

Recognise, Empower & Support Women Farmers

MAKAAM's Charter of Demands

State should restructure its policies around basic livelihood resources and their use. It should also formulate agricultural programmes to enable the poor, including women across different social groups, to get ownership to livelihood resources and rightful access to government support and services. The demands of MAKAAM (Mahila Kisan Adhikaar Manch or Forum for Women Farmers' Rights) should be read in the light of this broader framework and as a proposal for change it wishes to bring about. The demands are broadly classified as Rights over Resources and Entitlements to support systems (schemes, subsidies, institutional participation etc.). Further, demands for various categories of women farmers have been listed in distinct sections of this Charter of Demands.

I. Entitlements and Support to Women in Farming

General Demands

- 🌱 **Operationalise the definition of 'Farmer':** Recognise women farmers, including land owners and women working on others' lands with a special focus on the most marginalised, according to National Policy for Farmers 2007. It requires the inclusion of women tenant farmers, livestock-rearing women farmers, fisherwomen and women dependent on forests in the ambit of the definition.
- 🌱 **Mainstream women farmers in all government programmes:** Government should make policies which recognise women's work in agriculture by providing support in all spheres of intervention related to rural farm livelihoods. This includes technical support for developing innovative tools, implements and technologies to reduce drudgery and propagate them. Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials and support services to promote ecological agriculture need to be made available at the Panchayat level.
- 🌱 **Prioritise rain-fed agriculture:** High priority should be given to rain-fed agriculture, where small and marginal women farmers are involved, to promote food crops (with a focus on biodiverse crops like millets and vegetables) to ensure food security and climate change mitigation and adaptation (instead of cash crops such as cotton, maize, etc).
- 🌱 **Farming and land ownership:** Promote collective farming by women, allot land to landless women and invest to develop such land.
- 🌱 **Convergence:** Strengthen convergence efforts to bring all agriculture-related services to women farmers' doorsteps.
- 🌱 **Identity cards for farmers:** All women farmers to be provided identity cards and Kisan Credit Cards.



Specific Demands

a) Finances and Budget Allocations

- Allocation for agriculture budget should be at least 25 per cent of total budget allocations.
- At least two-third of loans given should be subsidies/grants. Financial institutions should provide customised terms and conditions for loans to women farmers including SC, ST, single women and differently abled women. All women farmers including share croppers to have access to bank accounts (Jan Dhan Yojana), credit, irrespective of land title deeds, and Kisan Credit Cards.
- Financial support to women's farmer collectives to lease or develop infrastructure for maintaining grain banks, seed banks, godowns for storage of crops and also for primary agriculture processing. In this, priority should be given to dalit and SC/ST hamlets.
- Adequate and appropriate disaster compensation fund to be set aside, specifically to support women farmers.
- At least 30 per cent of all fertiliser subsidies to begin with to be given to organic agricultural inputs procured from women's collectives.
- 70 per cent of all investments in agriculture (assets, inputs, energy, irrigation, credit) under various schemes of the Agriculture Ministry must be targeted to women farmers.



b) Extension Services

- All agricultural institutions' training programmes and farmers' training centres, ATMA (Agricultural Technology Management Authority) as well as the training of Indian Administrative Services should include the issues of women's land ownership and women farmers in their syllabus/curriculum.
- Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP) should be scaled out/replicated on a massive scale, and strengthened.
- Women farmers should be technically equipped by training and capacity building through dissemination of information related to sustainable agriculture, credit, market, government schemes, financial literacy, enterprise management, legal literacy, etc.
- To reduce the burden of gendered roles and responsibility related to food security and other household needs, and to also build on women's existing skills and knowledge, women should be supported for running seed banks that revive seed diversity and promote seed self-reliance; similarly, tool banks for drudgery reduction need to be set up in all villages.

c) Women Farmer Collectives/Cooperatives

- 🌱 Women producer collectives should get equal recognition and support as private companies in terms of investment, access to resources, infrastructure and other subsidies.
- 🌱 Ensure the participation and leadership of women in cooperative organisations, Kisan Sangh, Kisan Mitra and land management committees.

d) Administrative Setup

- 🌱 **Recruitment and training of personnel:** 50 per cent women personnel must be recruited at all levels in the Agriculture and Extension Services Departments as well as make gender sensitisation a mandatory component of all trainings to the staff. 50 per cent women should be recruited in the positions of Krishi Prasar Seva, technical and management. Reservation of 50 per cent seats for women farmers in Large Area Multi-Purpose Societies (LAMPS) and Primary Agriculture Credit Societies (PACS) in membership and in the executive body in 3 years' time.
- 🌱 **Cadre of women eco-workers:** Eco-workers, who are community animators skilled in mobilising women farmers, should be developed for linking with state programmes.



e) Market Access

- 🌱 Market yards should be made women-friendly, with easy access and necessary facilities, especially toilets.
- 🌱 Ensure mandatory inclusion of women farmers and women farmer collectives/vendors in market management committees.
- 🌱 Mandatory inclusion of millets and diverse pulses in ICDS and mid-day meals, produced and procured locally from women farmers' groups, to ensure market support to them and also nutritious meals for children.

