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A Study on Existing State Policies, Women's Access to Land and Women Empowerment

A majority of rural women in India depend on agriculture for their livelihood - even more than men, who have broader opportunities. There have been indications in recent years that the role of women has been increasing with diversification of household income, greater male occupational mobility and out-migration of men leading to increasing responsibility on women in farming. Despite this, however, only a very few women own or control land due to gender discrimination in the existing laws relating to land, ownership and accessibility, in most of the states.

Access to resources can result in increased women's empowerment and child well being, as some studies have revealed. Improvement in the asset base, ability to manage risk and diversification of livelihoods could also result in enhancement of level and quality of life of women.

In this background MANAGE initiated a study on, "Existing State policies, Women's Access to Land and Women Empowerment". The objectives of the study are:

1. To collect, collate and document information about existing laws, policies and interventions related to women's access to land in selected states;
2. To examine the existing pattern of land tenancy and land ownership rights for women associated with agricultural production / practices in terms of individual rights, joint *pattas*, common property land etc;
3. To examine the impact of these laws, policies and interventions in actual access / ownership of land by women and study the relationship between access to land and women empowerment
4. To identify constraints that inhibit women from availing full benefit of these laws, policies and interventions;
5. To study, constraints / limitations if any, faced by women farmers due to non-ownership of land in making optimum contribution to household food security.
6. To study the constraints faced by policy makers and implementing agencies in providing access to land including land ownership rights to women;
7. To suggest / recommend appropriate measures for policy makers and implementing agencies to promote the women's access to land ownership.

The study is being conducted in five states namely Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Meghalaya, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan, covering 1200 farm households and officials who have been selected using purposive sampling methods.