

“We need to ensure that women have land rights”: Thiru P Venkataramanan, Hon’ble Minister for Food and Civil Supplies, Consumer Protection and Price Control, Government of Tamil Nadu

MSSRF International Conference Concludes with Call for Gender-Just Food, Land and Water Systems

Press Release

“We hope to discuss ways to offer incentives and improve women's land rights, either in this budget session or the next,” said Thiru P Venkataramanan, Hon’ble Minister for Food and Civil Supplies, Consumer Protection and Price Control, Government of Tamil Nadu at the valedictory session of the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation’s annual conference on Saturday.

“We need to ensure that women have land rights,” he said adding that there is low awareness about these issues. “We often discuss gender equality in different forums and sectors, but this session definitely offered a deeper perspective on gender in the area of agriculture, and I hope that our future policies and schemes will focus on empowering women in agriculture.”

Each year, the conference is hosted during the birth anniversary of Prof. M.S. Swaminathan, the founder of MSSRF and architect of India’s green revolution. This year, the theme of the conference was Building Gender-Just Food, Land and Water Systems and it was convened in backdrop of the United Nation’s International Year of the Woman Farmer, a landmark global observance that recognises the indispensable contributions of women to agriculture, fisheries, pastoralism, biodiversity conservation, food and nutrition security, and sustainable rural livelihoods.

“These two days have resulted in some deep-dive discussions on food, land and water systems and have also uncovered further gaps,” said MSSRF Chairperson Dr Soumya Swaminathan, adding that many other important issues, such as climate change and heat, and their impact on women, also came up. “The first day of the conference concluded with a very telling Kattaikkuttu performance by Thilagavathy and her troupe, where they depicted issues such as climate change, extreme heat and greenhouse gases,” she said.

Kanta Singh, Deputy Country Representative, UN Women, India Country Office said that any money in the hands of women is good money. She also highlighted the need to accelerate planning across state and central governments to combat climate change and its discriminatory impact on women’s lives, particularly those of poor and marginalised women who depend on agriculture for their livelihoods.

Dr N. R. Bhanumurthy, Director, Madras School of Economics said that India is facing a public policy crisis. “Many programmes have been implemented across states, but we are still unable to address the nutrition challenge. There is also a need for nutrition programmes that focus specifically on women and the girl child,” he said during the session.

Dr E D Israel Oliver King, Director, Biodiversity, MSSRF summarised all sessions and the takeaways over two days and said that the insights will shape a policy paper.

Pre event press release: <https://www.mssrf.org/sites/default/files/2026-08/Pre-Event-press-release.pdf>