

Bill No. XX of 2026

THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE ENTITLEMENTS
AND WELFARE OF WOMEN FARMERS BILL, 2026

A

BILL

*to provide for the establishment of a National Commission for the
protection of the rights, entitlements and welfare of women
farmers and for matters connected therewith or
incidental thereto.*

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Seventy-seventh Year of the Republic
of India as follows: —

1. (1) This Act may be called the National Commission for the Entitlements
and Welfare of Women Farmers Act, 2026.

Short title and
commencement.

5 (2) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government
may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, —

(a) "appropriate Government" means in the case of a State, the Government of that State and in all other cases, the Central Government;

(b) "certificate" means the Woman Farmer Certificate issued by an authorized officer of the Gram Panchayat under sub-section (d) of section 7, which shall be the conclusive proof of declaring a person as a woman farmer; 5

(c) "Commission" means the National Commission for the Entitlements and Welfare of Women Farmers established under section 3; 10

(d) "farmer" shall include, but not limited to, agricultural operational holders, landless cultivators, agricultural labourers, plantation labourers, pastoralists, sharecroppers and tenants in case of a landless farmer migrating or moving from one state to another, if such farmer stays in a State for at least six months, that farmer may be considered as a farmer in that particular state, however, the term shall not include corporate entities operated by or involving farmers; 15

(e) "Fund" means the Central Women Farmers Agricultural Development Fund constituted under section 8; 20

(f) "land" means any land or water body utilised for the purpose of agriculture;

(g) "Member" means a Member of the Commission;

(h) "prescribed" means prescribed by rules made under this Act; and 25

(i) "women farmer" means, irrespective of the marital status or ownership of land, any woman who undertakes cultivation in her own land or land owned by her husband or a family member or land owned by any other person on sharing basis or on lease. 30

Establishment of National Commission for the Entitlements and Welfare of Women Farmers.

3. **(1) The Central Government shall, by notification in the Official Gazette, establish a Commission to be known as the National Commission for the Entitlements and Welfare of Women Farmers to exercise the powers conferred on, and to perform the functions assigned to it, under this Act.** 35

(2) The Commission shall be a body corporate by the name aforesaid, having perpetual succession and a common seal, with power, subject to the provisions of this Act, to acquire, hold and dispose of property, both movable and immovable, and to contract, and shall, by the said name, sue or be sued. 40

(3) The head office of the Commission shall be at such place in the country as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette specify and the Commission may, with the prior approval of the Central Government, establish offices at other places in the country as it may deem necessary, for the efficient discharge of the duties assigned to it under the Act. 45

(4) The Commission shall consist of the following members, namely —

(a) a woman Chairperson, having specialised knowledge, outstanding contributions and eminence in the field of farming to be appointed by the Central Government, in such manner as may be prescribed; 50

(b) three women Members, to be nominated by the

5 Central Government in such manner as may be prescribed,
from amongst persons of eminence, ability, integrity and
standing who have extensive professional and practical
experience in access of women farmers to input, technology,
market facilities, legal rights and all other aspects related to the
rights, welfare and entitlements of women farmers;

10 (c) one Member-Secretary who shall be a senior member
of the All India Services or the organized Group A services
having at least ten years of professional experience in the
management and administration in matters related to
agriculture, farming and entitlements to women farmers, to be
appointed by the Central Government in such manner as may
be prescribed.

15 (5) The Central Government may appoint such number of officers
and staff including experts to the Commission as may be required
for its efficient functioning.

(6) The salaries and allowances payable to, and other terms and
conditions of service of the Chairperson, Members, officers, staff
and experts of the Commission shall be such as may be prescribed.

20 (7) The Commission shall have the power to regulate its own procedure.

(8) Chairperson and every Member of the Commission shall hold office
for such period not exceeding four years from the date on which they
assume office, or for such period as may be specified by the Central
Government in this behalf.

