

**Women's Agency and Gender Equity in Food Systems**  
An Independent Food Systems Summit Dialogue, Asia & Africa  
10 June 2021, 14:00 - 16:00 IST  
Convened by Norwich Institute for Sustainable Development (NISD),  
Bharat Krishak Samaj, Rythu Sadhikara Samstha (RySS) and TIGR2ESS

A broad understanding is emerging that our food systems are profoundly inequitable; they also play a major role in environmental degradation. The pandemic and its devastating impacts have brought these vulnerabilities into sharper focus. Yet, food systems also have immense potential to improve the health of our bodies, our economies and our environment. For this, it is vital to transform the way the world produces, consumes and thinks about food.

In pursuit of this goal, the [United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021](#) is being convened as part of the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Guided by five [Action Tracks](#), the Summit will bring together key players from the worlds of science, business, policy, healthcare and academia, as well as farmers, indigenous people, youth organizations, consumer groups, environmental activists, and other stakeholders. [Food Systems Summit Dialogues](#) are an important instrument for the same.

We believe the FSS Dialogues are a unique opportunity to bring the perspectives of underrepresented food systems actors into the Summit process and help guide individual and collective action towards a future of food that is sustainable, equitable and secure. Women play vital roles within food systems, but are hardly recognized as crucial partners in making them resilient and sustainable. In this dialogue, we seek to explore the ways in which the concept of women's agency (including empowerment) can be operationalized in food systems, in both policy and practice. Investing in women's agency is now urgent, as despite considerable global awareness and progress on gender equality over the past four decades, several challenges remain to the exercise of women's agency in food systems. These include the invisibility and devaluation of women's work, a lack of entitlements and unequal access to assets, lack of recognition of women's knowledges, low levels of leadership and representation in decision-making bodies, structural inequities, and a lack of investment in building women's collective agency for inclusion and equity.

We invite you to join us in a [dialogue](#) with development practitioners, researchers and activists from Asia and Africa on 10 June 2021, from 2pm to 4pm IST. In keeping with Covid-19 restrictions, the discussion will be online (Zoom platform). The focus of the discussion will be on 'Women's Agency and Gender Equity in Food Systems'. Discussion on entry-points and strategies for strengthening women's agency will be framed around sub-themes including the interface between women's knowledges and science; investing in women's individual and collective agency; pathways to improving nutritional outcomes; and securing rights, entitlements and representation. Please find further details about the dialogue, including the discussion topics, in the concept note attached with this email.

We look forward to your participation in making this a stimulating and productive engagement. We request you to kindly confirm your participation [here](#). Thereafter, further details, including the meeting link, will be conveyed for your reference.

Thanking you,



Nitya Rao,  
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Director, [Norwich Institute for Sustainable Development](#);  
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