

# NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON GENDER, CLIMATE AND AGRICULTURE

New Delhi | April 2025



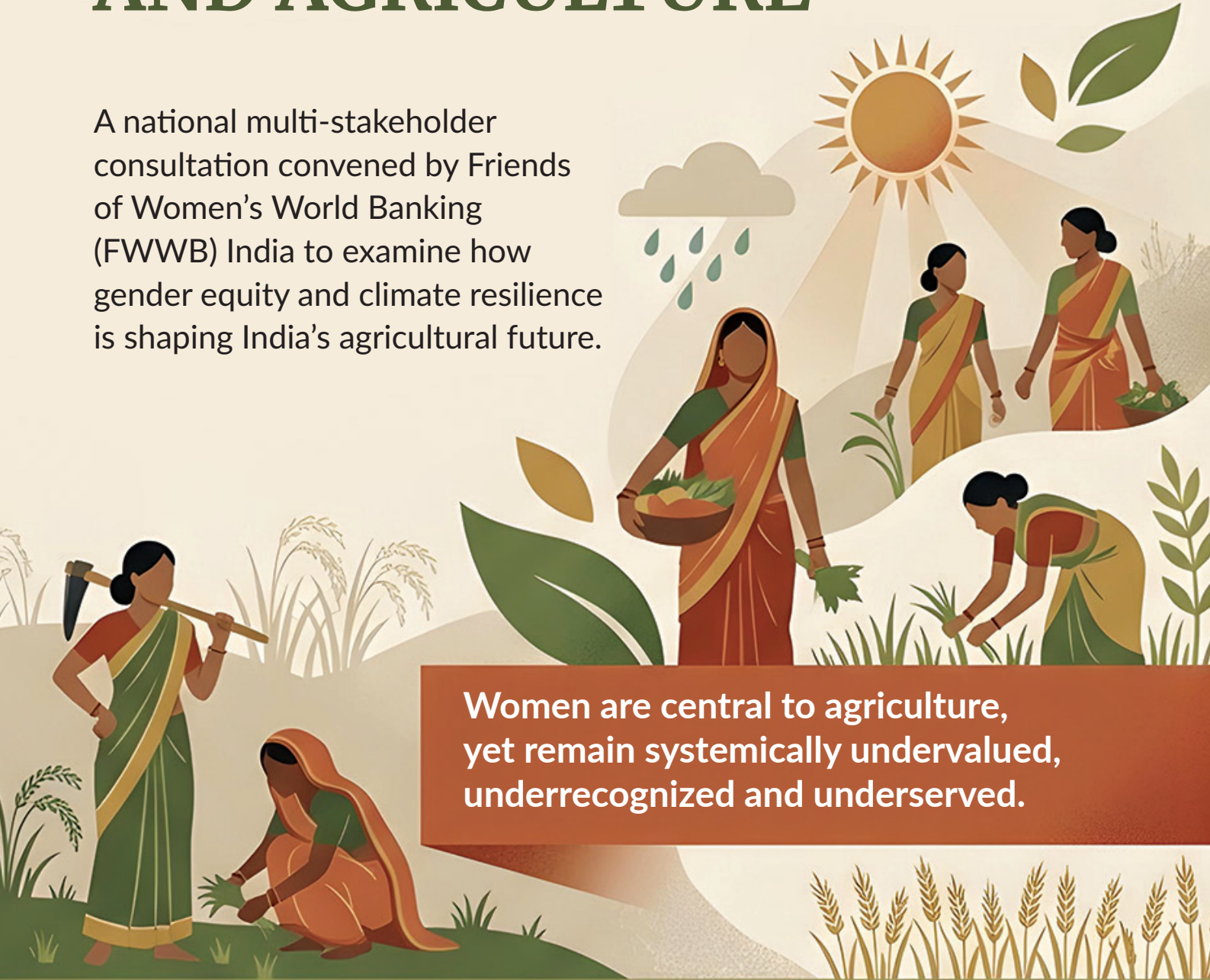


# NATIONAL CONSULTATION GENDER, CLIMATE & AGRICULTURE



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A national multi-stakeholder consultation convened by Friends of Women's World Banking (FWWB) India to examine how gender equity and climate resilience is shaping India's agricultural future.



Women are central to agriculture, yet remain systemically undervalued, underrecognized and underserved.



