

## INDIA

# Empowering Women to Fuel Agriculture-led Growth



### BACKGROUND

LWR began working in India in the 1950's and now focuses on breaking the cycle of poverty for India's most marginalized populations, including tribals, Dalits, and women, through livelihood development programs in agriculture, climate change adaptation, and disaster risk reduction.

Though gender is a cross-cutting theme of all its projects, LWR has implemented three projects in Bihar, India, since 2012, specifically working with female farmers to raise the quantity, quality, and diversity of their crop production, improve their access to markets and credit, and cultivate their business and leadership skills through the development of Self Help Groups (SHGs).

### LOCAL PARTNERS:

Action for Social Advancement (ASA) & Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN)

### PROJECT PERIOD:

July 2012 – September 2017

**FUNDING:** \$733,595

### RESULTS

- Reached 2,433 women farmers and supported 247 women SHGs.
- Facilitated the participation of all SHG members in developing the operational and governance procedures and marketing plans for their groups.
- Conducted nearly 700 trainings for women farmers. Trainings covered such topics as **Climate Smart and Good Agriculture Practices** (CSA/GAP), vegetable cultivation, farm planning, **marketing and microfinancing**, and SHG, water committee, and facilities (e.g. irrigation) management.
- Introduced **rain shelter and polyhouse agriculture** and trained 156 women farmers to manage polyhouse nurseries, which produce quality seedlings to sell to other farmers in and around their community.
- Increased the **annual income** of women farmers by INR 8,900 (USD 132) on average.
- Reduced women's time spent foraging for forest products to sell by 50% on average, affording them more time and energy to **participate in income generating and community development opportunities**.
- Increased the **agricultural collaboration and productivity of both men and women**, which also reduced the need for men to migrate for work.
- Convened first ever **Women Farmers Convention** in Losinga, Bihar. More than 500 women attended and participated in:
  - Songs and plays about **gender equality, farmers' rights**, and the importance of working together;
  - Demonstrations on **operating and maintaining heavy field machinery**, like power tillers;
  - Discussions on **improved farming and marketing practices**.

### ROAD TO DEVELOPMENT

*Harnessing their unified strength as SHG members, the women of Barmasia (pictured above) are fighting to have their say not only inside their homes but with their local government as well. On their first trip (ever) outside of their village, they paid a surprise visit to the Head Office of their District to demand several rights and services, which they had previously been denied.*

*Shocked to action by their outspokenness, the District Manager immediately tasked staff with visiting the village to assess their situation and needs. The staff failed to reach Barmasia on their first attempt, however, because there was no road to the village. Within a few short weeks, the local government had built a road connecting Barmasia to the rest of the district. In their first attempt at civic participation, these women literally put their village on the map!*