



**Celebrating the International Year of Women Farmers 2026
on 28th July at
Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights Authority,
Plant Authority Bhawan,
New Delhi**



The Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India, organized a programme on 28th July at Plant Authority Bhawan, New Delhi, as part of Celebration of International Year of Women Farmers' 2026 to felicitate Women Custodians of Agro-biodiversity in recognition of their role in Conservation and registration of traditional plant varieties.

More than 80 persons participated in this programme including 20 Women farmers engaged in the conservation of agro bio-diversity and making available plant genetic resources for the varietal development. The women custodians of agro-biodiversity belonging to five states, namely Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh, PGSC Awardees, scientists, invited dignitaries', and PPVFRA officers



and staff actively participated in the programme.

Shri C R Chaudhary, Chairman, Rajasthan Farmers Commission, Jaipur, was the Chief Guest of this half day event which started with tree-plantation by the Chief Guest. Others present on the occasion included Dr. T. Mohapatra Chairperson, PPVFRA, Dr

D K Agarwal, Registrar General, PPVFRA, Dr. P.K. Singh, Agricultural Commissioner, Government of India, Dr Anuradha Agarwal, Director, ICAR-DKMA, PUSA, New Delhi, Dr Seema Sharma, Authority Member, PPVFRA, New Delhi, Dr V. Celia Chalam, Head, Division of Plant Quarantine, NBPGR, New Delhi and Dr. Bhagirath Choudhary, SABC, ASIA, Rajasthan.



An exhibition was organised by the Authority wherein women custodians of agrobiodiversity displayed various traditional varieties of cereals, pulses, millets, oilseed crops and fruits. The women farmers' group from Kalsubai Parisar Biyane Savardhan Samajik Sanstha, Ahmednagar, Maharashtra; Nagauri Pan Methi Grower Samooh, Nagaur,

Rajasthan; Shanidev Mahila Self-Help Group, Kasganj, Uttar Pradesh; Mahila Samooh, Balaghat Madhya Pradesh; Women Farmers group from Malda, West Bengal and individual women farmers Ms Lahari Bai Padiya, from Dindori, Madhya Pradesh and Ms Asawari Nilesh Poshattiwar, Chandrapur, Maharashtra, showcased their conserved plant genetic resources/ varieties, and value-added products. The Chief Guest, dignitaries and participants visited the Exhibition, interacted with the women custodians of Agro-biodiversity and appreciated the efforts made by them.





The celebration commenced with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by Shri CR Chaudhary, Chairman of the Rajasthan Farmers Commission, and other dignitaries as well as the invited women farmers.

Dr D K Agarwal, Registrar General, PPVFRA welcomed the Chief Guest and other

participants, He highlighted the importance of the program and progress of the Registration of Plant Varieties and informed that the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority (PPV&FRA) has registered over 10,716 plant varieties to date, with approximately 1,000 of these registered in the names of women farmers or women farmers' groups. He urged that farmers should take advantage of traditional knowledge associated with seeds as well as the agricultural practice and register many more traditional varieties to take the benefit of the provisions under the PPVFR Act, 2001.



Dr. Bhagirath Choudhary, Founding Director of the South Asia Biotechnology Centre (SABC) and facilitator, highlighted the journey for registration of 'Nagori Paan Methi'. He explained that a campaign was launched in 2021 to establish the crop's true identity as 'Nagori Paan Methi', distinguishing it from 'Kasuri Methi'. Subsequently, the crop gained a new identity through the collaborative efforts of farmers from the Mundwa region, scientific institutions, and various government agencies. He noted that after being included in the schedule of the Spices Board Act, Nagori Paan Methi has now been registered as a 'community variety' under the PPV&FR Act. He stated that this achievement marks a significant milestone towards obtaining a GI tag and a distinct HSN code.



Dr Sujata Tetali, Technical Consultant, PPVFRA, Branch Office Pune highlighted the role of women in agriculture, particularly in conservation of plant genetic resources and informed that a large number of women farmers are engaged in such activities who are to be facilitated for registration of their varieties with PPVRFA.

Dr. Seema Sharma, a PPVFR Authority member commended the efforts being made by PPV&FRA to encourage women farmer groups and facilitate the registration of local crop varieties. She emphasized the need to recognise and value the seeds and plants preserved by women farmers.

Dr. Anuradha Agrawal, Director, ICAR-DKMA, New Delhi highlighted the pivotal role rural women play in agriculture and in ensuring food and nutritional security. She stated that the conservation of traditional crops varieties can be achieved more effectively under women's leadership.

Dr. P.K. Singh, Agriculture Commissioner, Government of India and PPVFR Authority member, in his remark, stated that women farmers are the true guardians of the country's agricultural biodiversity. While welcoming groups of women farmers from various states, he emphasized the need to extend the benefits of the Ministry of Agriculture schemes to small and marginal farmers, as well as to tribal communities.

In his address, the Chief Guest, Shri CR Chaudhary, appreciated the remarkable progress made by PPVFRA in recent years in registration of plant varieties, particularly of those belonging to the farmers. He stated that 'Nagori Paan Methi; now registered with PPVFRA in the name of a community of women farmers of Nagaur Rajasthan, is renowned both domestically and internationally for its distinctive aroma and quality, and it should soon be granted Geographical Indication (GI) status. Urging farmers to adopt residue-free (chemical-free) farming, he stated that safe and high-quality produce is what will strengthen the competitiveness of farmers in global markets. Further he emphasized that seeds are farmers' greatest asset and traditional varieties represent our rich heritage, which can meet our future needs.



Appreciating the contribution of women farmers, Dr. Trilochan Mohapatra, Chairperson of the PPV&FRA, in his presidential address stated that women have played a pivotal role in conserving India's agricultural biodiversity. Describing the identification, conservation, promotion, breeding, and registration of traditional plant varieties as a

national imperative, he called upon farming communities to come forward and register



a greater number of local and traditional varieties. He stated that while current figure of variety registration reflects the significant role played by women, their actual level of participation is far greater.

Dr. Mohapatra announced that the Authority would soon amend the plant variety registration application form to include gender identification as a mandatory field. This measure will facilitate better scientific and institutional documentation of the contributions made by women farmers and women farmers' groups, thereby ensuring that their role in agricultural

biodiversity conservation receives due recognition and appreciation at the national level.

During interaction with Women farmers, Smt Lahari Bai Padia from Dindori, Madhya Pradesh and Smt Asawari Nilesh Poshattiwar, Chandrapur, Maharashtra, shared their experiences in the conservation of traditional plant varieties and urged the Government for more support to the women farmers.

On this occasion, PPVFRA felicitated the Seed Saviours, communities and individual women farmers who came from different parts of the country with shawl and shreephala. The facilitators were also honoured for helping the farmers for registration of their conserved varieties.

During the event, the registration certificate for world-renowned Community conserved Variety' "Nagori Paan Methi" (*Trigonella corniculata* L.) was presented to Smt. Geeta Devi, the Pradhan (Head) and representative of the women farmer community from Mundwa Tehsil in Nagaur district of Rajasthan. Participating women farmers groups also submitted more than 100 applications with seeds for registration of farmer's varieties under the PPVFR Act 2001.



The Program ended with a vote of thanks to one and all by Dr Ravi Prakash, Technical Consultant, PPVFRA, New Delhi.

