

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Saturday, 19 June 2021 15:00 GMT +05:30
DIALOGUE TITLE	National Dialogue on Women, Work and Food Systems
CONVENED BY	SEWA
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/23772/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	India

The outcomes from a Food Systems Summit Dialogue will be of use in developing the pathway to sustainable food systems within the locality in which they take place. They will be a valuable contribution to the national pathways and also of interest to the different workstreams preparing for the Summit: the Action Tracks, Scientific Groups and Champions as well as for other Dialogues.

1. PARTICIPATION

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

164

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

37

19-30

63

31-50

39

51-65

18

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

40 Male

110 Female

14 Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

39 Agriculture/crops

3 Fish and aquaculture

11 Livestock

7 Agro-forestry

2 Environment and ecology

3 Trade and commerce

7 Education

Communication

14 Food processing

2 Food retail, markets

7 Food industry

6 Financial Services

5 Health care

8 Nutrition

5 National or local government

Utilities

4 Industrial

41 Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

5 Small/medium enterprise/artisan

3 Large national business

4 Multi-national corporation

26 Small-scale farmer

Medium-scale farmer

Large-scale farmer

15 Local Non-Governmental Organization

11 International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

2 Science and academia

21 Workers and trade union

Member of Parliament

Local authority

6 Government and national institution

Regional economic community

United Nations

7 International financial institution

34 Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

Consumer group

30 Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

HOW DID YOU ORGANIZE THE DIALOGUE SO THAT THE PRINCIPLES WERE INCORPORATED, REINFORCED AND ENHANCED?

1. Act with Urgency: Recognizing the urgency to bring voice and visibility to these poor women workers in the food systems discussions and to ensure that they are not left out from the process of food systems transformation, SEWA organized this National Dialogue on "Women Work and Food Systems: Voices from Grassroots". 2. Commit to the Summit: Through this dialogue, SEWA intends to bring in the voices of the poor informal sector women workers who are an integral part of the food systems but often left out in decisions making process. 3. Be Respectful: The women workers from the informal economy are a backbone of a countries food systems. And yet their voices are unheard. Therefore, this dialogue was organized to get these workers their due respect in the food systems by giving them a platform to voice their issues and concerns but also their best practices. 4. Embrace multi-stakeholder inclusivity: Adhering to the 'embrace multi-stakeholder inclusivity', SEWA invited various stakeholders from different sectors including grassroots organizations, national level stakeholders, and policy makers. This intentional composition of participants enabled our dialogue to bring diverse perspectives and voices from stakeholders and helped participants to listen and understand different perspective in food systems. 5. Complement the work of others: The dialogue provided stakeholders from various sectors of the food systems an equal opportunity to put forth their points. As the dialogue provided representatives from each sector to share, participants could complement and learn from experiences of each other without any prejudice. At the beginning of the dialogue, we encouraged participants to be respectful and carefully listen to each other. The moderator guided the discussion and helped participants to be open to divergent points of view. As the grassroots sisters shared their life journeys, challenges faced as well as provided with solutions, participants presented respects and shared various perspectives comfortably. They represented on behalf of their communities.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

• The Dialogue was kept within the suggested time frame – 2.5 hours. • Keynote presentations on the purpose and objectives of the UNFSS and the Summit Dialogues were given to orient the participants, for them to take the opportunity to come together and identify priorities and actions they can take to bring more inclusive, equitable and healthier food systems, while also safeguarding the planet. • The Moderator provided the context of the Summit Action Tracks, the complexity of food systems, and how the Dialogue could help shape pathways for the future of equitable and sustainable food systems. Members from various action tracks of the Food Systems Summit were also invited and actively participated to ensure that the dialogue sticks to the purpose and objective of the UNFSS. • Representatives of various sectors in the food systems including the Govt., inter-governmental organizations, Multilateral organizations (Like UNDP, WB), CSOs, Private sector, Academia, Economists as well as most importantly the grassroot women workers themselves including vendors and hawkers, small and marginal farmers, FPOs, members of Milk Cooperatives, Agribusiness enterprises etc. actively participated in the dialogue. • To ensure effective participation by the grassroot workers, simultaneous translation in 2 local languages (Hindi and Gujarati) as well as in English was arranged. • Participants were encouraged to share their perspectives on how issues on food and food security could be approached collectively, not through one's own disciplinary lens or own sectoral interest.

DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER DIALOGUE CONVENORS ABOUT APPRECIATING THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT?

Based on our experience hosting two independent dialogues, we have learned that it is important to present clear objectives and topics at the beginning of the dialogue. It means that you need to explain about the Food Systems Summit and what it means to participants, so that participants would be aware of the purpose of the dialogue and we can also better organize the dialogue to apply the 'commit to the summit' principle. Also, to ensure equitable food systems, there is a need to have a balanced and integrated approach to various aspects of the food systems from Production, Processing, Distribution and consumption. And therefore, the dialogues and discussions on these aspects also need to include stakeholders engaged at all levels in these stages of the food systems.

3. METHOD

The outcomes of a Dialogue are influenced by the method that is used.

DID YOU USE THE SAME METHOD AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CONVENORS REFERENCE MANUAL?

