

Diverse Role of Women in Agricultural Resource Management in Maharashtra

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Abstract: *Women play a crucial and multifaceted role in agricultural resource management in Maharashtra. Their contributions extend beyond traditional farming to include livestock management, soil and water conservation, biodiversity preservation, and agri-based entrepreneurship. Using recent 2025 data, this study highlights women's high participation in agricultural activities alongside persistent challenges such as limited land ownership, restricted access to technology, and low involvement in decision-making. Despite being the backbone of rural agriculture, their contributions remain undervalued. The study emphasizes the growing feminization of agriculture and the need for inclusive, gender-sensitive policies to enhance women's empowerment, productivity, and sustainable agricultural development.*

Keywords: Women farmers, Agricultural resource management, Maharashtra, Feminization of agriculture, Sustainable development, Gender inequality

I. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture forms the backbone of the rural economy in Maharashtra, and women constitute a substantial portion of the agricultural workforce. In recent years, the role of women in agriculture has expanded due to male migration to urban areas, leading to the "feminization of agriculture." Women are no longer just helpers but have become primary cultivators and managers of agricultural resources. They are actively involved in almost every stage of agricultural production, yet their contributions are often undervalued and remain largely invisible in official records.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To analyze the diverse roles of women in agricultural resource management
2. To examine 2025-level participation data
3. To identify challenges faced by women farmers

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study primarily relies on secondary data sources. Data has been collected from various recent and reliable sources such as government reports, research articles, institutional publications, and economic surveys. Key sources include reports published by the Government of India, agricultural departments, rural development agencies, and national institutions like NABARD and ICAR. In addition, relevant data has been gathered from journals, policy documents, and recent studies conducted during the period 2024–2025. These sources provide updated statistical information regarding women's participation in agriculture, land ownership, access to resources, and involvement in decision-making processes.

IV. ROLE OF WOMEN IN AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT:

Women in Maharashtra are actively involved in a wide range of agricultural activities. In crop production, they perform major labour-intensive tasks such as sowing, transplanting, weeding, and harvesting, contributing nearly 70–90 percent of the work. They also play a key role in livestock management, handling activities like feeding animals, milking, and



maintaining sheds, which provide additional income and support food security. Women contribute significantly to soil and water conservation through organic farming, composting, and water harvesting. Their traditional knowledge helps maintain soil fertility and promotes sustainable agriculture. They are also involved in seed preservation and biodiversity conservation by protecting indigenous seeds and practicing mixed cropping. In recent years, women have emerged as agricultural entrepreneurs through Self-Help Groups and cooperatives. They participate in agro-processing and value addition, which enhances their income, economic independence, and overall social status.

Table 1: Women's Participation in Agricultural Activities (Maharashtra, 2025)

Activity	Participation (%)	Role Description
Crop Production	70–90%	Sowing, weeding, harvesting
Livestock Management	~70%	Dairy, poultry, animal care
Soil & Water Conservation	50–65%	Composting, irrigation, water harvesting
Agro-processing	60–75%	Storage, food processing
Decision Making	20–30%	Limited due to social barriers
Land Ownership	13–14%	Very low ownership rights
Access to Technology	Low (~30–40%)	Digital divide present

(Compiled from 2024–2025 reports and studies)

The 2025 data on women's participation in agricultural activities in Maharashtra clearly reflects both their strong involvement and existing inequalities. Women contribute approximately 70–90 percent in crop production and 60–70 percent in livestock management. Their participation in soil and water conservation ranges between 50–65 percent, while their involvement in agro-processing activities is around 60–75 percent.

