



Small Steps Towards an Empowered Tomorrow

A compilation of success stories on
women empowerment

As a federally owned enterprise, GIZ supports the German Government in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development.

Published by

Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices:

Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

A2/18 Safdarjung Enclave
New Delhi - 110 029, India
T: +91 11 4949 5353 (3302)
giz-indien@giz.de
I: www.giz.de/India

Responsible

Rajeev Ahal, Director Natural Resource Management
rajeev.ahal@giz.de

Created by

Gender Working Group of the Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resource
Management Programme, GIZ India

Contributors

Debashree Roy, Technical Expert, Water Security and Climate Adaptation in Rural India
Divya Sharma, Technical Expert, Soil Protection and Rehabilitation for Food Security in India
Rohit Sharma, Junior Advisor, Climate Adaptation and Finance in Rural India
Sanjay Tomar, Project Head, Himachal Pradesh Forest Ecosystem Services
Shreyas Bhartiya, Technical Advisor, Sustainability and Value Added in Agricultural Supply Chains
Somya Bhatt, Technical Advisor, Climate Adaptation and Finance in Rural India
Sahasini Huddone, Technical Expert, Green Innovation Centres for the Agriculture and Food Sector
Susanne Milcher, Project Director, Securing Nutrition, Enhancing Resilience
Vanessa Berghoff, Junior Advisor, Sustainability and Value Added in Agricultural Supply Chains

Compiled by

Caroline Ostendorf, Intern, GIZ India Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity
Meekha Hannah Paul, Senior Policy Advisor, Enhancing Rural Resilience through Appropriate Development Actions
Shreyas Bhartiya, Technical Advisor, Sustainability and Value Added in Agricultural Supply Chains
Vanessa Berghoff, Junior Advisor, Sustainability and Value Added in Agricultural Supply Chains

Edited by

PR Desk GIZ India
Scherazade Sigamoria, Technical Expert, Gender & Cross Cutting Issues, GIZ India

Photo credits:

PWC, bioRe, GIZ/Aashima Negi, GIZ/SENU, GIZ/WASCA, GIZ/Preeti Bharati

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

On behalf of the
German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

New Delhi, July 2022

Content

04

Introduction

05

**Preparation of
Botanicals by Women
Self-Help Groups**

06

**A Platform for Women-led
Businesses: Empowering
Women Farmer Groups**

07

**From Evidence to Action:
Gender Transformative
Approaches to Improve
Nutrition**

08

**Empowerment through
Participation: Women in
the Water Dialogue**

09

**Managing Forest
Ecosystem Services
with Women of
Himachal**

10

**Gender Sensitive
Participatory Climate
Adaptation Planning in
Himachal Pradesh and
Uttar Pradesh**

11

**Women Sowing the
Seed of Empowerment**

Introduction

Gender equality and the elimination of gender-based discrimination and disadvantages are core objectives and guiding principles of international, European and German (development) policies. The new German Federal Government elected in 2021 officially commits to a Feminist Foreign and Development Policy with the aim of strengthening the rights, resources and representation of women and girls worldwide and promoting greater equality in society. The Indo-German development cooperation projects contribute towards this larger goal through adopting gender responsive or gender transformative approaches in all its project activities. For over 60 years, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH has been working jointly with partners in India for sustainable economic, ecological and social development. The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV) as well as the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) are the main commissioning parties of GIZ in India.

This knowledge product is an effort of the Gender Working Group hosted by the Natural Resource Management and Agroecology NRMAE, thematic area within the Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resource Management Programme (ECNRM) of GIZ India. The compilation includes best practices and innovations in processes, approaches, and interventions of various projects from ECNRM, that may be inspiring for learning, contextualisation, and replication for other GIZ projects.

We hope this paves the way for emergence of new synergies and collaborations in future.

