

women workers in the country continue to be associated with agriculture. What we see is the 'Feminisation of Agriculture'! Managing the enterprise of farming is becoming the sole responsibility of women when men migrate out in search of opportunities elsewhere. And women have to do without some important support services from the government (since most of such support is linked to land ownership)! However, in commercial, corporate-intensive, market-driven agriculture, it is the man who is connected to both input and output markets and gets to have a greater say.



Evidence exists to show that if all things are kept equal between men and women farmers in terms of support systems, women's farming is in fact more productive than men's! Women farmers need to have equality in this domain not just for instrumental reasons around poverty, food security, etc., but because these are their rights!

### Work of MAKAAAM

- Advocacy for recognition of women as farmers as per the definition of the National Policy for Farmers, 2007
- Policy advocacy for women farmers' individual and community rights and entitlements---land, commons, water, markets, credit and investment, and social protection
- Evidence building and documentation of best practices



- Recognise and promote the plurality of knowledge systems, including traditional knowledge and ecological approaches of women farmers, towards achieving food sovereignty, gender equality and social justice
- Organising, training and capacity building of women farmers.

### RECOGNISE ● EMPOWER ● SUPPORT

*If you are a woman farmer yourself, or the leader of a women's collective, or an individual or an organisation keen on securing women farmers' rights, and would like to join MAKAAAM, please do write to us.*

## MAKAAAM

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# MAKAAAM

## Mahila Kisan Adhikaar Manch

(Forum for Women Farmers' Rights)



## MAKAAM

MAKAAM or Mahila Kisan Adhikaar Manch (Forum for Women Farmers' Rights) was created in April 2014 as a nationwide alliance of networks, campaigns, movements, organisations, people's collectives and individuals who advocate for the Right to Livelihoods of women farmers<sup>1</sup>, particularly dalits, adivasis, single women, differently-abled and displaced. It is guided by principles of feminism and sustainability for economic, environmental and social justice. MAKAAM strives to ensure women's identity as farmers, and that their rights over resources (including land and other natural resources) are realised. The mission of MAKAAM is to visibilise women farmers, especially smallholder marginalised women, with a development vision led by social justice, plurality of knowledge systems and sustainability driven by ecological approaches. It endeavours to create and secure rights over productive livelihood resources (land in particular) as well as entitlements over a variety of support systems, with equal participation of women in decision-making in various institutions, starting family upwards, to ensure empowered, self-reliant and sustainable women's livelihoods. MAKAAM works through state-level networks, supported by Regional Facilitation Teams and a broad-based National Facilitation Team.

### Why MAKAAM ?

All over India, an overwhelming majority of female rural workers are engaged in agriculture in various capacities. At the national level, 65.1% of female workers are in the

<sup>1</sup>MAKAAM adopts the definition of Farmers as incorporated in the National Policy for Farmers in India (2007). 'A person actively engaged in the economic and/or livelihood activity of growing crops and producing other primary agricultural commodities and will include all agricultural operational holders, cultivators, agricultural labourers, sharecroppers, tenants, poultry and livestock rearers, fishers, beekeepers, gardeners, pastoralists, non-corporate planters and planting labourers as well as persons engaged in various farming related occupations such as sericulture, vermiculture and agro-forestry. The term will also include tribals engaged in shifting cultivation and in the collection, use and sale of minor and non-timber forest produce'. National Policy for Farmers, 2007. Ministry of Agriculture, Govt of India. <http://www.agricoop.nic.in/NPF/npff2007.pdf>



agriculture sector (as compared to only 49.8% of male workers) contributing significantly more women days to the sector than men days across crops and regions. It is they who are toiling day in and day out in the fields, carefully nurturing the seeds that they have sown so that we all get the food that we eat and survive on. Most of the work that they do is in fact laden with drudgery and long hours of labour. While women work the hardest in this sector, they lack recognition as farmers, and when we talk about farmers, it is mostly men who are described as the Anna Daatas (breadwinners). Often, women involved in farming do not identify themselves as farmers either! They also, like the rest of the world, look at the men in the family who own the land as the 'farmer'.

### Women in Indian Agriculture

- ❧ 48.9% of the total workers in India were in agriculture (62.8% female and 43.6% male), according to NSS 68th Round (2011--12)
- ❧ Census 2011 says 65.1% of female workers depend on agriculture, either as cultivators or agricultural labourers, compared to 49.8% of male workers
- ❧ 14.98 crore female workers are in agriculture (cultivators: 3.60 crore and agricultural labourers: 6.16 crore, while the rest in fisheries, forest produce collection, animal husbandry)---that is almost 150 million women!

- ❧ Percentage share of women in total operational land holdings: 12%
- ❧ Women do not own any land in 89% of rural households
- ❧ 60—75% of agriculture-related work is done by women
- ❧ Gender segregated wage gaps exist – Women's wage is only 50—75% of men.

Women farmers' knowledge and skills and work in allied activities such as animal husbandry, fishing, agricultural processing, horticulture, poultry, sericulture, etc. provide for sustainable agriculture and food security.

While it is apparent that women farmers are critical to agriculture in the country, and agriculture is central to most rural households' livelihoods, yet women farmers remain invisible and unsupported, despite their significant contribution to farming and food security. This is primarily because of land ownership resting in the hands of men in our patriarchal society. The systems of agricultural research, training and extension, marketing, risk insurance, credit and other supports systematically ignore women.

This rampant neglect of women farmers is despite the so-called economic growth and opportunities that this country has witnessed; opportunities for women in other sectors have not seen any significant opening and most

