



The Status of Women in Agrifood Systems: FAO

For Prelims: FAO, Gender Equality, Agrifood Systems, Food Security, SDG, Covid-19, CAC, WFP.

For Mains: The Status of Women in Agrifood Systems.

Why in News?

Recently, the [FAO \(Food and Agriculture Organization\)](#) has released a report titled- “**The Status Of Women In Agrifood Systems**” highlighting the importance of [Gender Equality in the Agricultural Sector](#).

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- **Gender-Based Barriers:**
 - Women make up a significant proportion of the agricultural workforce, accounting for around **40% of the global agricultural labor force**. However, women often face significant gender-based barriers that limit **their access to resources**, technology, and markets, which can impact their productivity and income.
- **Gaps are Unchanged:**
 - Even though women have gained more access to some resources, such as digital technology and financial services, over the last several years, the gaps are **either unchanged or growing in far too many areas**, especially for rural women.
 - Since the outbreak of [Covid-19](#), the gap between women’s and men’s **Food Security** has grown to 4.3% — with significantly **higher food insecurity among rural women**.
- **Additional Challenges:**
 - Women and girls face barriers and constraints that **men and boys do not as a consequence of rigid gender norms** and roles, unequal power dynamics and discriminatory social structures.
 - These impediments to women’s progress are **compounded by the additional challenges posed by [Climate](#), economic and price shocks**, conflicts and the increasing risks of [Gender-Based Violence](#).
- **Marginalizing Roles of Women:**
 - Despite the importance of agri-food systems for women’s livelihoods and the welfare of their families, **women’s roles tend to be marginalised** and their working conditions are likely to be worse than men’s — irregular, informal, part-time, low-skilled, labour-intensive and thus vulnerable.

What are the Recommendations?

- Closing the gender gap in agri-food systems could increase agricultural productivity by up to 4% in developing countries, which could, in turn, **boost global [GDP \(Gross Domestic Product\)](#) by up to 2%**. This increase in productivity and income could help to reduce **poverty and hunger and improve [Food Security](#)** and nutrition.

- Closing the gender gap and empowering women would: Increase global GDP by 1%/ nearly USD 1 trillion.
- Gender equality in agri-food systems is essential for achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, particularly SDG 2, which aims to **end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition**, and promote sustainable agriculture.
- It is also crucial for achieving SDG 5, which aims to achieve **gender equality and empower all women and girls**.
- There is a need for policies and programs that **promote gender equality and empower women** in agriculture.
- Women need more access to and control over the livestock, water, seeds, land, technology, and finance needed to grow their livelihoods.

What is the Food and Agriculture Organization?

- **About:**
 - FAO is a specialised agency of the **United Nations** that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.
 - **World Food Day** is celebrated every year around the world on 16th October. The day is celebrated to mark the anniversary of the founding of the FAO in 1945.
 - It is one of the UN food aid organisations based in Rome (Italy). Its sister bodies are the **World Food Programme** and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).
- **Initiatives Taken:**
 - **Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)**.
 - Monitors the **Desert Locust** situation throughout the world.
 - The **Codex Alimentarius Commission or CAC** is the body responsible for all matters regarding the implementation of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.
 - The **International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture** was adopted by the Thirty-First Session of the Conference of the FAO in 2001.
- **Flagship Publications:**
 - The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA).
 - The State of the World's Forests (SOFO).
 - **The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI)**.
 - The State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA).
 - The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets (SOCO).

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. The FAO accords the status of 'Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS)' to traditional agricultural systems. What is the overall goal of this initiative? (2016)

1. To provide modern technology, training in modern farming methods and financial support to local communities of identified GIAHS so as to greatly enhance their agricultural productivity.
2. To identify and safeguard eco-friendly traditional farm practices and their associated landscapes, agricultural biodiversity and knowledge systems of the local communities.
3. To provide Geographical Indication status to all the varieties of agricultural produce in such identified GIAHS.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

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