25 4. (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (6) of section 3,
the Chairperson or a Member other than the Member-Secretary,
appointed under clause (c) of sub-section (4) of section 3, may by
writing under their hand to the Central Government resign from office at
any time;

Resignation or
removal.

30 (2) The Central Government may, by order, remove from office, the
Chairperson or any Member of the Commission, if the Chairperson or as
the case may be, such other Member —

(a) has been adjudged insolvent; or

35 (b) is convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for an offence
which, in the opinion of the Central Government, involves moral
turpitude; or

(c) becomes of unsound mind and stands so declared by a
competent court; or

40 (d) refuses to act or has become physically or mentally
incapable of acting as a Member; or

(e) has, without obtaining leave of absence from the
Commission, remained absent from three consecutive meetings of
Commission; or

45 (f) has acquired such financial or other interest which is likely
to affect prejudicially her functions as Chairperson or a member; or

(g) has, in the opinion of the Central Government, so abused
her office as to render her continuance in office detrimental to the
interest of the office or public interest.

50 Provided that no person shall be removed from office under this
clause until that person has been given a reasonable opportunity of
being heard in the matter.

(3) A vacancy caused under sub-sections (1) and (2) or otherwise shall be filled by fresh appointment or nomination, as the case may be:

Provided that the Chairperson or any other member appointed or nominated against any casual vacancy in the Commission shall hold office only for the remainder of the term of the Chairperson or Member in whose place she has been appointed or nominated. 5

Vacancies, etc., not to invalidate proceedings of the Commission.

5. No act or proceeding of the Commission shall be questioned or shall be invalid on the ground merely by reason of:

(a) any vacancy in, or any defect in the constitution of the Commission; 10

(b) any defect in the appointment of a person as Chairperson or Member of the Commission; or

(c) any irregularity in the procedure of the Commission not affecting the merits of the case.

Members, officers and staff of the Commission to be public servants.

6. The Chairperson, Members, officers and staff including experts of the Commission shall be deemed, when acting or purporting to act in pursuance of any of the provisions of this Act, to be public servants within the meaning of sub-section (2) of section 28 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. 15

45 of 2023.

Functions of the Commission.

7. The Commission shall perform all or any of the following functions, namely: — 20

(a) to promote the welfare and livelihood security of women farmers across the country;

(b) to conduct the annual survey of women farmers in the country across various categories including different crops and landholding sizes; 25

(c) to prepare an accurate data-base on women farmers in the country across various categories including different crops and landholding size;

(d) to prepare detailed guidelines and rules to identify women farmers in each village and facilitate the issue of Woman Farmer Certificate to each woman farmer; 30

(e) to identify the number of women farmers in each State without legal rights and entitlements on agricultural land;

(f) to ensure that every woman shall have equal ownership and inheritance rights over her spouse's self-acquired agricultural land, or his share of family property, or his share of land transferred by the appropriate Government under land reform or resettlement scheme; 35

(g) to ensure that a woman farmer shall have equal right, as enjoyed by male farmers, to all water resources connected with the agricultural land to which she is the owner, shareholder, possessor or uses for farming activity and shall have access to water, water resources and irrigation facilities for carrying out agricultural activities; 40 45

(h) to ensure that no woman farmers shall be discriminated on the grounds of marital status, religion, caste, ownership or possession of agricultural land while accessing water resources for irrigation purposes;

(i) notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force and subject to the provisions of this Act, the 50

Commission shall ensure that every woman farmer who has a Certificate from the appropriate authority shall be entitled to Kisan Credit Card;

5 (j) to review the existing laws and policies affecting women farmers and to recommend measures for ensuring land and resource rights;

(k) to monitor women farmers' access to credit, insurance, technology and markets and to inquire into violations of rights and entitlements of women farmers;

10 (l) to advise the appropriate Government on gender-responsive agricultural policies, programmes and in any other matter as may be referred to it, from time to time;

(m) present to the Central Government, annually as the Commission may deem fit, reports upon the its working; and

15 (n) such other matters, as may be prescribed.

