

# Women and farmers- STATUS

*State of Uttarakhand*

# Features

- Himalayas: *highly vulnerable to weather changes and impact*
- Earthquake prone
- Conditions of living quite difficult –fragility, inaccessibility, remoteness,
- Middle Himalayan ranges – height ranging from 1500m-2700m
- Agriculture –main source of livelihood (60%)
- Female agri workers- 83% in contrast to male agri workers- 43% (2001)
- % age of female agricultural workers to total agricultural workers : 51% (higher than National average: 38 %)
- Traditional knowledge has helped people weather the changing conditions

# Contribution of women

## Women are farmers

- Agriculture- land, forest, animals , water
- 80-90% of the farming activities carried out by women. Ploughing and harrowing : done by men only
- Increasing migration leading to an increase in women headed HH
- Workload of women is very high
- By default – farming mostly organic , but cash crop moving in , in many places
- Main holders and practitioners of traditional knowledge
- With cash crop- agricultural inputs and information is coming from market/Instt and accessible to men mostly

# Land and women

## LAND

- 87% of the land is rainfed
- Majority farmers are small , marginal land holders
- Land: scattered , fragmented- scale of economies get affected
- Fertile land getting lost : landslides, soil erosion, getting swept away in floods
- Common land- forests, pasture land being taken away from community control in the name of development
- Displaced people have not been rehabilitated since..... As there is no land for distribution

# Agriculture

- Organic state : Many schemes promoting the use of chemicals
- Replacing traditional crops, varieties, mixed cropping, rotational cropping system practices with monoculture, chemical intensive farming- less climate resilient, food and nutritionally insecure
- Increasing Human- Wildlife conflict resulting into decreased production
- IMPACT : Dependence on market increasing, reduced food and nutrition security

# Land rights and women

- In reality, very small percentage of women are land owners.
- In cases of land distribution too after displacements - only the name of head of the family (who is mostly a male member ) has been included, despite recommendations.
- Since 1964, land redistribution and consolidation hasn't happened: present status of land use (lack of data) is unknown and so is the planning

# Forest Panchayats

## Forests

- New Niyamavali (2006): women have 50 % reservation
- Provision for 100% women in van panchayat council now . Otherwise Niyamavali is mostly gender blind
- Women's representation is mostly token , do not attend meetings – mechanisms not there to involve more and more women, their skill and capacity building
- Govt forests : mostly pine plantations : commercial purpose mostly
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# Climate change

- Weather pattern –changes quite frequent now
- Reduced water availability and quality, forest degradation, growth of plants affected, increase in pests and diseases
- Adverse impact on production and productivity
- Disasters – severe loss of land, seeds, crops, property, animals and so on.
- Vulnerability and impact of CC getting aggravated due to plans and policies



# Policies , prog

- Forest Rights Act- lack of political will to implement (van gujjars, van tongia are being displaced from their habitated areas )
- Agricultural policy – recognises women’s role and contribution
  - No mention of how it can be done . Mostly gender blind
- Since 2011, programmes do not reflect this realisation
- Govt programmes contradict each other- high level of confusion – promote organic and also chemical intensive farming
- Lopsided development: concentrated in the plains

# IMPACT

- High level of workload on women
- Increasing dependence on markets
- Women further marginalised and vulnerable - no land rights , highly limited access and control over other production assets and resources
- Very little time towards themselves- food, health, hygiene and sanitation , awareness and skill building
- Administrative and social factors prevent women from enjoying legal rights over land where due
- Adverse impact on Food and Nutrition security , food sovereignty
- Undermining of women's knowledge and wisdom
- High level of anemia and malnutrition amongst women and girls
- Aggravating the already severe food , nutrition insecurity

# Recommendations

- Development policy – natural resources, culture, people’s knowledge based
- Biodiversity based ecologically sound, sustainable agriculture-adaptive and mitigative strategies-potential to mitigate global warming impacts thru C absorption.
- Promotion of millets(climate resilient, nutritious) –production, consumption
- Mixed , broad leaved species in forests sequestration
- Traditional nutritious food should be part of food security programmes
- Forest Rights Act should be strictly implemented
- Research to make post harvesting activities –less laborious, time taking and more efficient
- Gender mainstreaming of policies , programmes is crucial to increase women’s political participation
- Proactive strategies need to be made to increase women’s access to extension, credit, trainings etc

- Land rights : Uttar Pradesh Zamindari Abolition Act must be revised and both ,the son and daughter must get equal right as heir.
- Land consolidation should be initiated again
- Purchase of agricultural land by women should tax free.
- For strict implementation of the Law granting the right to land to widow and widow daughter-in-law , after the death of their husbands , punishment procedure should be introduced strictly for defaulters.
- special efforts need to be made for capacity building of women in forest panchayats –location, opportunity, time etc
- Special Awareness Campaigns should be carried out to sensitise people about this land right and its effective implementation
- For Indira Awaaz Yojna it should be made mandatory to have woman as a beneficiary once piece of land has been transferred to her , in her name. Such a transfer should be immediate and tax free.

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