☒

Yes

☐

No

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

While the Food Systems Summit workstreams and regional and state dialogues focused on the issues of gender, food systems and gender transformative approaches with multi-stakeholders, the issues and challenges of the people who make the base of agriculture i.e., the marginal rural women farmers and landless laborers had not been represented in the game changing solutions. We believe that women play major role in shouldering the responsibility of fulfilling the family's food and nutritional needs as well as in the food systems – in production, processing, trading of food and in making decisions about consumption and purchase of food at household level. And yet their voices are barely heard. Thus, the dialogue was intentionally created to promote their participation in the food systems and bring their voices.

The dialogue was organized by SEWA to engage small and marginal women farmers and informal sector women workers in the food systems across India and provide a platform to bring forth their issues, challenges and solutions to enhance their visibility, identity and livelihood in the food system in the presence of appropriate policymakers, private sector organizations, scientists and individual consumers.

ACTION TRACKS

	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
✓	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

	Finance	✓	Policy
	Innovation		Data & Evidence
	Human rights		Governance
✓	Women & Youth Empowerment		Trade-offs
			Environment and Climate

MAIN FINDINGS

The dialogue established that in order to enable real progress for the smallholder women farmers and landless laborers, there is a need for a comprehensive and inclusive approach that integrates women producers into mainstream agriculture and food system activities, provides them long-term, sustainable support and creates for them better access to financial services and markets.

Further, to achieve truly transformative changes in the Food System, it is critical that all the issues, challenges and solutions identified should not be considered in silos, but viewed holistically, with the implementation of solutions and policies being done in complete synergy between the Private Sector, Public Sector, NGOs and the grassroot members. Replication of SEWA's models of social enterprises and cooperatives across the country can bring about truly transformative changes in the lives of millions of informal workers in our country.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC

1. The Issues and Challenges in the Food Systems identified through the dialogue

- A lack of integration of women workers in production and consumption of food
- Most of the policies, schemes and subsidies are associated to land and hence smallholder farmers, share croppers & agricultural laborers not unable to access them.
- Despite women taking care of major field activities, they are “unpaid workers” as they rarely have access to market and the income as well as benefits linked to farming is received by the male members of the family due to them being the title-holders of farm lands. According to a study done by World Economic Forum, 66% of the work done by women in India is unpaid work.
- Women farmers do not have voice, visibility or validity in the decision-making process in mainstream agricultural practices and overall food system.
- This lack of visibility results in disentanglement to benefits as well as lack of access to agricultural extension services
- Increasingly frequent climate and market shocks make agriculture unprofitable, unsustainable and unviable.
- Most of the training and capacity building programs on technology and farm activities being attended by male members of the family and women being deprived of the same opportunity.
- Modernized, heavy farming machinery and equipment is not women-compatible and usable only by men, rendering the women unemployable.

2. Solutions suggested through the dialogue

- An integration of the entire food system from “Seed to Food” i.e., the entire process from seed to cultivation, production, distribution & consumption of food to be integrated to achieve the goals of good nutrition for the people, income for small holder farmers and sustainability of the food system.
- Capacity building and skill development of women farmers and laborers on farm planning, farm management, marketing and supply chain management.
- Resilience building of the smallholder farmers to absorb climate and market shocks through an agriculture resilience and recovery fund.
- Enabling women farmers to have the rights to the title of their land
- Enabling women farmers to have a voice in decision-making & policy implementation in the Food System.
- Addressing the issue of women’s unpaid labor and skewed balance of work.
- Bringing about gender responsive agriculture & food system policies; bridging gender & technology gaps.
- Understanding the role of “uncultivated greens” and encouraging its cultivation as it forms a major part of the diet of poor, rural families along with being a powerful source of nutrition.
- Decentralizing and diversifying the food markets with a wide range of local products.
- Linking the produce of smallholder women farmers to the Public Distribution System which would help in food grains produced by the farmers being available for their consumption, consumption for their family members and the local villagers.
- Enabling the farmers to get assured markets and fair price of their produce to attain income security.
- Promoting local agro-processing industry to increase employment opportunities for youth in villages & reducing migration to urban areas.
- Organizing women to come together for collective marketing, bargaining & demand for better services.
- Introducing progressive policies empowering women in food systems to reduce gender based violence.

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		✓	Environment and Climate

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

No divergent viewpoints were raised or identified.

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KEYWORDS

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Finance | Policy |
| Innovation | Data & Evidence |
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| Women & Youth Empowerment | Trade-offs |
| | Environment and Climate |

ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

ATTACHMENTS

- **Report-SEWA National Dialogue**
<https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Report-SEWAs-National-Dialogue-on-Women-Work-and-Food-Systems.pdf>

RELEVANT LINKS

- **Summary Report of SEWA's National Dialogue on Women, Work and Food Systems: Voices of Women Workers**
https://www.sewa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Summary-report_SEWAs-National-Dialogue-on-Women-Work-and-Food-Systems.pdf
- **Experience of Grassroot women worker from Gujarat**
<https://youtu.be/SKs0WB4ze4E>
- **Testimonial of Grassroot sister from Bihar**
<https://youtu.be/-L0tmTxJvQA>
- **Experience of Grassroots women worker from Meghalaya**
https://youtu.be/OQ_pC0dQ_-w