8. **(1) The Central Government shall, by notification in the Official Gazette, constitute a Fund to be known as the Central Women Farmers Agricultural Development Fund for carrying out the purposes of this Act.**

Constitution of Central Women Farmers Agricultural Development Fund.

20 **(2) The Fund shall be administered and maintained by the Commission, in such manner as may be prescribed.**

25 **(3) The Commission shall utilize the fund to empower women farmers through providing incentives, conducting capacity building training for the use of new technologies, creating market facilities for women farmers, establishing creches and day-care centres, providing social security and old age pensions for women farmers and all other related issues as may be prescribed in the rules.**

30 9. The Commission shall, while investigating any matter referred to it in clauses (d), (f), (g), (h) and (k) of section 7, have all the powers of a Civil Court trying a suit and, in particular in respect of the following matters, namely: —

Commission to have powers of a Civil Court.

(a) summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person from any part of the country and examining him on oath;

(b) requiring the discovery and production of any document;

35 (c) receiving evidence on affidavits;

(d) requisitioning any public record or copy thereof from any court or office;

(e) issuing commission for the examination of witnesses and documents; and

40 (f) any other matter which may be prescribed.

10. The appropriate Government shall consult the Commission on all policies related to the promotion of welfare of women farmers in the country.

Appropriate Government to consult the Commission.

45 11. **The Central Government shall, after due appropriation made by Parliament by law in this behalf, pay to the Commission, by way of grants such sums of money as the Central Government may think fit for carrying out the purposes of this Act.**

Central Government to provide funds.

50 12. (1) The Commission shall, in consultation with the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India, maintain proper accounts and other relevant records including the administration of the Fund and prepare an annual statement of accounts in such form and manner, at such time of each financial year, and such intervals, as may be prescribed.

Accounts and audit.

(2) The accounts of the Commission shall be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor-General at such intervals as may be specified by him and any expenditure incurred in connection with such audit shall be payable by the Commission to the Comptroller and Auditor-General.

(3) The Comptroller and Auditor-General and any person appointed by him in connection with the audit of the accounts of the Commission under this Act shall have the same rights and privileges and the authority in connection with such audit as the Comptroller and Auditor-General generally has in connection with the audit of Government accounts and, in particular, shall have the right to demand the production of books, accounts, connected vouchers and other documents and papers and to inspect any of the offices of the Commission.

(4) The accounts of the Commission, as certified by the Comptroller and Auditor-General or any other person appointed by him in this behalf, together with the audit report thereon shall be forwarded annually to the Central Government by the Commission and the Central Government shall cause the same to be laid before both Houses of Parliament.

Annual Report.

13. (1) The Commission shall prepare every year, in such form and within such time as may be prescribed by the Central Government, an annual report giving a true and full account of its activities during the previous year and copies thereof shall be forwarded to the Central Government.

(2) The Central Government shall cause to be laid before each House of Parliament along with a memorandum on the action taken or proposed to be taken on the recommendations of the Commission relating to the Union and the reasons for non-acceptance, if any, of such recommendations, within a period of one year from the date of receipt of such report.

(3) Where the report or any of its part is related to any issues connected with the State Government, a copy of such report shall be forwarded to the Governor of that State, who shall in turn cause it to be laid before the Legislature of the State concerned, along with an explanatory memorandum on the action taken or proposed to be taken on the recommendations related to the State, and reasons for non-acceptance, if any, of such recommendations, within a period of one year from the date of receipt of such report.

Power to make rules and regulations.

14. (1) The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

(2) The Commission may, with the approval of the Central Government, by notification in the Official Gazette, make regulations not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act and the rules made thereunder, to provide for all matters for which provision is necessary or expedient for the purposes of implementing the provisions of this Act.