WOMEN FARMERS



CLIMATE



AGRICULTURE



INSTITUTIONS  
(FARMER COLLECTIVES)

# NEED FOR CONSULTATION

Climate resilience and gender equity are integral towards reshaping Indian agriculture

With over four decades of experience in strengthening women-centred institutions, FWWB convened this National Consultation to draw upon lessons, build and deepen its work across gender, climate, and agriculture. It aimed to draw upon insights on the evolving roles of women, FPOs, and climate-smart agricultural practices in shaping India's agri-food systems and provide actionable recommendations on mainstreaming gender across agricultural value chains, enhancing climate resilience, and strengthening women-led FPOs.

Indian agriculture faces intensifying climate risks, ecological degradation, and livelihood uncertainty.

Women form a substantial share of the agricultural workforce (65%), yet remain largely unrecognised as farmers and leaders, and excluded from decision-making roles.

Structural barriers, limited land rights, restricted access to resources (finance, markets, technology), and low representation in governance and leadership roles exacerbate women's low recognition in the agri value chain

FPOs offer a promising pathway, yet only 8% are women-led and most struggle with poor governance, compliance burdens, and undercapitalization.



Climate variability further amplifies these inequities, particularly for smallholders and women farmers who lack adaptive capacities, information, and institutional support.

The consultation built on the **Scoping Study** conducted with 30 FPOs and farmers across Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Odisha, and brought together stakeholders from government, civil society, academia, finance, private sector, and farmer organisations. The objective was to co-create actionable pathways for gender-inclusive, climate-resilient agricultural development.



## Scoping Study

- Started in November 2024
- Covered 30 FPOs across Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Odisha

The scoping study revealed common challenges across FPOs, including weak governance, limited infrastructure, low social capital, poor access to finance, and limited market linkages.

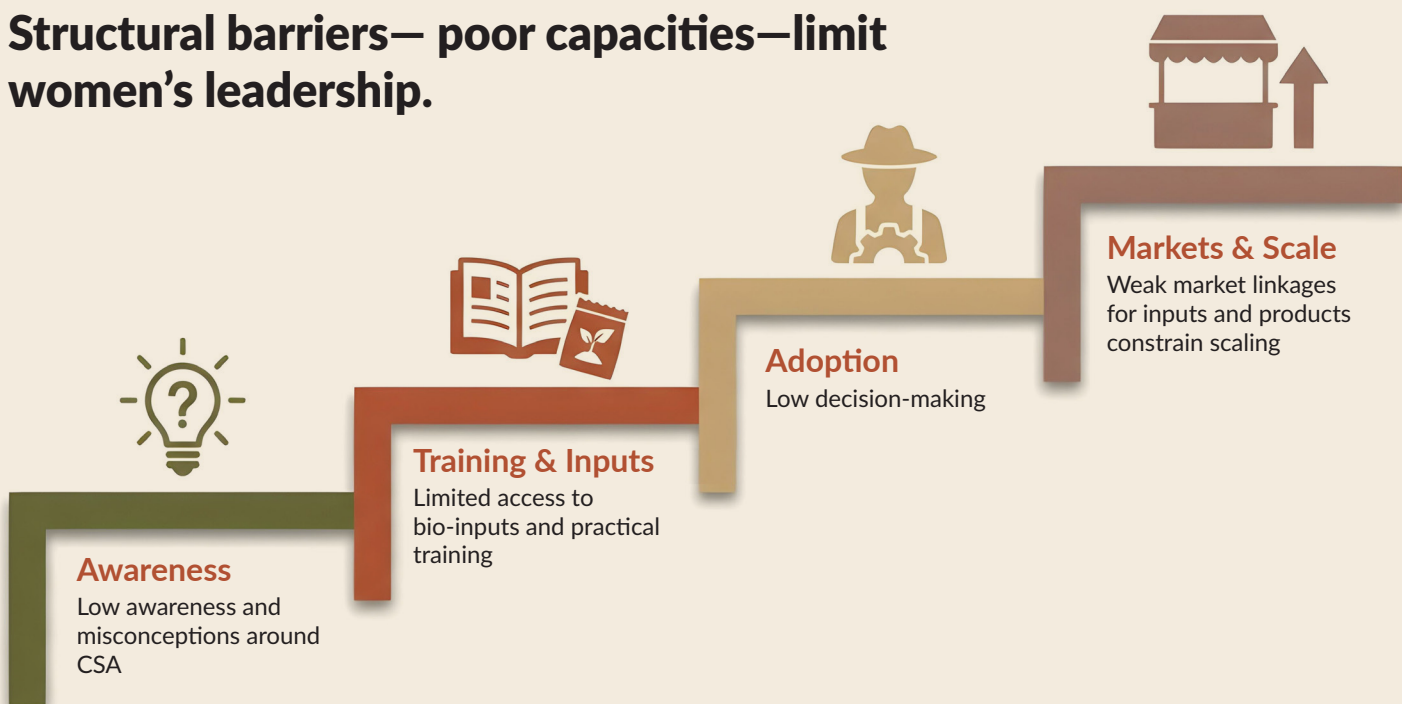
Women's participation varied across states and remained constrained by time poverty, mobility restrictions, limited training, reduced decision-making power, and low participation and representation in governance and leadership roles.