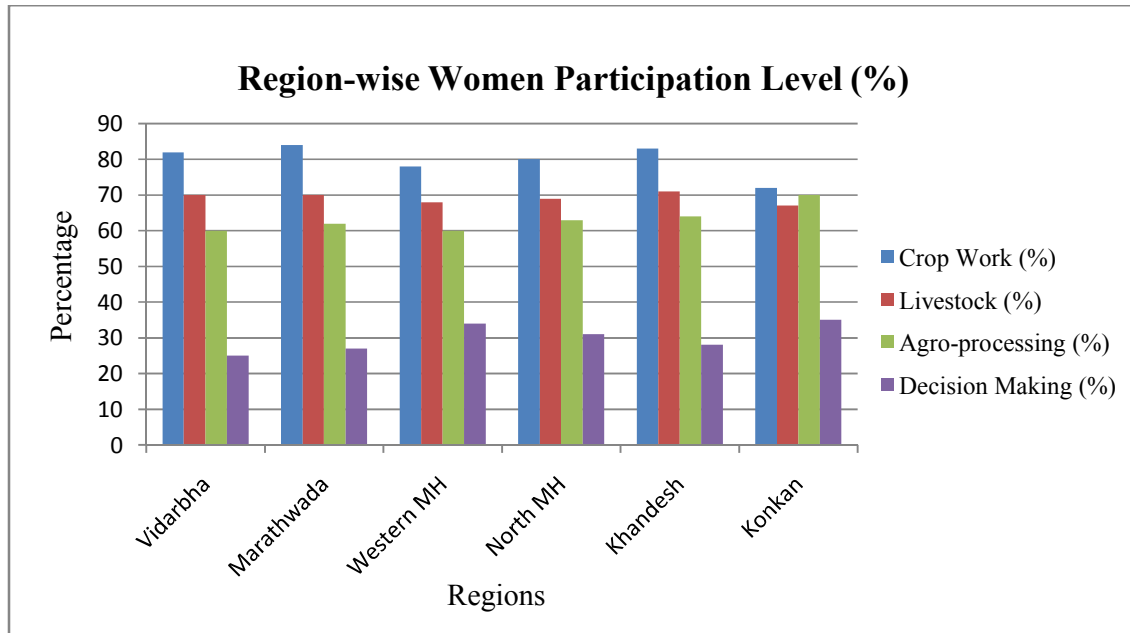
However, despite this high level of participation, women's role in decision-making remains limited to about 20–30 percent. Even more concerning is the issue of land ownership, where women own only around 13–14 percent of agricultural land. Access to modern agricultural technology is also relatively low, with only about 30–40 percent of women having access to digital tools and information. This data highlights a significant imbalance between the labor contribution of women and their control over resources. While they are the backbone of agricultural operations, they lack ownership rights and decision-making power, which restricts their overall empowerment.

Table 2: Region-wise Women Participation Levels (%)

Region	Crop Work	Livestock	Agro-processing	Decision Making
Vidarbha	82	70	60	25
Marathwada	84	70	62	27
Western MH	78	68	60	34
North MH	80	69	63	31
Konkan	72	67	70	35

(Compiled from 2024–2025 reports and studies)





The table shows region-wise women's participation in agriculture in Maharashtra. Women are most involved in crop work, with the highest in Marathwada (84%) and lowest in Konkan (72%). Livestock participation is also high (67–70%) across regions. Agro-processing shows moderate variation, with Konkan leading (70%). However, decision-making participation is low everywhere, highest in Konkan (35%) and lowest in Vidarbha (25%). Overall, women contribute significantly to agricultural labor but have limited decision-making power, highlighting gender inequality and the need for empowerment.

V. CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE:

Women in agriculture face several challenges that hinder their full participation and growth. The most significant issue is the lack of land ownership, which limits their access to credit and government schemes. Gender discrimination and social norms further restrict their role in decision-making processes. Additionally, women bear a dual burden of farm work and household responsibilities, leading to physical and mental stress. Limited access to education, training, and technology further widens the gap between men and women in agriculture. Climate change also poses a serious threat, as women often lack the resources needed to adapt to changing environmental conditions.

VI. GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES AND SUPPORT:

In recent years, various government initiatives have been introduced to support women in agriculture. Programs focusing on women's empowerment, skill development, and financial inclusion have shown positive results. The promotion of Self-Help Groups, digital agriculture tools, and agripreneurship training programs has helped women enhance their capabilities and income levels. However, there is still a need for more gender-sensitive policies and effective implementation at the grassroots level.

VII. CONCLUSION

Women in Maharashtra play a diverse and indispensable role in agricultural resource management. They contribute significantly to crop production, livestock management, and sustainable farming practices. Despite their critical role, they face numerous challenges that limit their potential. Addressing issues such as land ownership, access to



technology, and gender inequality is essential for achieving sustainable agricultural development. Empowering women in agriculture is not only a matter of social justice but also a key factor in ensuring food security and economic growth.

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