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Empowering Rural Women through Sustainable Integrated Farming Practices

Aakash Deep¹, Dr. Rahul Kr. Rai², Dr. Abhishek Kalia³, Dr. Yash Gautam⁴, Akash Singh⁵, Rishabh Srivastava⁶, Neeraj Kumar⁷, Kannan Kr. Verma⁸

ABSTRACT

Rural livelihoods are crucial for maintaining communities and promoting economic progress, especially for women. Women are frequently the major carers and providers in rural communities, but they also frequently experience marginalization and have restricted access to opportunities and resources. Developing rural women's potential and allowing them to actively participate in decisions on their means of subsistence are key components of empowering them. The fishing industry presents a multitude of options for the empowerment of rural women, extending beyond fishing into processing and marketing. Another option is poultry farming, which enables women to work in fields like egg production and broiler farming, boosting household income and nutrition in the process. In a similar vein, dairy farming, dairy processing, develops women's skills in animal husbandry while simultaneously offering them a stable source of income. Moreover, the incorporation of home scientific activities enhances household well-being and income generation by providing women with knowledge and skills in nutrition, food processing, and preservation. Agroforestry, ecotourism, and handicrafts are a few other pertinent fields that provide potential for rural development and empowerment of women. Access to education and training, the availability of financial services and resources, the development of infrastructure and supportive legislation, and the encouragement of leadership of women and entrepreneurial abilities are important tactics for empowering rural women in these fields. Sustainable empowerment initiatives also need tackling sociocultural hurdles and advancing gender equality.

Keywords: livelihoods, marginalization, women's empowerment, women's empowerment

INTRODUCTION:

Women Empowerment: It means enabling women to have control over their lives, rights and opportunities.

It involves giving the power to make choices, access resources and participate fully in social, economic, and political spheres without discrimination on gender-based.

Aakash Deep¹, Dr. Rahul Kr. Rai², Dr. Abhishek Kalia³, Dr. Yash Gautam⁴, Akash Singh⁵, Rishabh Srivastava⁶, Neeraj Kumar⁷, Kannan Kr. Verma⁸

¹P.G. Scholar, Department of Agricultural Economics

²Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics

³Assistant Professor, Department of Basic and Social Sciences

⁴Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics

⁵P.G. Scholar, Department of Agricultural Extension Education

⁶P.G. Scholar, Department of Agricultural Extension Education

⁷P.G. Scholar, Department of Agricultural Economics

Banda University of Agriculture and Technology, Banda

⁸P.G. Scholar, Department of Agricultural Economics, SMM Town PG College, Ballia

In all emerging nations, women play a critical role in the agricultural and rural economies. Their responsibilities are evolving quickly in many parts of the world, where social and economic factors are reshaping the agricultural sector, and they differ significantly between and within regions. Rural women frequently oversee intricate families and employ a variety of subsistence techniques. Specific agricultural tasks like transplanting, weeding, winnowing, etc. are performed exclusively by women.

INTEGRATED FARMING SYSTEM: The term "Integrated Farming System" (IFS) refers to a set of interdependent, related, and frequently interlocking production systems that are based on a small number of crops, animals, and related subsidiary businesses and are designed to maximize resource utilization in each system while minimizing their adverse environmental effects.



These systems were founded on the ideas of productive farm waste use and greater

utilisation of available resources and personnel. A result of the ongoing research efforts is integrated farming systems that combine agriculture, livestock farming, and fish culture.

At the farmer level, the packages of techniques for fish-cum-duck, fish-cum-pig, and fish-cum-poultry farming have been developed and systematically verified. The introduction of animal manure to ponds encourages the growth of phytoplankton and zooplankton, which serve as a source of nutrients for fish. Animal manure includes significant amounts of nutrients and biomass. Fish ingest indigestible feed components found in dung directly.

SEVERAL FARM BUSINESSES THAT WELCOME WOMEN ARE AS FOLLOWS:

These are Apiculture, Fishery, Goat farming, Piggery, Biogas, Backyard Poultry farming, etc.

APICULTURE:

Refers to beekeeping and honey production, can indeed contribute to the economic development of women in various ways.

