

International Journal of Agriculture Extension and Social Development

Volume 9; Issue 7; July 2026; Page No. 450-452

Received: 24-04-2026
Accepted: 28-05-2026

Indexed Journal
Peer Reviewed Journal

Assessing the role of Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Sivasagar in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment among farm women in Sivasagar District, Assam

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DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.33545/26180723.2026.v9.i7f.3892>

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Abstract

India ranks second worldwide in agricultural production having world's largest net cultivated area. But still ranks 131 out of 148 countries in the world with gender parity score of 64.1%. In agri food system of India, Indian women contribute 62% of total workforce as farmers, agricultural labourer, agripreneurs and community leader. 80% of rural women are engaged in agri food system. Despite accounting second position in global agricultural production and having a nearly equal sex ratio, India has a significant gender gap. Lack of land ownership, restricted access to credit and technology, unpaid family labour, wage disparity etc are found as the factors of gender gap in Indian Agri food system. To reduce this gender gap and to establish gender equality and social inclusion, Krishi Vigyan Kendras of Indian Council of Agricultural Research are working strategically. Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Sivasagar is also encouraging farm women through awareness programme, trainings, on farm trials and front line demonstrations and able to make a significant change in promoting gender equality and social inclusion in Sivasagar district of Assam. From 2020-21 to 2025-26, all total 339 nos of training were conducted with 63 nos of OFT, 88 nos of FLD and 70 nos of awareness programme. All total 26,548 nos of practicing farmer, farm women and rural youth were came directly in contact with KVK Sivasagar, out of which 65% were women farmers. Under skill and Entrepreneurship development programmes, 27% women farmers showed interest in Animal Husbandry, 24% in value addition and food processing and 16% in vermicompost preparation.

Keywords: KVK, farm women, rural youth, tribal farmer, agricultural technology, capacity building

Introduction

India is world's 6th largest economy in the world with an estimated economic power of \$4.15 trillion. But still it ranks 131 out of 148 countries with an overall gender parity score of 64.1% (Global Gender Gap Report, 2025) ^[1]. In Agri Food system of India, Indian women contribute 62% of total workforce as farmers, agricultural labourer, agri-preneurs and community leader and 80% women in rural sector are engaged in the agri food system of India. They drive every stage of agri food system- from sowing seed to harvesting. Women are not only engaged in food production, they are also engaged in livestock, fishery, seed conservation and processing as well. Despite accounting second position in global agricultural production and having a nearly equal sex ratio, India has a significant gender gap. Various socio economic factors are identified responsible for the severe gender gap. Interaction of many socio-economic elements determines the status of women in any community. Even now, more than 60 years of independence, there is still widespread gender discrimination (Jangir *et al.*, 2024) ^[2]. Recognizing and tackling gender inequities is critical for gender equality and food security and sustainable agricultural development (Kanojiya *et al.*, 2023) ^[3]. Lack of land

ownership, restricted access to credit and technology, unpaid family labour, wage disparity etc are found as the factors of gender gap in Indian Agri food system. While 73.2% rural women work in agriculture, only about 12%- 13.5% own land, Lack of ownership of land limits their access to institutional credit, loans and inputs for agriculture activities (Singh *et al.*, 2023) ^[4]. Women in agriculture frequently earn less than male farmer. Apart from this, women farmers were not welcome in decision making in the family. Although women participate in marketing as traders and vendors, their potential remains constrained by poor market literacy and male dominated market.

To reduce this gender gap and to establish gender equality and social inclusion, Krishi Vigyan Kendras of Indian Council of Agricultural Research are working strategically (ICAR, 2025) ^[5]. Krishi Vigyan kendras are an integral part of the National Agricultural Research System (NARS) aims at assessment of location specific technology modules in agriculture and allied disciplines through training, technology assessment, refinement and demonstrations. Krishi Vigyan Kendras empower farm women through tailored vocational training, skill development in agriculture and allied sectors and introduction of drudgery reducing

technologies. The Krishi Vigyan Kendras have got clear cut mandates for upgradation farmwomen in term of capacity building through training, demonstrated campaign and sensitization programme. While child nutrition and mother care have become the prime issues to the nation, the KVK are organizing different vocational training for the women. Some of the trainings are specially designed for the women so that they can earn and sustain their family through remunerative enterprise like vermicompost, kitchen garden, tailoring, fabric, preservation of fruits and vegetable/nursery, floriculture, pisciculture ornamental fish etc. (Acharya, *et al.*, 2019) [6]. Under the guidance of KVKs, women farmers are not only involving in the areas related to women health, income generation but also in the fields dominated by male farmers like seed production (Jagriti Beej Savikas, Malda, West Bengal; Balaram women Farmers SHG, Baramati etc), CHCs for women, encouraging agripreneurs etc.

Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Sivasagar is also encouraging farm women through awareness programme, trainings, on farm trials and front line demonstrations and able to make a significant change in promoting gender equality and social inclusion in Sivasagar district of Assam.

Materials and Methods

KVK Sivasagar is situated at Rohdoi Pukhuri of Sivasagar district in Assam, India. Sivasagar district is situated on the Upper Brahmaputra Valley Zone of Assam covering a geographical area of 1599 square kilometers and lies between 26.45°N and 27.15°N latitudes and 94.25°E and 95.25°E longitudes.

The study was mainly based on the data collected from the mandated and non-mandated activities of KVK Sivasagar from 2021-22 to 2025-26. Trainings are prime activity of

KVKs to hands on training to the farmers. Farm women along with Rural Youth and Extension Functionaries. On Farm Trials and Front Line Demonstrations are the activities demonstrated at farmers field to assess the technology and popularise the technology respectively. Data collected from KVK Sivasagar are studied and analyses in terms of percentage.