About NRMAE

NRMAE is one of the four key thematic areas within the ECNRM programme of GIZ India. The thematic area currently includes 13 projects ranging from bi-lateral, global, sectoral and developPPP projects (public-private partnership projects) on water security and climate adaptation, agroecology, sustainable soil management, sustainable agriculture, aquaculture, artificial intelligence, rural livelihoods, among others.

About the Gender Working Group, NRMAE

The NRMAE Gender Working Group, consisting of 13 members from various projects, primarily identifies and supports projects in their efforts towards gender equality and empowerment. The core emphasis is on *Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA)*. Successful GTA addresses a lack of gender justice and unequal power relationships. The approach tackles inequality at the root of the problem. GTA approaches scrutinise established norms and gender stereotypes, create an atmosphere of change that extends beyond simply involving women as a target group and as participants but actively involving men in the process. The group's *Reach Benefit Empower (RBE)* approach clearly makes a distinction between **Reach** (e.g., including women in meetings and trainings), **Benefit** (e.g., an increased income, better nutrition) and **Empower**, which is defined as the ability of individuals to make choices for themselves concerning aspects related to income, livelihood, food and nutrition without having to seek approval from



Training of women farmers on preparation of herbal extracts for organic cotton
© bioRe

others or to depend on others. Supporting projects to adopt the different elements of RBE, and gradually progressing towards empowerment is a key objective of the Working Group.

In this regard, the Working Group:

- Initiates discussions with experts within GIZ and elsewhere for sharing of experiences, tools, best practices and exploring potential approaches and interventions;
- Analyses knowledge products that have been developed by previous projects working on the topic of gender equality, particularly women empowerment;
- Supports project activities including developing Terms of References, sharing resource materials, connecting to external support, review of knowledge products;
- Currently supporting the development of a business case for botanical preparation by SHGs and women collectives under the global development cooperation project 'Sustainable and Value Added in Agricultural Supply Chains | Cotton';
- Provides a platform for colleagues to engage with and exchange on various topics associated with gender.

The Working Group, primarily identifies and supports projects in their activities and efforts towards gender sensitisation, gender equality and gender mainstreaming.



Preparation of Botanicals by Women Self-Help Groups

Sustainability and Value Added in Agricultural Supply Chains | Cotton



In collaboration with the organisation Action for Food Production (AFPRO), the Indo-German development cooperation Sustainability and Value Added in Agricultural Supply Chains | Cotton supports 1,000 farmers in Nanded (Maharashtra) in the transition from conventional to organic cotton farming. Over a period of three years, AFPRO has provided trainings on organic cultivation practices and helped to establish an *Internal Control System (ICS)* to ensure farmer receive certification for their organic cotton production.

Organic cotton production relies on the use of natural inputs and practices instead of manufactured fertilisers and synthetic pesticides. Biological inputs, such as bio-fertilisers, bio-pesticides and bio-weedicides, cater to the nutrient requirement of the crop and ensure efficient integrated pest management.

Since 2022, the project partners with two *Women Self-Help Groups (SHGs)* to take up the preparation of botanicals for cotton growing. Botanicals are part of organic substances derived from plants. The women dedicate a part of their family-owned land for setting up the input centres. They have received not only training in the preparation of the inputs, but further aspects associated with establishing and running the businesses.

The location is rich in biodiversity and raw materials for preparation of the inputs. The women produce organic pest and insect repellents, namely *Dashparni Ark* and *Neem Ark*, and use vermicomposting for organic fertilisation and soil conditioning. Instead of relying on the market for buying organic inputs, farmers receive the inputs locally available



Training of women farmers on preparation of botanicals for organic cotton production. © bioRe

and at better prices from the SHG members.

While it will take about half a year until the input centres are fully operational, the intervention aims to create a sustainable business case for strengthening SHGs.

The botanical preparations are not only an additional source of income and reduces the cost for in-conversion organic

cotton farmers, but the project highlights the essential role of women along the cotton supply chain.

