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To
The Editor,

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Sir,

I request that the following matter may kindly be published in your esteemed daily:

Endowment lecture on, 'Young and Female?'

“Women farmers are not recognized by themselves or by others in India, China and Indonesia. They are not recognized as farmers in their own right but as farmers’ wives ‘helping’ in farming. But in Canada, many young women express their self-identity as farmers” observed Dr. Sharada Srinivasan, Associate Professor, International Development and Canada Research Chair in Gender, Justice and Development, University of Guelph, Canada. She was delivering the endowment lecture organized by the Centre for Agricultural and Rural Development Studies (CARDS), Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore. She, in her lecture, tried to address some pertinent questions on the issue like: What proportion of farmers is young and female? Do they participate in designing policy and technology that can make them better farmers? Do we know how many young female farmers own land or other productive resources?

Worldwide young people are apparently disinterested in farming and leaving the countryside in search of better future. Close to 34% of India’s rural population belongs to the age group 15–34 years. An estimated 56.6% of rural youth in the age group 15–29 years continued to rely on agriculture, forestry, or fishing as a source of livelihood. They are under-represented in local institutions and governance mechanisms, and tend to have less decision-making power. In addition to these constraints, prevailing gender norms and discrimination often mean that women face an excessive work burden, and much of their labour remains unpaid and unrecognized.

In Tamil Nadu only 22 per cent of female farmers are working full time in farms. Some legal and patriarchal norms prevent females as farmers. These include patrilineal inheritance, preference for sons to inherit even when they are not interested, sons are seen as more attached to family land than daughters and daughters 'willingly' give up their share in patriarchal bargain. Women's work is never finished in farm, household, reproductive and care responsibilities.

Some of the serious repercussions of lack of recognition as independent farmer, lack of representation in farmers' associations, lack of mentors, social status associated with women on farm among upper castes and wealthier households and restriction of movement for input purchase and sale of produce are not being taken seriously. Family farms steeped in patriarchy, intersection of gender, caste and class. Some revitalizing strategies are land banks and collective land leasing by women like 'KudumbaShree' experiments in India (Kerala and Telangana), access to finance and markets, training, leadership and mentoring.

Dr.N.Kumar, Vice Chancellor, TNAU in his inaugural address narrated how once full time farm worker cum farm owner become a visiting farmers in most of the farms in Tamil Nadu. Dr. K. S. Subramanian, Director of Research introduced the speaker and welcomed the gathering. Dr. K. Mani, Professor and Head, Department of Agricultural Economics proposed vote of thanks. Post graduate students, PhD scholars and staffs of the Directorate of CARDS participated in the lecture.

Public Relations Officer