f) Attention to Distressed Farmer Families

- 🌱 Families of farmers who have committed suicide must be recognised as distressed. Their loans should be waived off and support provided to restart sustainable agriculture. Verification committees for 'investigation' into farm suicide cases should include marginalised women members, and all members should undergo gender sensitisation trainings. Further, such investigation processes should be automatically triggered for all cases of suicides in an agricultural household, rather than being triggered by complaints filed.
- 🌱 Help lines, counseling, etc. should be established to prevent suicides.

g) Integration with MGNREGS

- ☛ Small and marginal women farmers should be recognised and supported to develop their lands through MGNREGS. Revise MGNREGA guidelines for soil and water conservation works, fencing, leveling, horticulture, vermin pits, bund repairs, canals, SRI and other locally suitable work.
- ☛ Women-friendly worksite facilities should be created through convergence with different government schemes.
- ☛ Individual should be made the unit for the scheme and not household, with each individual worker entitled to minimum 100 days of work.

h) Universal Coverage for Social Security Schemes

- ☛ All farm women including labourers should be able to access universal coverage for all social security schemes such as pension, maternity entitlements (for at least six months), Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY), accident and life insurance, etc. Individual should be the unit for entitlement and not household.
- ☛ Pension should be Rs 2000 or at least half the minimum wages per month, and for women, the age criteria should be lower compared to men, and universalised.



II. Women's Land Rights

a) Enhance Women's Rights to Public Land

- ☛ **Gender-disaggregated database:** All State Governments must initiate efforts to develop and maintain a gender disaggregated database consisting of extent of land holdings (both public/assigned lands and private lands) by women across various castes, communities, etc.
- ☛ **Prioritising landless women in public land distribution:** All categories of landless single women, especially from SC, ST sections (including those from farm suicide-affected households, liberated manual scavengers, etc) must be enumerated and prioritised in various kinds of public land distribution initiatives of the State Governments.
- ☛ **Clear, inalienable rights, including succession rights:** Women beneficiaries or assignees in public land distribution programmes must be given clear, secure rights to lands assigned.
- ☛ **Land purchase and land lease:** State tenancy laws must be reviewed and suitably amended to allow leasing of all unused, potentially cultivable lands (endowment lands, ponds, water bodies, canal embankments, inland fisheries rights, etc.) to landless women's groups while recognising such groups (SHGs, JLG, cooperative, other collectives) as a valid category of landowners.

- 🌱 **Women resource cells:** A single window system in the form of 'Women Resource Cell' should be created from the mandal/block level upwards in the revenue departments in all States that aims to address and resolve all land issues related to women in a time bound manner.
- 🌱 **Allot unused land to women farmer collectives:** Unused land available with government, railways, irrigation department, canals highway department to be allotted to women farmer collectives for agriculture development and livelihood promotion. Convert cultivable fallows into food production farms including millets, under women farmer leadership to produce millets, pulses, other food crops and fodder.

b) Private Land Ownership

- 🌱 **Need for legal provisioning:** Land and Property Succession Acts for women should be gender just for all women irrespective of caste, creed, community and status. As a policy, automatically include names of married women at the time of marriage, into the land title of husband as joint owners, except in the case of matrilineal communities.
- 🌱 **Succession Acts:** The provision should be such that upon the death of the husband, the land and property gets registered in the name of the wife. At the time of her death, the land and property is divided equally amongst the sons and daughters. If she remarries, at the time of remarriage, the land and property are divided equally amongst the children and she remains the owner of an equal share of the divided land.
- 🌱 **Create barriers to daughters/sisters/widows in releasing their title deeds:** Make procedural changes and guidelines which must be enforced so that daughters/sisters/widows do not give away their rights to the father's/brother's/husband's land due to social pressure.



c) Litigation and Court Matters

- 🌱 When a matter with respect to land and property is sub-judice, the court should reserve its right to permit the concerned victim woman to exercise her right and use the disputed land/property to earn her livelihood till the final disposal of the suit. Fast track all cases of women's land ownership disputes within a time period of 3 months.
- 🌱 When a single woman files a title suit for possession over land and property, the act/provision should be such that: a) Such cases should be decided in the fast track courts; b) The incurred cost/expenses and court fee should be reduced to a minimum. In the absence of the disputing opposite parties/respondents, the suit must be heard ex-parte and decided in favour of the single woman/appellant.

d) Gender Audit of Existing Laws

- 🌱 All existing laws related to land assignment, land ceiling, tenancy, etc. along with the large body of revenue statutes must be reviewed from a gender perspective and suitable amendments must be made in favour of women, wherever relevant.

e) Land Records

- 🌱 Women's names must be recorded in all relevant land records from the village level upwards. Women's rights should be verified in all cases of inheritance, whenever land titles are issued under the Record of Rights Act (RoR).
- 🌱 Women having land rights should be issued pattadar passbooks, title deeds, etc.
- 🌱 Issue individual land titles (land records) for all women coparceners during the time of mutation by measuring and surveying the land.