Results and Discussion

Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) play a crucial role in promoting Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Indian agriculture by providing targeted training, technology, and support services to women and marginalized communities, thereby enhancing their livelihoods and decision-making power. KVKs address gender disparities in agriculture through Customized training for value addition, household food security and animal husbandry; Skill Development and Entrepreneurship development by poultry farming, mushroom cultivation, beekeeping; popularize and demonstrate location-specific; Drudgery-reducing technologies and tools to save women's time and energy and improve their work efficiency; Gender Mainstreaming by fostering the formation of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and improving their access to information, technology, and financial resources; representation of farm women as members of their Scientific Advisory Committees (SAC) ensuring their perspectives are considered in planning and reviewing activities. Fostering Social inclusion by it's mandated activities and flagship programmes, KVKs contributing a great share in rural India by uplifting all farming communities, including rural youth and school dropouts, socially disadvantaged and tribal farmers, by ensuring agricultural research and entrepreneurship.

Table 1: Activities carried out by KVK Sivasagar for promoting gender equality in Sivasagar district

Initiatives taken by KVKs	Activities
Technology dissemination	On Farm Trials, Front Line Demonstrations
Customized training	Value addition, household food security and animal husbandry
Skill Development and Entrepreneurship development	Mushroom production, vermicompost production, poultry farming, beekeeping, goatery
Drudgery-reducing technologies and tools	To save women's time and energy and imorove their work efficiency
Gender Mainstreaming	Fostering the formation of Self Help Group (SHG), improving their access to information technology and financial resources, imparting input dealer training programme, participation in Scientific Advisory Committee

KVK Sivasagar of Assam is one of the KVKs in India intensively working for the upliftment of Farm women by providing diverse technical knowledge and skills from the time of inception. From 2020-21 to 2025-26, all total 339 nos of training were conducted with 63 nos of OFT, 88 nos of FLD and 70 nos of awareness programme. All total 26,548 nos of practicing farmer, farm women and rural youth were came directly contact with KVK Sivasagar, out of which 65% were women farmers. Highest numbers of women participation (11,332) was recorded against male farmer (6811) in the year 2025-26 (Fig.:1). Apart from these, women farmers have been participating in various other programmes of KVK Sivasagar like CFLD, Oilseed Model Village, APART, National Mission on Natural Farming, Nutrition Garden etc. From the study, it has found that 14045 nos women farmers participated in awareness programme, 1541 nos women participated in training, 198 nos participated in OFT while 342 nos women participated in FLD programmes in last six years (Fig.2). Vikshit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan

(VKSA) was the largest nationwide campaign in the year 2025-26, where KVK Sivasagar recorded 59.26% women participation.

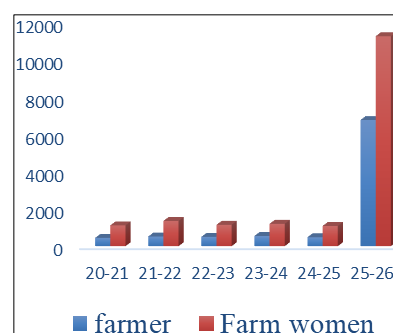


Fig 1: Year wise participation of farmer and farm women in KVK activities

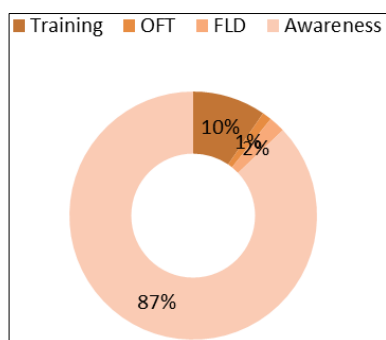


Fig 2: Women farmers participation in Awareness programme, training, OFT and FLD

Under skill and Entrepreneurship development programmes, 27% women farmers showed interest in Animal Husbandry. As a result, new breeds of poultry like Kuttanad, White pekin, Vanashree, Janapriya and Sri Nidhi, BV380 layer poultry were introduced and getting popularity among women farmers. Another second most important sector is value addition and food processing (24%). Under this sector many women farmers are able to establish as Agripreneur in Sivasagar district. Mushroom, vermicompost, floriculture, honey production are some thrust areas given importance by the women farmers (Fig.3).

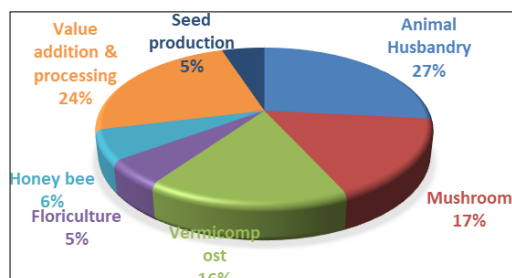


Fig 3: Skill and Entrepreneurship development programme for women farmers

Women farmers trained by KVK Sivasagar are not only doing excellent in women specialized skills; but also taking part in male dominating sectors like farm machineries and seed production programmes.



Conclusion

In this changing scenario of Indian agriculture, there is a strong need for institutional support to promote critical analysis in women and encourage them to think independently and challenge unequal gender relations and

exploitation. Krishi vigyan Kendras under ICAR are pivotal institutions in Indian Agriculture for minimizing the gender gap by transforming women from passive farm labourers to skilled, empowered stakeholder of the farming community. KVKs are fostering farm women's access to knowledge, technologies, and institutional platforms, thereby strengthening their agency, productivity, and leadership in agri-food systems.

There should be more numbers of skill development training programmes for women leading to entrepreneurship development; women based Farmers Producer Companies to access financial benefits and marketing through KVKs of India to promote gender equality and women empowerment in Indian Agriculture.

Acknowledgment

The authors thankfully acknowledge the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) for providing the necessary facilities to conduct various programmes.

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