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Water

# Gender and Water in Agriculture and Allied Sectors

## Towards Sustainable and Equitable Models

### Case Studies from Maharashtra

Considering the rich experience available in Maharashtra and reinforcing women's role in agriculture and water sector, 2030 WRG and UNDP India have documented sustainable and equitable business models from the state wherein women are reshaping communities and adding value to the local economy through leading enterprises. The five case studies showcased here highlight the need for collective action in the agri-water sector and identify opportunities to scale projects and programs that protect the ecosystem, improve water resources efficiency, and reduce poverty. This knowledge product proposes replicable strategies and opportunities for stakeholders such as the government, civil society organizations and the private sector to work closely with women and build a larger movement towards a more sustainable and empowered society.



## PROJECT DISHA

### Removing Gender Barriers in Post-harvest Management

**CHALLENGE: Women have limited decision-making power at the post-harvest stage over what to sell, where to sell and at what price**

- Training women to become economically self-sufficient through employment and entrepreneurial skill development
- Creating a cadre of women sourcing managers for providing farm advisory to farmers
- Enabling fair purchase of agriculture produce from farmers
- Connecting to private sector partners to buy produce from women sourcing managers

#### Results and Lessons

- Over 5,600 women trained in sustainable agricultural practices
- 30 women sourcing managers trained to enable fair procurement of agricultural produce from smallholder farmers
- Developed capacities of six community managed resource centers
- Successful partnership between the government, private sector, Self Help Groups (SHGs) and international NGO ensuring sustainability of the program



## SWAYAM SHIKSHAN PRAYOG

### Ensuring Food Security through Sustainable Farming

#### CHALLENGE: Women have limited decision-making power on agricultural inputs, techniques and harvest

- Encouraging women to gain cultivation rights over one acre (0.4 ha) of land through the One Acre Model / Women-led Climate Resilient Farming Model
- Gaining complete control – selection of seeds, farming techniques, food retained for consumption, sale of excess produce
- Cultivation of water efficient crops – vegetables, cereals, pulses and millets
- Satisfying nutritional needs of the family and contributing to water savings

#### Results and Lessons

- 48,000 women benefited so far
- 25% increase in yield (food security)
- 40% women adopted micro-irrigation (water savings)
- 30% increase in income for women (enhanced livelihoods)
- Low dependency on cash crops
- Farmer Producer Company (FPC) formation by women to market additional produce

## SAHYADRI FARMS

### Unlocking the Value Chain for Small and Marginal Farmers through Sustainable Agriculture Practices and Enhanced Market Access



#### CHALLENGE: Lack of market access, inadequately developed supply chains and cold storage facilities

- Cooperative Model: Vilas Shinde, a farmer himself, started Sahyadri Farms, an FPC, as a cooperative model
  - Farmers share in the profits
  - Farmers have ownership rights in the company
- Sahyadri Farms facilitates buying and marketing of horticulture produce (focus on grapes) from 6,400 shareholding farmers for global export market
- ~20% women farmers as shareholders
- 1,100 women employed by Sahyadri Farms (both full-time and seasonal)

#### Results and Lessons

- 100% adoption of drip irrigation among grape growers
- Access to markets for women-led households dependent on agri-incomes
- Women-friendly policies:
  - Equal pay for equal work
  - Favorable working conditions encourages seasonal women workers from remote tribal areas
  - 50% women employed in Sahyadri Farms' packaging facility
  - Assured income for women throughout the year, especially landless laborers and women with low levels of education



## THE GOATRY PROJECT

Leveraging Allied Businesses Complementing  
Enhanced Agri-water Productivity

**CHALLENGE:** Lack of alternative livelihood options besides agriculture for women

- Value chain economics of goat-rearing:
  - Building capacities for advanced and business approach to goat-rearing practices
  - Establishing linkages with large scale stakeholders for sale of goats through women-led FPCs
  - Providing interest-free loans to women to invest and expand goat-rearing
  - Enabling partnership-based approach between CSOs and private sector

### Results and Lessons

- Increase in average herd size per woman (from 4 to 6 goats) over a period of three years
- Setting up a women-run Goat Producer Company
- 2.5 lac m<sup>3</sup> of additional water storage through village ecosystem development
- Low dependency of women on agriculture-based livelihood



## HAPPY ROOTS

Empowering Women and Small Farmers  
through a Responsible Supply Chain

**CHALLENGE:** Lack of access to markets for women, and small and marginal farmers

- Procures directly from small and marginal farmers
- Provides training to rural women groups to handcraft snacks from locally procured ingredients
- Promotes the consumption of healthy snacks

### Results and Lessons

- 100% increase in annual income for women working in the snack factory
- Connected over 5,000 farmers to the market
- 30% less water used to grow barley – key ingredient in the snacks promoted by Happy Roots

# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

## Policy Interventions

- Offer policy support to promote nutrition-rich, indigenous, and climate-resilient crop varieties
- Improved market access for women-run FPCs/FPOs (Farmer Producer Organizations)
- Leverage ongoing government initiatives aimed at empowering women and improve their economic opportunities
- Improve awareness about existing government policies and schemes for women

## Financing Interventions

- Promote formation of a Special Purpose Financing Vehicle, including start-up funds and funds targeting women-run FPCs
- Set up innovative equity or debt funds such as a credit guarantee fund or a revolving fund to facilitate working capital
- Leverage Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds to develop village ecosystems that facilitate women entrepreneurship

## Platforms and Partnerships

- Create an entrepreneurship and incubation facility for women-led, water-centric agri-innovations supporting existing GoM initiatives
- Connect women farmers to markets through support from private sector as buyers and civil society as facilitators
- Leverage 2030 WRG facilitated Maharashtra Water Multi-Stakeholder Platform to drive dialogues and develop partnerships in agri-water-gender through public-private-civil society engagements



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