f) Schemes to Motivate Transfer of Land in the Name of Women

- 🌱 States should create schemes with inducements to encourage men to promote joint ownership with their wives, as well as transfer lands in women's names.
- 🌱 Promote a policy of differential incentive for women land owners in agriculture/horticulture schemes to motivate transfer of land to women in the family.
- 🌱 Waive stamp duty for purchase of land, or transfer of property, exclusively in the name of women to motivate men to transfer/purchase land in the name of women.



g) Rights on Forests and Entitlements for Forest-based Livelihoods

- 🌱 Women from forest-dependent communities play an important role in nurturing and sustaining their land, water and forest resources. States should recognise their contribution and secure their rights over natural resources.
- 🌱 The implementation of Forest Rights Act should be undertaken in conjunction with Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA), which focuses on self-governance by tribal communities. In forest areas not covered by FRA, the rights of communities especially women to use and sustain these resources should be recognised and safeguarded.
- 🌱 Women's participation should be ensured in the Forest Rights Committee and Forest Management Committees.
- 🌱 Government should develop Management Information System (MIS) like the one for MGNREGS to track the status of implementation of FRA.
- 🌱 The criteria of 75 years residence for other forest dwellers to claim individual rights under FRA should be reviewed.

- 🌱 Consent of Gram Sabha must be mandatory to take up any projects which affect village forests.
- 🌱 Government should promote ecological farming in tribal and other ecologically fragile areas.

h) Displacement, Resettlement and Rehabilitation

- 🌱 Forcible displacement in the name of development should be stopped in order to prevent loss of livelihood and to protect the dignity of women.
- 🌱 Survey should be done to assess the ground situation related to displacement due to conflict situation across the country. Active resettlement efforts should be taken up to ensure that displaced adivasis and women feel safe in coming back to their habitations. Efforts must be made to restore livelihoods.
- 🌱 Specific guidelines should be formulated to ensure that women farmers consent is taken separately as in cases of land acquisition. Further women's concerns and needs must be separately recognised in compensation as well as Resettlement and Rehabilitation processes.
- 🌱 In cases where communities agree to displacement, the resettlement and rehabilitation process should ensure that the entire community is rehabilitated in one location and that the social fabric and livelihoods of the community are not destroyed.



I) Women Agricultural Labour

- 🌱 Equal and living wages (incl. basic lifestyle expenses) have to be laid down and ensured for women agriculture labourers by recognising them as skilled workers.
- 🌱 Protective labour laws should be implemented, including for immigrant labourers and inter-state migrant labourers.
- 🌱 All labour-displacing technologies (heavy machines, herbicides, etc.) should be minimised and stopped from being promoted in any way, while drudgery reducing technologies and mechanisms like tool banks and custom hiring centres should be set up.

j) Livestock Rearers

- 🌱 Livestock development policy and schemes should be gender sensitive.
- 🌱 Women who are targeted as beneficiaries of loans for dairy animals, sheep and goat and poultry through government schemes should be given the choice of buying breeds suitable to their resources and climatic conditions. They should not be pressurised to buy unsuitable cattle.
- 🌱 Women livestock rearers' cooperatives should be promoted and extend all necessary support systems.
- 🌱 Grazing lands under occupation must be surveyed and handed over to the Panchayats so that women dependent on livestock rearing can benefit.

k) Fisherwomen

- 🌱 Fisherwomen should be given lease rights on at least 50 per cent ponds, water bodies and inland fisheries with collective control on resources.
- 🌱 Provide equal membership at all levels including governance bodies in fisher cooperatives.
- 🌱 Customary rights to grounds for drying fish should be respected and upheld/protected.
- 🌱 State should protect the rights of fisher women to access fish in the harbours for sale.
- 🌱 Fisherwomen should be provided facilities for storage of goods at harbours and markets.
- 🌱 Cultural taboos on women's use of fishing boats and other equipment should be addressed. Systematic skill building of fisherwomen to engage in activities like fishing (fish harvesting) should be invested upon. Any skill testing criteria for allocating of lease rights on water bodies which inadvertently keep out women should be removed.



MAKAAAM

Mahila Kisan Adhikaar Manch

(Forum for Women Farmers' Rights)

MAKAAAM or Mahila Kisan Adhikaar Manch (Forum for Women Farmers' Rights) was created in April 2014 as a nationwide alliance of networks, campaigns, movements, organisations, people's collectives and individuals who advocate for the Right to Livelihoods of women farmers, particularly dalits, adivasis, single women, differently-abled and displaced. It is guided by principles of feminism and sustainability for economic, environmental and social justice. MAKAAAM strives to ensure women's identity as farmers, and that their rights over resources (including land and other natural resources) are realised. The mission of MAKAAAM is to visibilise women farmers, especially smallholder marginalised women, with a development vision led by social justice, plurality of knowledge systems and sustainability driven by ecological approaches. It endeavours to create and secure rights over productive livelihood resources (land

in particular) as well as entitlements over a variety of support systems, with equal participation of women in decision-making in various institutions, starting family upwards, to ensure empowered, self-reliant and sustainable women's livelihoods. MAKAAAM works through state-level networks, supported by Regional Facilitation Teams and a broad-based National Facilitation Team.

MAKAAAM

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