Adoption of climate-smart agriculture was uneven. While some FPOs facilitated training and inputs, market linkages and advisory services remained weak. Women-led FPOs demonstrated stronger engagement but faced barriers to scale.



*These challenges are most visible across all stages of agri value chain, but in different degrees.*

## Structural barriers— poor capacities—limit women's leadership.



## National Consultation

- Held on **25 April 2025**
- Venue: **India Habitat Centre, New Delhi**
- Convened by **FWWB India**
- Brought together **83 stakeholders**
- Built directly on findings from the scoping study

# WHAT EMERGED ACROSS DISCUSSIONS

## Five themes shaping inclusive agriculture

Across sessions, participants converged on key themes. Women must be recognised as farmers and leaders

The quality and governance of FPOs matter more than the number of women they represent. Climate resilience must be localised and gender-responsive.

Market and financial systems remain poorly accessible to women. Inclusive agriculture requires convergence across policy, finance, technology, data, and institutions.



## Inclusion must be intentional, institutional, systemic and transformative



### Women's Leadership

- Structural barriers, land rights, finance, and governance, impede women's progress, not lack of skill
- Women are vital to climate-resilient, nutrition-sensitive agriculture but face time Poverty and Lack of Recognition.
- Women must be recognised as leaders and creating spaces for co-leadership



### FPO Institutional Capacity

- Women's leadership in FPOs must be institutionalized through targeted support and policies.
- Dedicated institutional mechanism, like a central FPO body, are critical for scale and sustainability.
- Panchayati Raj Institutions, local governance structures and SHG network can be leveraged for outreach and last-mile service delivery.



### Climate Resilience

- Climate variability is shifting traditional practices, increasing production cost and risk.
- CSA must be grounded in local knowledge, gender equity and institutional convergence
- Targeted investments in Gender responsive CSA & technologies, climate/financial literacy, collective platforms led by women can drive adoption of localised CSA innovations, agri-advisory, and crop planning services



### Markets & Finance

- Direct market linkages, bundled services, and transparent pricing models are crucial.
- Rural women-led enterprises and startups lack access to dedicated funding or CSR investments.
- Digital platforms offer potential for market access and extension, but must be inclusive Ecosystem convergence.



### Building Inclusive Ecosystems (policy, data, tech, education)

- Most schemes lack gendered budgeting, affirmative action and accountability are critical.
- Extension systems, KVKs, and advisory services need redesign with a gender lens.
- Women-friendly technology design and distribution must be prioritized.
- Formal recognition of women farmers is essential to access entitlements and schemes.

# PERSPECTIVES FROM PLENARY AND PANELS

## Discussions on the policy and practice

Discussions highlighted that gender inequity in agriculture is deepened by poor policy design, structural impediments and institutional biasness.

Debates explored top-down versus co-designed approaches, commercial versus inclusive FPO models, and technology-led growth versus social development.

Despite differing views, participants agreed that smallholders, including women and tenant farmers, are poorly recognised in the agri value chain.



## Co-designed, inclusive approaches



Agricultural solutions must be co-created with women farmers, based on lived realities.



Gender-blind climate and agri-policies to evolve into localized, integrated approaches.



Emphasis is on inclusion, leadership, dignity, and recognition, not just productivity.



Women-led FPOs prioritise food security, participation, and resilience, alongside markets.



Structural barriers—land access, finance, mobility, unpaid care work—must be addressed before scale.



Social capital built through SHGs and federations is seen as a foundation for sustainability.



Promote women-friendly tools, mechanisation, and hands-on training.

## The State of Agriculture Today



Despite showcasing higher productivity and playing a pivotal role in India's food system, women, tenants, landless cultivators and smallholder farmers lack recognition and are excluded from policy benefits.



Climate change, disproportional input costs and returns, surging synthetic agrochemicals market, weak regulatory enforcement, weak market access, financial health, and difficulty in meeting the market standards have been undermining farmers and FPOs from thriving.



