

## Women as agents of environmental change

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### General Note



Article is recommended to print as color version in recycled paper. *Save Plants, Save Climate.*

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### Outline of the Presentation

- **Creating Women as Active Agents of Environmental Change combating Climate change**
- **Sensitizing them towards agriculture practices in the context of Climate Change**
- **Training and Capacity building as community of practitioners**
- **Communciation approaches for knowledge multiplication**
- **Success stories from India**


## WOMEN AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

Women serve as agents of social change and development through their unique roles in the family and child care, agricultural labour, food and nutrition security, health and disaster risk reduction.


The promotion of their engagement and leadership is critical to addressing climate change in equitable, healthy, and sustainable ways.

Integrating women's empowerment as well as food and nutrition security and health in adaptation strategies is urgently needed to ensure the well-being of communities under a changing climate.

Based on the recognition that empowering women is not only a matter of equity and justice, but also a key pathway to achieving healthy, resilient and sustainable communities and societies



## NEED FOR CREATING A GROUP OF WOMEN AMBASSADORS AS AGENTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

- Building on women's knowledge and experience creates opportunities for the whole community.
  - Promoting equitable access to adaptation knowledge for women and men is a key practical step for inclusive adaptation
  - Investing in women brings economic returns for smallholder farmers
  - Supporting women's equal voice in decision-making about adaptation strategies is needed in the home, in the community and at the national and global levels
  - It is important to tackle women's workloads, which are often greater than that of men's and tend to increase as a result of climate change.
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- Major issues that particularly affect women farmers are land ownership, shrinking natural resources and their deteriorating quality – especially in areas most affected by climate change.

To stem such trends, pro-women and pro-youth agricultural policies must be developed to support the entrepreneurial vision of women and young farmers.

Indigenous environmental knowledge especially that of women when blended with modern techniques and technology could contribute to a more effective adaptation responses.

To develop this, they need to gain self-confidence, which comes from having access to productive assets, and to knowledge and skills.

They also need the support of men.



- Women's capacity to address health, clean water and nutrition risks resulting from climate change must be enhanced through greater gender equity.
- This involves improved access to education, information, land, technologies, credit and social protection, as well as increased participation in climate change decision-making.
- Facilitating access to maternal and child care and nutrition services reduces hunger and malnutrition among women and children in the face of climate-related hazards and climate change impacts.



### SUPPORTING WOMEN TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE

- Sensitising the women group of ambassadors in agriculture
- Capacity Building and Training Programmes
- Empowering women with adequate hardware and software to enable them to transform knowledge into actions
- Women farmers as key science communicators
- Create a community of practitioners

### SENSITISING THEM TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

- Empowering women is a cornerstone of fostering adaptation and addressing the impacts of climate change on nutrition security and health.
- Facilitators and rural communities to develop sensitization programmes to raise the level of awareness, knowledge, better access to resources, and appropriate technologies, training and other support services to create a sustainable society.

## CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Capacity building is critical to all facets of the discussion to promote further communication among of women farmers

- Women need access to the latest technological information regarding agriculture, production and coping with climate change, as well as information technologies to access this information.
- They need to acquire entrepreneurial and marketing skills; confidence building; leadership skills; and the ability to negotiate and discuss with authorities and negotiation.
- They also need to understand the policy issues that affect them as farmers.

## SKILL DEVELOPMENT

More specifically:

- Training should be targeted and decentralized so that women can be empowered to carry out their own training.
- Capacity building should include exchange visits, farmer-to-farmer exchanges, and visits to research intuitions and labs.
- Training of young women farmers as communicators
- Create a Community of Practitioners for mutual learning and sharing on a knowledge platform

## NETWORKS, FORA

Establishing supportive networks for women and men serves as reinforcement for all efforts made to promote women farmers as agents of change.


- Networks also provide a forum for launching new platforms for women to convene and organize.
- Women-only fora (such as women-only organizations or women's structures within mixed organizations) to be created where women can meet, deliberate and discuss, since in many contexts it is easier for women to talk when they are among themselves.
- The importance of providing assistance to the legalization of organizations needs to be highlighted, since women's groups are often informal.

## COMMUNICATION APPROACHES


Communication strategies must build on community knowledge of local conditions and embed the following:

- Assessing the situation and vulnerability of village-level threats
- Undertaking vulnerability analysis by women group of ambassadors
- Preparing the communities
- Developing a plan for adaptation to climate change
- knowledge dissemination
- Monitoring activities by women group/ communities

## A MULTI-PRONGED APPROACH TOWARDS KNOWLEDGE MULTIPLICATION

- A combination of traditional and modern communication methods can help women group to improve the quality and outreach of their programmes with women.
  - Participatory communication skills and methods and establish a climate of confidence and trust. They need to learn how to promote dialogue among women farmers, help them identify their needs and strengthen their self-confidence.
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## A MULTI-PRONGED APPROACH TOWARDS KNOWLEDGE MULTIPLICATION

- Participatory communication methods can improve the linkages among women farmers, extensionists, researchers, policy-makers and planners, thereby fostering the exchange of information and knowledge and ensuring that development activities correspond to the real needs of rural communities.
  - Packaging of need-based scientific communication in regional languages and make them available at local level through different communication platforms
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## COMMUNICATION APPROACHES

- Mass Media
  - Radio
  - Community Radio
  - Television
  - Audio Visual Media
  - Krishi Mahotsav
  - Participatory approach-women networks, face-face interaction
  - Folk media, drama, puppetry
- ICT
  - Multimedia CD on compendium of best practices
  - Digital knowledge platform
  - Information Clearing House
- Mobile Technology
- Village Pay Phone
- Rural Tele centers

## FEW SUCCESS STORIES FROM INDIA

- Beej Bachao Andalon , TERI , Uttarakhand
- Tribal Women Self Help Groups of Adilabad, Andhra Pradesh were heard at climate policy forum at 8<sup>th</sup> session of conference of Parties to the United Nation Framework on Climate change, held in India.
- In Tamil nadu, women farmers have made food last longer by improving post harvest traditional systems.
- Navdanya for better agriculture practices
- SEWA, Ahmedabad in capacity building
- Digital Green in mass communication

## POSITION WOMEN AS LEADING COMMUNICATORS

- As decision-makers
- As advocates for conservationists
- As early adopters of renewable energy, clean water and climate resilience
- As enablers of knowledge disseminators
- As active agents for environmental change

