

Gender Roles in Agriculture: Empowering Women Farmers

*Anisha Sonny

School of Agriculture, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab, India

*Corresponding Author's email: annuts2004@gmail.com

Women play a big role in farming all over the world. You know, especially in places like developing countries. But they usually don't get much access to land or credit or tech stuff. Or even extension services and markets. And decision-making? That's often out of reach too. All that holds back their own lives. Plus, it messes with how well farms actually produce things. Giving women farmers more say isn't just about fairness. It's key for food security and rural growth and sustainable stuff too.

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Introduction

Farming is still huge for jobs, food and money in lots of places. Women put in tons of work there. Like in labour for crops or handling livestock processing food and more. But even with all this, they don't get the credit they deserve compared to guys anyway. Unequal shot at land, credit, tech, training, markets, not much say in big decisions and they end up with way more unpaid chores. Take India as an example. Women make up a big chunk of farm workers. But they're barely in charge or in fancy agribusiness jobs. A 2025 report from Godrej Agrovet and IIM Ahmedabad says women are about 64.4% of India's farm workforce. Yet only 6-10% land spots in top agribusiness companies. The article covers a few things. First, what women actually do in farming. Second, what's blocking their power-up. Third, some wins that show it's possible. And fourth, ideas for policies and on-the-ground moves to help women farmers get ahead.

Key Section

Role of Women in Agriculture: Participation & Functions

- Women handle all sorts of jobs on farms. Planting seeds. Weeding fields. Harvesting crops. Then post-harvest work. Caring for animals and dairy. Managing seeds. Dealing with water. And plenty more. In South Asia, over 70% of working women tie into agrifood systems. That's production. Processing. Trading. A lot of it stays informal. Or unpaid even.
- In India, the 2021-22 Periodic Labour Force Survey shows almost 63% of farm workers are women. That's higher than in factories or other areas.
- Still, they don't own much. Or control it formally. Women hold just a tiny bit of the land. In rural India, 73.2% of women work in farming. But they own only 12.8% of the land holdings.

Barriers to Empowerment

- Barriers come from all sides; Structural ones, Cultural, Legal even Economic too. They keep women from gaining power in farming.
- Land ownership and tenure hit hard. Like we said, women own so little land. No titles mean no credit or government help.

- c) Access to credit, inputs, technology? Women lack collateral a lot. They don't know finance well. Banks bias against them. Seeds, fertilizers, machines stay out of reach. Extension services pick men more often.
- d) Informality and invisibility play in. Women's work looks like chores. Unpaid or informal. Stats miss it. No pay. No policy support.
- e) Time constraints and double burden wear them down. Farming plus home stuff, kids, cooking and fetching water leaves no time for learning or new ideas or even rest.
- f) Cultural norms and decision-making power limit everything. Old gender rules cut mobility; Voice at home or in the community and even getting out in public.

Evidence of Success & Good Practices

Some initiatives and data indicate how empowerment is possible, and beneficial:

- a. The Godrej Agrovet / IIM Ahmedabad report (2025) underscores that despite high participation, women are under-represented in top agribusiness. It highlights opportunities around training, access, workplace inclusion.
- b. In South Asia more broadly, the FAO report “The status of women in agrifood systems” shows that while many women are engaged in the value chain, many work informally; interventions that improve women’s access to inputs, markets, and voice have positive impacts.
- c. Country or regional case studies such as India’s various self-help group (SHG) models, collective marketing, women’s cooperatives, vocational training have shown gains in income, decision-making, and visibility (though specific data in this article are limited by available sources).

Strategies and Policy Recommendations

To empower women farmers, a combination of institutional, legal, technological, social, and economic strategies is necessary. Below are key recommendations:

- a) Secure land rights first. Push joint titles or recognize women's use rights. Make registration easier. Policies should cover inheritance for women.
- b) Better credit and finance access. Microloans with low collateral. Training on money for women. Government subsidies and guarantees.
- c) Gender-sensitive extension. Hire more women agents. Trainings must be at right time. Places must be in such a manner that women can reach. Tools and machines that cut labour must be established. Fit women's needs. Get them on mobile apps for advice, weather and prices.
- d) There must be technology to ease physical work for women.
- e) Market access and value add. Help start women-led groups. Co-ops. Train on processing, packaging. Link to markets including digital ones.
- f) Community talks to change views on women's roles. Put women in leadership. Get men talking about sharing home work.
- g) Gather data split by gender. Track ownership, decisions and results. Schemes with clear gender goals should be established.

Conclusion

Women matter a ton in farming, not just labour but knowledge, care and in new ideas too. Still, legal stuff, social norms and money issues hold many backs. Empowering them goes beyond equity. It ramps up farm output, food security and sustainable goals. Data from India and South Asia backs it. So, policymakers, groups, businesses, communities need to build setups that let women farmers thrive.

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