

Women-led Climate Resilient Farming Model

Empowerment | Food Security | Livelihoods | Natural Resources

Results(2016-17)

- 16000 women farmers have adopted this model
- 12000 acres of dry land has been converted to bio farms
- 40 % reduced farming costs
- 25% increase in productivity per acre

“Growing cotton blocked the land for an entire year. It was also prone to crop diseases. Our land was deteriorating due to use of chemicals and it was becoming difficult to continue farming. Shifting to food crops has given us stability”

Savita Shivananda Awle,
Maharashtra, India

Context

In the water scarce regions of Maharashtra, India, marginal farmers are the most affected by climate change. These farmers are in distress since farming has become unviable as they grow cash crops like soya, sugarcane and cotton - which require more water and more chemical inputs, causing long term harm to their land, groundwater and the environment. This problem is further intensified as the key stakeholder of farming is left aside – the women. Globally, 80% of poor farmers are women, however, have always been considered as mere labour on their own farms.

About Us

Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) empowers grassroots women’s collectives to move from “Margin to Mainstream”. Over two decades, we have built robust partnership eco-systems that enables women’s entrepreneurship and leadership in sustainable development . Our work, by choice, is centred around low income climate threatened communities.

The Model

Climate resilience farming model repositions women as farmers and bearers of the knowledge, enabling them to take informed decisions related to what to grow, what to consume and how much to sell.



Evolution

In 2014, SSP teams evolved this approach with an aim to promote participation of leadership of women to ensure food and income security among marginal farmer households. In 2016, the partnership with Government of Maharashtra came as an opportunity to scale up the approach through building a cadre of agriculture leaders as Community Resource Persons to further train and handhold women farmers.

“By cultivating food crops, I have been doing what the doctor does for people – providing good health”

Vanita Balbhim Manshetty, Maharashtra India

Scaling Up

In just one year, 20,000 women farmers and households have begun the shift towards climate resilient farming in drought prone regions of Maharashtra. SSP is organising the women farmers in producer groups and collectives and has adopted a market based approach that encourages first time access for marginal women farmers so they get competitive price for their yield.

Key Partners: Misereor Germany, Huairou Commission-GROOTS International

This model encourages women to gain cultivation rights from their families on a small piece of land which usually starts with half or one acre.

The key innovative practices that are building the resilience of marginal farming households are use of bio fertilisers and pesticides, preservation and exchange of local seeds, diversify from single to multiple food crops, increase in no. of crop cycles, choice of water efficient and short term crops, stress on water conservation through use of hydroponics, drip irrigation, sprinklers, farm ponds, recharging of bore wells, tree plantation and diversifying into agri allied businesses.

Sustainable Development Impact



Enhanced income security as a result of sale of surplus produce and diversifying into livestock and agri allied enterprise



Shift from cash crops to food crops, now women and households have food from their own farms



Increased consumption of farm grown chemical free vegetables, pulses and food grains



Women repositioned as farmers, entrepreneurs and decision makers in their farms, families and communities



Protection of soil, water and land through bio farming, water harvesting and afforestation

