

PRESS RELEASE

Mahila Krishi Shakti Puraskar opens nominations to recognise women transforming agriculture across India

The M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), in collaboration with JSW Foundation, has announced the inaugural Mahila Krishi Shakti Puraskar: JSW Foundation-MSSRF National Award for Women in Agriculture 2026, a national platform established to recognise and celebrate the extraordinary contributions of women and women-led institutions in agriculture, food systems, rural livelihoods and ecological stewardship across India.

The award seeks to honour field-grounded women leaders and institutions whose work is strengthening agriculture, biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, nutrition security and rural communities, often without receiving national recognition despite their significant impact.

Through this initiative, JSW Foundation and MSSRF aim to bring greater visibility to women whose knowledge, innovation, leadership and commitment are shaping the future of India's agrarian and rural economy. The award will also serve as a platform for knowledge sharing, peer learning and inspiring future generations of women leaders in agriculture.

“Agriculture employs a large majority of rural women in India, yet many of their contributions remain under-recognised. The Mahila Krishi Shakti Puraskar seeks to make visible the leadership, knowledge and enterprise of women who are shaping agriculture and rural livelihoods every day. We hope this platform will not only honour outstanding women leaders, but also create role models for many more women and girls across rural India,” said Reema Sathe, JSW Chair – Women in Agriculture & Rural Systems, MSSRF.

The awards will recognise outstanding contributions under three major categories:

1. Seeds, Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge
2. Climate Resilience and Ecological Stewardship
3. Nutrition Security and Rural Livelihoods

In addition, the Bhoomi Jaa Rashtriya Samman will be conferred as a special citation for transformative leadership and women-centred innovation and technology design.

The awards will be decided by an eminent panel of jury comprising Dr R. A. Mashelkar, Eminent Mentor and Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri awardee; Dr Renu Swarup, Jury Chair and former Secretary, Department of Biotechnology, Government of India; Shri T. Nanda Kumar, IAS (Retd.), Jury Member and former Agriculture Secretary, Government of India and former Chairman, NDDB; Prof. Nitya Rao, internationally recognised scholar of gender, rural livelihoods, food systems and women's work; Prof. Sanjay Zodpey, President, PHFI and public health leader; Mr R. Pavithra Kumar, CEO, JSW Foundation; and Ms Mayfereen Ryntathieng, Founder, Grassroot Shillong and grassroots leader from the North East.

Award recipients will receive a citation, trophy and cash prize ranging from ₹3 lakh to ₹7 lakh, jointly conferred by JSW Foundation and MSSRF, along with enhanced national visibility,

access to professional networks, and opportunities to engage with a growing community of women leaders working across rural India.

Nominations are open for:

- Indian women aged 18 years and above who have demonstrated sustained contributions to agriculture, allied sectors or rural livelihoods.
- Women-led institutions.

Nominations may be submitted through self-nomination or by supporting organisations and institutions. The nomination window opened on 14 August 2026, and **applications will be accepted until 15 September 2026.**

Applications can be submitted through the official award portal available on the MSSRF website. Mahila Krishi Shakti Puraskar page: <https://mssrf.org/mahila-krishi-shakti-puraskar>

For award related queries:

Award Secretariat
Mahila Krishi Shakti Puraskar
M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF)
Email: mahila.krishishakti@mssrf.res.in

Phone: 044-22541229

MSSRF Media Contacts:

Jyoti Shelar, Head of Communications & Donor Outreach: 9920394959

Shriya Naidu, Science Communication Manager: 9791196037