Contact

Vanessa Berghoff

Junior Advisor, Pro Agri Chains - Cotton
GIZ India
vanessa.berghoff@giz.de

Since 2022, the project partners with two **Women Self-Help Groups** to take up the preparation of botanicals for organic cotton growing.



A Platform for Women-led Businesses: Empowering Women Farmer Groups

Green Innovation Centres for the Agriculture and Food Sector (GIC) - India



Women FPO Workshop in Andhra Pradesh
© APMAS

How can exclusive women farmer groups provide a special forum that addresses their needs? In Andhra Pradesh, the Green Innovation Centre India together with its local NGO partner, *Mahila Abhivruddhi Society, Andhra Pradesh (APMAS)* is working with these groups and demonstrates great achievements.

Exclusive Women Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) are the solution of one of the major issues faced by women farmers: the lack of platforms to voice their views and

take up joint initiatives. Women farmers get together, learn, and start agricultural business activities. A major advantage of the groups is that they are registered under the *Andhra Pradesh Mutually Aided Cooperative Societies Act*, which regulates the formation and work of cooperative societies and gives them the possibility to act as an accountable, competitive, self-reliant business.

The initial steps of forming the group and to gather on a regular basis for the monthly meetings were challenging.

The women faced resistance from their families and neighbours who stated the

difficulty by women to manage institutions by themselves. However, over the past two years, the women were able to prove their assumptions wrong.

So far, three exclusive women FPOs (one FPO at sub-district level and two FPOs at village level) are being promoted. What all these organisations have in common is their strong group dynamics that mainly contributed to the success.

They have managed to effectively take up multiple business activities since their formation, such as:

- Collective procurement of inputs;
- Promotion of organic farming;
- Marketing of fruits and vegetables.

Contact

Gerrit Qualitz

Project Director, GIC India,
GIZ India
gerrit.qualitz@giz.de

A major advantage of the groups is that they are registered under the

Andhra Pradesh Mutually Aided Cooperative Societies Act.



From Evidence to Action: Gender Transformative Approaches to Improve Nutrition

Securing Nutrition, Enhancing Resilience (SENU) - India



The global development cooperation project 'Securing Nutrition, Enhancing Resilience (SENU)' in India implements a nutrition sensitive integrated approach linking nutrition education with a multi-sectoral *Community Nutrition Garden* initiative in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

To evaluate progress and understand gender-specific barriers towards better nutrition outcomes, SENU India undertook several studies and workshops with their partners. Based on the results, the project developed a gender strategy that provides a roadmap to promote gender transformative change.

Gender-specific findings in SENU:

- Cultural practices and social institutions in a patriarchal country

such as India, contribute to current gender inequalities in nutrition security - hence 'Women eat last and last'.

- Women's economic empowerment and decision-making authority in a family and community is positively associated with the food and nutrition security status of women and the family.
- Engagement of men and other family members in food and nutrition related activities at family and community level is a key enabler to ensure that nutrition becomes a family's responsibility.



Woman and man jointly working in a Community Nutrition Garden in Madhya Pradesh. © GIZ / SENU

Gender transformative actions in SENU:

- Fostering Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) driven approach to overcome harmful cultural practices and to promote local solutions and good practices.
- Involving men as allies and champions on nutrition.
- Enabling economic empowerment of women.
- Analysing and addressing inequalities in decision-making power in households and communities.

Contact

Dr. Susanne Milcher

Project Director, SENU India
GIZ India
susanne.milcher@giz.de

SENU India

undertook several studies and workshops with partners to evaluate, progress and understand gender-specific barriers towards better nutrition outcomes.



Empowerment through Participation: Women in the Water Dialogue

Water Security and Climate Adaptation in Rural India (WASCA)



Under the Indo-German development cooperation project 'Water Security and Climate Adaptation in Rural India (WASCA), gender mainstreaming is targeted at the lowest governance level, where the districts constitute blocks in rural set up. WASCA developed the *Composite Water Resources Management (CWRM)* plans at national and *gram panchayat* (village council) level across ten districts in five states of India, namely Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka.

