

NABARD, Maharashtra Celebrates 45th Foundation Day in Pune, Honours Women Farmers

Women are the backbone of Agriculture - Agriculture Minister Dattatray Bharne

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The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) celebrated its 45th Foundation Day on 16th July 2026, marking the International Year of Women Farmers 2026 and reaffirming its commitment to inclusive, sustainable and climate-resilient rural growth.

Hon'ble Dattatray Bharne, Agriculture Minister, Maharashtra, attended as Chief Guest, and women farmers, women-led FPOs, SHGs, PACS and rural entrepreneurs from across the State were felicitated for their contribution to rural transformation.

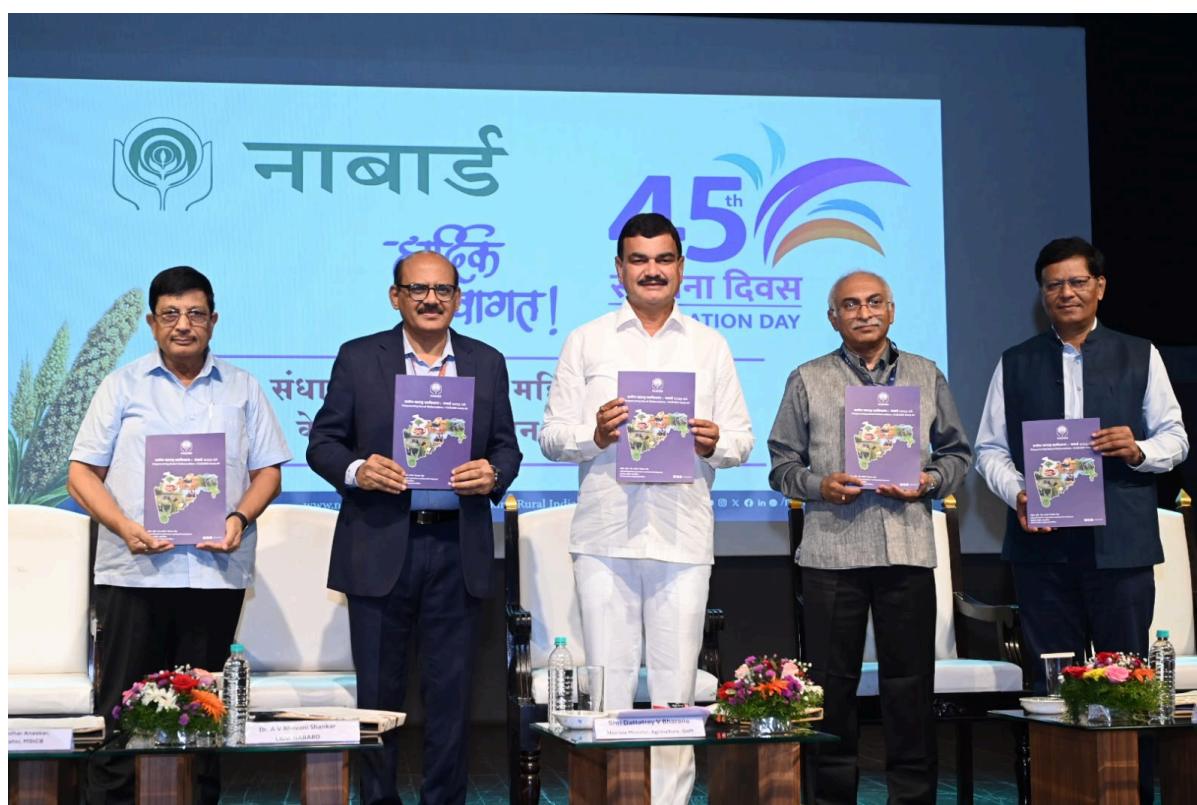


The event was attended by Shri Jaikish, CGM & Principal, CAB, Pune; Shri Vivek Nachane, GM/Convenor, SLBC, Maharashtra; Dr. Bharat Kakde, President, BAIF and Shri Vidhyadhar Anaskar, Administrator, MStCB. Dr. A. V. Bhavani Shankar, Chief General Manager, NABARD Maharashtra Regional Office hosted the programme. A

booklet, "Empowering Rural Maharashtra: NABARD 2025-26," was released, and a documentary on the NABARD-supported Backyard Poultry Livelihood Project led by women in Chandrapur district was screened.



Addressing the audience as chief guest, Shri Bharne commended NABARD's 45-year partnership with Maharashtra's farmers and cooperatives, calling women "the backbone of agriculture." He cited the State Budget's farmer-first measures: crop loan waivers up to ₹2 lakh with a ₹50,000 regular repayment incentive under the Punya Shlok Ahilyadevi Holkar Shetkari Karj Mafi Yojana; free power to farmers with pumps up to 7.5 HP; the Natural Farming Mission's five-lakh-hectare target; AgriStack digital IDs for over a crore farmers; AI advisory via Mahavistaar-AI and Vasudha; and expanded livelihoods under the Pashudhan Udyojak and Matsya Sampada Yojanas.



He noted priority sector lending rose from ₹6.40 lakh crore (2023-24) to ₹9.20 lakh crore (2025-26), and agricultural credit from ₹1.54 lakh crore to ₹1.93 lakh crore, urging banks to widen KCC coverage especially for small and marginal farmers. On women's empowerment, he highlighted the Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana and UMED, under which over 50 lakh women in SHGs have received ₹50,000-crore-plus in loans as 'Lakhpati Didis,' and invited NABARD to deepen ties with UMED, MAVIM and Women FPCs. He linked these efforts to the State's Viksit Maharashtra 2047 vision for a one-trillion-dollar economy by 2030, growing to five trillion dollars by 2047 — to be built on the strength of villages, farms and cooperatives to ensure inclusive and regionally balanced development.



Record Year for NABARD Maharashtra

Dr. Bhavani Shankar called 2025-26 a landmark year for NABARD Maharashtra, as business support and refinance crossed ₹39,380 crore, direct infrastructure assistance to the State Government stood at nearly ₹5,600 crore, and ₹37.72 crore was extended under developmental and grant-based initiatives. He highlighted strong progress on PACS digitisation, multi-Purpose PACS, and continued support for FPOs, climate-resilient agriculture, natural resource management and women-led rural enterprises - reiterating that empowering women farmers and strengthening rural institutions remain central to NABARD's Viksit Bharat @2047 strategy in Maharashtra.

Smt. Samriti Bhagat, General Manager, delivered the welcome address; Shri Avinash P. Sevalkar, General Manager, NABARD Maharashtra Regional Office, proposed the vote of thanks.

Harshal Akude/Parshuram Kor

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