Dedicated and continued Systemic and Fiscal support is required in the form of institutions, inclusive policies, extension services, access to technologies, and competitive price control

## Gender and climate intersection in agriculture

A paradox exists where women contribute the most but remain under-recognised, face structural and cultural barriers.



Scalable, sustainable, gender-responsive, and context-specific solutions, beyond diagnostics and pilot projects, are urgently needed, with an emphasis on what works, for whom, and why.



Collective action through agri-collectives, institutional innovations, gender-intentional technologies, resilient varieties, bundled bio-input services, market linked value-chains, could lead to the scope of more decision-making spaces for women.

# LEARNINGS FROM THE FIELD

## Women-led agriculture models across value chains

**Case studies** presented during the consultation showcased women-led initiatives across cotton, millets, seeds, dairy, fodder, and associated value-addition.

These models demonstrated a glimpse of collective action, blended finance, governance reform, climate-smart practices, and direct market linkages.

While challenges around access to land and resources, collateral requirements for financial access, certification of processes and products, and business scaling persist, these initiatives offer proven pathways to resilience.

### When women lead, systems become more resilient.

State / Region	Initiative / Model	Lead Organisation	Focus Area
<b>Maharashtra</b>	Organic Cotton Value Chain	Chetna Organic	Certified organic cotton, direct global market linkages
<b>Gujarat</b>	Agri-Finance & Solar Processing	FWWB India	Blended finance, solar dryers, fruit pulping units
<b>Uttar Pradesh &amp; West Bengal</b>	FPO Governance Reform	Grameen Foundation	Data-driven governance, SHG integration in FPOs
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>	Women-led Millet FPO Model	SABALA	Millet seed production and processing
<b>Odisha</b>	Seed FPO with Digital & Climate Tools	Dvara e-Registry	Digital advisory, climate finance, women-led seed FPO
<b>Karnataka</b>	FPO Board via Village Institutions	Foundation for Ecological Security (FES)	Community-based FPO governance
<b>Andhra Pradesh &amp; Telangana</b>	Women-only Dairy Cooperatives	Mulukanoor & Shreeja Milk Producer Companies	Women-led dairy cooperatives
<b>Madhya Pradesh</b>	Market Access via Trust-Based Finance	Ramrahim Pragati Producer Co. Ltd.	Trust-based finance, corporate market linkages
<b>Odisha</b>	ICARE Framework for Gender Inclusion	Trickle Up	Gender inclusion framework for FPOs
<b>Maharashtra</b>	Women-led Tech Adoption in Potato FPO	SV Agri	High-yield seed technology adoption
<b>Gujarat</b>	Women-led Silage Production	Corteva Agriscience	Climate-resilient fodder enterprises

# FROM DIALOGUE TO ACTION

- Emerged from the National consultation
- Consolidated as the Delhi Declaration
- Reflect the outcomes of: plenary discussions, panel sessions, field insights
- Intended to inform policy and programmatic action going forward

The consultation concluded with the Delhi Declaration, outlining six priority pillars: policy and legal reform; strengthening FPOs; gender-inclusive agriculture; climate-resilient practices; market access and finance; and technology and data systems.

The recommendations call for gender mainstreaming in the agri value chain; recognising women and tenants as farmers; institutionalising women's leadership in governance and FPO operations; strengthening support for the FPO ecosystem; improving input regulation; partnering with technology, market, and CSA services providers; and scaling inclusive climate-smart innovations.

## Women's leadership is essential to resilient agriculture.



### Policy

- Redefining "farmer" to include women, tenants, and sharecroppers, along with institutional recognition
- Enactment of long-pending seed and pesticide legislation



### FPOs

- Create FPO Development Board
- Provide working capital and subsidised compliance support



### Gender

- Women's involvement must be promoted in para-agronomy, extension, FPO governance, and climate negotiations
- Ensure 40% of agri-program funds benefit women



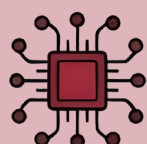
### Climate

- Climate-resilient cropping systems, adaptive planning and crop advisories
- Public investments in decentralised irrigation, post-harvest infrastructure,
- Private sector to scale up EV-compliant, and climate-smart technologies



### Markets

- Recognise women's tenancy rights
- Co-invest in women-led rural startups and value chains



### Technology

- Scale AI-powered localized tech
- Reform agri-education with inclusive, climate-smart content





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