- ➔ **Income Generation:** Through the selling of honey, beeswax, pollen, and other bee-related goods, beekeeping can give women a source of income. Women can start their small

beekeeping businesses and sell their wares locally, regionally, or even internationally.

- ➔ **Empowerment and Entrepreneurship:** Women who work in apiculture have the chance to start their businesses, become financially independent, and take charge of their economic activities.
- ➔ **Low Investment and Space Requirement:** Beekeeping can be started with relatively little capital outlay and infrastructure needs, making it accessible to women with restricted financial resources.
- ➔ **Skill Development:** Certain abilities and expertise are needed for beekeeping, including hive management, beekeeping methods, honey extraction, and product processing.

FISHERY:

- ➔ **Equal Access to Resources:** Women in many societies confront obstacles while trying to acquire resources like money, technology, and education. Women can actively engage and contribute to the fisheries sector's economic success by being given equal access to these resources.
- ➔ **Access to Markets and Finance:** The key to empowering women

economically is to make it easier for them to access markets and credit.

- ➔ **Value Addition and Diversification:** Women's involvement in value-adding tasks including fish processing, packaging, and product development can open up markets for higher-value goods and boost their income.

GOATARY

- ➔ **Income generation:** Women can make money for their families by selling goat milk, meat, and other goods like cheese and yoghurt.
- ➔ **Poverty alleviation:** Women who sell goats or their products can make money to cover their basic expenses, pay for healthcare and education, and invest in other income-generating ventures.
- ➔ **Food security and nutrition:** Milk and

meat from goats are great sources of nutrient-dense food. Women and their families can increase their dietary intake and general wellbeing by consuming goat products. Additionally, extra goat products might be distributed or sold within the neighbourhood to alleviate difficulties with food security.

- ➔ **Community development:** When raising goats, women frequently organise into cooperatives or self-help

organisations to handle problems, pool resources, and gain access to markets. These organisations give women a forum where they may work together, share knowledge, and fight for their rights and interests, fostering the growth of the entire community.

PIGGERY:

➔ **Employment Opportunities:**

Operations involving pigs involve a variety of duties, including feeding, cleaning, breeding, and marketing. Individual or group work for women is possible in various fields, which will increase job prospects and the local economy.

➔ **Environmental Sustainability:**

Designing piggy operations with environmental sustainability in mind is also possible. The implementation of sustainable practises, such as adequate waste management, effective feeding strategies, and using organic farming practises, can greatly benefit from the involvement of women. This strategy increases the long-term survival of the piggery enterprises while also benefiting the environment.

BIOGAS:

➔ **Improved cooking facilities:**

Traditional cookstoves can be replaced with biogas, which offers a healthy and

effective alternative. Women can cook in a smoke-free environment and spend less time searching for firewood thanks to biogas. This improves their health.

➔ **Income generation:** Women can work in biogas plant maintenance and operation, as well as the collecting and processing of organic waste. The by-products of biogas generation, including organic fertiliser, can also be sold or utilised for agricultural purposes, giving women new sources of income.

➔ **Enhanced sanitation:** Utilising organic waste products like crop leftovers or animal manure is frequently necessary for biogas systems. Biogas technology supports the proper treatment of organic waste, which enhances hygienic procedures. To maintain sanitation and cleanliness. In their homes, women are essential because they run the household and are the primary carers. Access to biogas can aid women in addressing sanitary issues, lowering their risk of contracting waterborne illnesses, and enhancing their general health.

➔ **Reduced drudgery:** By requiring less human labour for domestic tasks, biogas systems can lessen the physical stress on women. Biogas, for instance,

can be applied to home tasks. For instance, using biogas for lighting can lessen the need for candles or paraffin lamps. This saves women the time and effort needed to obtain and maintain conventional lighting sources while also providing a safer and more dependable source of light.

CONCLUSION

Women of rural area are major stakeholders in growth of agricultural sector for the New India. Acknowledging and mainstreaming of rural women via ensured access to resources, technology, education, health facilities, ownership rights and skill development will improve agriculture productivity and help in building an empowered nation.