The project has two gender-related indicators, that are expected to be achieved through the CWRM planning and implementation process:

- 30 decisions of *Gram Panchayats (GPs)* on water management measures are in line with the *Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)* with equal participation of women and men.
- 35 water management measures for enhancing water security and climate change adaptation in rural areas are being developed taking into consideration women's needs.

CWRM planning has been used to develop and implement sustainable plans at the ground level including the administrative and hydrological unit in a catchment or river sub-basin. A women involvement checklist has been prepared based on the CWRM



Capacity building of women in Khaliya village, Rajasthan
© GIZ / WASCA

framework with four major components/domains of CWRM, viz:

- Area of interest;
- Capacity development and Institutional Mechanisms;
- Preparation of the *Composite Water Resource Management Plan (CWRMP)*;
- Implementation Mechanisms.

Themes and sub-themes were selected for the purpose of capturing the

mainstreaming of gender in the CWRM process.

The sub-themes involve project area characteristics, natural resource assessment, climate analysis, stakeholder mapping, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), scoping, creation of a supportive environment, etc.

Contact

Debashree Roy

Technical Expert, WASCA
GIZ India
debashree.roy1@giz.de

WASCA developed Composite Water Resources Management (CWRM) plans at national and gram panchayat level across ten districts in five states of India.



Managing Forest Ecosystem Services with Women of Himachal

Himachal Pradesh Forest Ecosystem Services (HP-FES)



Community meeting at Loharlari to understand the zone-wise management map of prioritised FES
© GIZ / Aashima Negi

The importance of protecting ecosystems and biodiversity has been recognised politically and has become a national priority as it is also closely linked to the livelihoods of millions of Indians. Many communities of Himachal Pradesh rely extensively on *Forest Ecosystem Services (FES)* such as water, climate regulation, soil conservation, provision of resources critical for their livelihoods, as well as abundant recreational values.

The Indo-German development cooperation project 'Himachal Pradesh Forest Ecosystems Services (HP-FES)' integrated the FES approach into the forest management systems of Himachal

Pradesh in the project's nine demonstration sites. The target groups of the project were the residents of rural areas who are keepers, users and final beneficiaries of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Various livelihood trainings such as pine-needle artefact making, pickle making, cooking and homestay management were conducted for the communities residing at the pilot sites, with a focus on women beneficiaries. These trainings were identified as entry points to use the FES approach in microplanning, and a livelihood opportunity to earn cash income by the respective women.

Under the project, 18,585 hectares of forest area was managed through zone-wise management under nine micro plans and one divisional working plan. Over 7,758 people are expected to benefit directly, out of which 3,944 are women.

It was widely acknowledged throughout the project that the women's groups in the pilot sites were one of the most active participants in protecting the forests.

Contact

Sanjay Tomar

Project Head, HP-FES
GIZ India
sanjay.tomat@giz.de

3,944

women beneficiaries are expected to benefit directly.



Gender Sensitive Participatory Climate Adaptation Planning in Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh

Climate Adaptation and Finance in Rural India (CAFRI)



The Indo-German development cooperation project 'Climate Adaptation and Finance in Rural India (CAFRI)' supports women farmers in awareness raising on climate change and its associated risks, adaptation as well as mitigation measures through trainings, knowledge sharing and capacity building workshops using e-learning modules and content specific handouts in the project's partner states Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh. It is implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC); the state partners including the Department of Environment, Science and Technology (DEST) in Himachal Pradesh and the Directorate of Environment (DoE) in Uttar Pradesh.

