gender equality in various areas are discussed. First and foremost inequalities that women in rural India do not have access to resources such as land, finance, technology, and education. Women hold less than 13.96% according to the 2015-16 data of agricultural land in India, according to statistics from the National Sample Survey (NSS). There is huge income disparities as women contribute heavily to agricultural operations, yet they usually confront financial differences. According to an FAO research, if women farmers had equal access to productive resources as males, agricultural production might possibly improve by 20-30%, lowering the number of hungry people by 12-17%. Due to their responsibilities as primary caretakers and suppliers of family food security, women are disproportionately affected by the effects of climate change. Extreme weather events and shifting agricultural patterns caused by climate change frequently increase their effort and have an impact on their livelihoods. It is critical to improve women's access to education and training in sustainable farming methods. According to UNESCO figures, only around 65% of women in India are literate, compared to 82% of men. Women's engagement in decision-making processes at all levels, including policymaking and community initiatives, is critical for attaining gender equality in climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. Closing the digital gender gap is critical to ensuring women's access to information and technology that may boost agricultural output and resistance to climate change. Data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) suggest that women had less access to mobile phones and the internet than males. Women commonly possess traditional knowledge and adaptation practices that can considerably contribute to climate resilience. It is advantageous to encourage the incorporation of their

expertise into adaptation and mitigation initiatives. To address these difficulties, tailored policies and actions focused at empowering women in agriculture and climate action are required. Implementing land reforms and ensuring women's land rights, providing financial services and assistance to women farmers. Gender-responsive climate-smart agriculture techniques are being promoted, need of investing in rural women's education and skill-building initiatives. Ensure equal involvement and representation of women in climate change and agriculture decision-making processes.

### **Conclusion**

Achieving the empowering women is very critical due to climate change and its harmful effects on Indian agri-food systems. We can leverage their revolutionary potential to solve climate change concerns and promote sustainable agriculture by providing them with the required knowledge, skills, and assistance. It is critical to acknowledge women's unique contributions and to provide equal opportunities and representation in decision-making processes. By empowering women and fostering their leadership in the agri-food sector, we can create a more sustainable future. Women have an important place in Indian agri-food system but sometimes neglected role in India's agri-food system, contributing to sustainable agriculture and food security. However, they confront several restrictions and problems that prevent them from fully participating and being empowered. It is critical to address gender gaps and offer equitable access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making processes for women. We can harness women's potential as change agents in tackling climate change and attaining sustainable development objectives by investing in their education, capacity building, and supporting women-led initiatives. Empowering women in India's agri-food system not only promotes gender equality, but it also improves resilience, food security, and the country's agricultural sector's overall sustainability. Therefore, it is time to acknowledge and unleash women's enormous potential in constructing a sustainable future for India.