(3) Every rule and regulation made under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of Parliament, while it is in session, for a total period of thirty days which may be comprised in one session or two or more successive sessions, and if, before the expiry of the session immediately following the session or the successive sessions aforesaid, both Houses agree in making any modification in the rule or regulation or both the Houses agree that the rule or regulation should not be made, the rule or regulation shall thereafter have effect only in a such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be; so, however, that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under that rule or regulation.

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| 5 | <p>15. The provisions of this Act and rules made thereunder shall have effect notwithstanding anything inconsistent therewith contained in any other law for the time being in force.</p> <p>16. If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the Central Government may, by order, make such provisions, as may be necessary for removing the difficulty.</p> | <p>Act to have an overriding effect.</p> <p>Power to remove difficulties.</p> |
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STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

Agriculture continues to be the backbone of the Indian economy, with small and marginal farmers contributing substantially to national food security. Over the years, there has been a steady decline in the size of farm holdings, compelling rural households to diversify their sources of income. As male members from resource-poor farm families increasingly migrate to urban areas in search of employment, women are assuming an integral role in agricultural production and allied activities, leading to the feminization of agriculture. Women farmers play a critical role in crop cultivation, animal husbandry, fisheries, seed conservation and post-harvest processing. Despite their central contribution to food production and rural livelihoods, women farmers continue to face structural and systemic disadvantages. These include lack of legal recognition as farmers, insecure or absent land titles, limited access to institutional credit, insurance, technology, extension services, inputs and markets, and inadequate representation in decision-making processes related to agriculture and rural development.

Recognizing the importance of addressing gender-specific constraints faced by women farmers, the Fourth World Conference on Women held at Beijing in 1995 urged States to take affirmative measures to strengthen women's access to productive resources and legal entitlements. India has also initiated several policy measures, including the *Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana*, to enhance the economic empowerment of women in agriculture. However, the absence of a dedicated statutory body has resulted in fragmented implementation and inadequate enforcement of women farmers' rights and welfare measures.

Therefore, it is considered necessary to establish a National Commission for ensuring the entitlements and welfare of women farmers. The proposed Commission will function as an independent statutory body to safeguard the welfare, secure the legal entitlements, and promote the social, economic and legal empowerment of women farmers across the country. The Bill seeks to give effect to the aforesaid objectives and to implement India's constitutional obligations under Articles 14, 15, 21, 38, 39 and 253 of the Constitution of India, as well as its international commitments relating to gender equality and women's rights.

Hence, this Bill.

SANDOSH KUMAR P.

FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM

Clause 3 of the Bill provides for the establishment of the National Commission for the Entitlements and Welfare of Women Farmers, its head office, regional offices as well as appointment of a Chairperson, members, member-secretary, officers, staff and experts to the Commission, their salaries and allowances and other terms and conditions of service. Clause 7 provides for functions of the Commission, which *inter alia*, provides for conducting annual survey of women farmers in the country as well as preparing a database of women farmers in the country. Clause 8 provides for constitution of a Central Women Farmers Agricultural Development Fund for the effective functioning of the Commission. Clause 11 provides for Central Government to provide such sums of money as required for the purposes of the Bill.

The Bill, therefore, if enacted, will involve expenditure, both of recurring and non-recurring nature, from the Consolidated Fund of India. However, it is not possible at this stage, to make an exact estimate of the expenditure likely to be involved.

MEMORANDUM REGARDING DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Clause 14 of the Bill empowers the Central Government to make rules and the National Commission for the Entitlements and Welfare of Women Farmers to frame regulations for carrying out the purposes of the Bill. Clause 16 empowers the Central Government to issue orders for removing difficulties in giving effect to the provisions of the Bill.

As the rules or regulations will relate to matters of detail only, the delegation of legislative power is of a normal character.

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to provide for the establishment of a National Commission for the
protection of the rights, entitlements and welfare of women
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(Shri Sandosh Kumar P, M.P.)