State Government of Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have existing schemes and programmes to support women groups and farmers for livelihood support and income

diversification. The project is working with *Women Self-Help Groups (SHGs)* under the existing state supported schemes *Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP)*, (Women Empowerment Programme) in Uttar Pradesh, and *Mahila Mandals* (Women Groups) in Himachal Pradesh by linking priority local adaptation needs to agencies and programmes through strengthened women groups. The groups are being supported to successfully plan, implement and operate evidence based projects for sustainable agriculture, for example through efficient irrigation practices, better market linkages and resilient cropping patterns via existing government support schemes.

In this regard, our capacity development package follows the following overarching principles:



Focus group discussion in Mahrajnaji district of Uttar Pradesh
© PWC

- Supporting local adaptation needs;
- Convergence with ongoing government schemes;
- Strengthening the role of intermediary organisation;
- Supporting gender responsive participatory planning;
- Fostering behavioural change towards Climate Change Adaptation (CCA)/Climate Resilience;
- Providing inputs for indicating CCA elements into policy instruments;
- Enhancing ownership on financing mechanisms for local adaptation needs.

Multiple workshops with key training institutes, state departments as well as interviews with women farmers, SHG representatives and site visits laid the groundwork for this package. The trainings are now being rolled out in partnership with the State Institute of Rural Development in both the states.

Contact

Kirtiman Awasthi

Senior Policy Advisor, CCA & Climate Finance
Climate & Environment in Rural Areas
GIZ India
kirtiman.awasthi@giz.de

Women SHGs under the *Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP)*, Uttar Pradesh, and *Mahila Mandals* in Himachal Pradesh are being supported to successfully plan, implement and operate evidence based projects for

sustainable agriculture.



Women Sowing the Seed of Empowerment

Soil Protection and Rehabilitation for Food Security in India (ProSoil)



Agriculture is the most significant employment source for women in the rural pockets of India. Despite of contributing towards agriculture and allied activities extensively, women's contributions are most often overlooked and are considered peripheral. Under the umbrella of the Indo-German development cooperation in India, the Soil Protection and Rehabilitation of Degraded Soil for Food Security (ProSoil) project identified this challenge. Since 2016, the project helps to equip women with valuable technical knowledge on agroecological farming practices as well as with inputs and tools to manage homestead gardens where they can be the owners and decision makers. Homestead gardens that have been set up with support of ProSoil have not only supported additional household income of participating families but contributed to improved nutrition and well-being of families especially during crisis times such as during the COVID-19 lockdowns. The seasonal migration of male farmers to urban areas for work

leaves the women and children at home, which raises the need for women to be trained as knowledgeable farmers on issues related to agriculture, soil, and crop management. Under ProSoil, women benefit from capacity development and trainings to contribute to achieve better soil quality, greater productivity, and bring diversity into their homesteads. Aiming at bridging the gender gap in agriculture, the project works towards increasing women farmers' access to extension services, trainings and technical knowledge, financial products, and innovative technologies.

By including women into village development committees, farmer producer groups and by strengthening *Self-Help Groups (SHGs)*, ProSoil gives women the opportunity to be involved in decision-making at local governance levels through inclusive, participatory planning and management, and development of women friendly policies within communities. The project had



Women farmers in Bichiya block, Mandla, Madhya Pradesh
© GIZ / Preeti Bharati

organised a farmers' conference in January 2020 to provide a platform to women farmers to raise their voice for different issues and empower them to be a change maker.

ProSoil supported 4,662 women owned homestead gardens which benefitted 17,305 women farmers until 2022. A survey (status November 2021) showed that 77% of women from the

participating 13,900 households under ProSoil confirm an improvement of their socio-economic situation due to the project interventions.

Contact

Divya Sharma
Gender Focal Point, ProSoil India
divya.sharma@giz.de

ProSoil supported 4,662 women owned homestead gardens which benefitted 17,305 women farmers until 2022.



**Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit
(GIZ) GmbH**

**A2/18 Safdarjung Enclave
New Delhi - 110 029, India**

**E giz-indien@giz.de
I www.giz.de**