

'Women cementing their place in agriculture'

Offering women better access to education and technology can help mitigate climate change challenges; ensuring gender equity key to achieving sustainable development goals, says scientist

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From a central role in seed conservation and quality seed production to carbon farming, women are formalising and cementing their place in agriculture, according to speakers at the 16th Agricultural Science Congress here. Their increasing enrolment for formal agricultural education, especially in agricultural universities, is an indication of the shape of things to come.

V. Geethalakshmi, Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University,

said that more than 70% of students in the university were women. The trend has been visible for around five years now, she said on the sidelines of the congress.

Dr. Geethalakshmi, who made a presentation on 'Empowering youth and women for entrepreneurship-driven economic development', said greater participation in education provided better opportunities for women by raising the overall level of human capital and labour productivity. The gap between girls and boys in higher educational institutions

was narrowing as 49% of students in colleges are now girls. She also said women-owned enterprises had grown in recent years.

According to her, women bring with them a different perspective and set of skills, which are needed to create a more diverse and innovative business environment. Malavika Daddani, former Joint Director (Research), ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute, said achieving gender equity was integral to achieving sustainable development goals.

Equipping women by providing them better ac-

cess to education and technology can help mitigate climate change challenges.

Agricultural scientist Neeru Bhooshan made a presentation on 'Agri start-up ecosystem to empower youth and women'. Swati Nayak, International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), who made a presentation on empowering farm women through the seed system, said women farmers formed an integral part of agriculture, had sound knowledge of rice production, and showed the ability to learn and excel in groups through strong community bonding.