

## **Gender Inclusivity Takes Centre Stage on World Water Day 2026 at ICAR-RCER, Patna**

### **World Water Day 2026 Celebrated at ICAR-RCER, Patna**

World Water Day 2026 was celebrated with great enthusiasm at ICAR–Research Complex for Eastern Region, Patna in collaboration with IWMI, New Delhi. The programme was organized on the theme “Water and Gender,” highlighting the importance of sustainable water management and the critical role of gender inclusivity in water resource utilization.

The programme was chaired by Dr. Anup Das, Director, ICAR-RCER, Patna. He emphasized that effective water management is essential for ensuring the long-term sustainability of agriculture in the face of climate change. He highlighted the need to adopt sustainable water management practices, such as micro-irrigation and raised bed cultivation, to improve water-use efficiency. Apart from this, he stressed the importance of crop diversification, particularly the promotion of millets & pulses as water-efficient and climate-resilient crops. He also emphasized on adopting advanced technologies while continuing to value and integrate traditional practices.

Dr. Gopal Kumar, Country Representative, IWMI graced the occasion as the special guest. In his address, Dr. Kumar stressed the need for innovative, community-driven approaches to tackle emerging water challenges and highlighted the importance of institutional collaboration in promoting equitable and efficient water use practices.

Earlier, the welcome address was delivered by Dr. P.C. Chandran, Principal Scientist, who elaborated on the significance of water conservation in Livestock farming for sustainable agriculture and its direct impact on enhancing productivity and building resilience in rural ecosystems. Dr. Ashutosh Upadhyaya, Head, DLWM stressed on promoting micro-irrigation system, water efficient on-farm water management techniques, rainwater harvesting etc., and Dr. Kamal Sarma, Head, DLFM emphasized on the adoption of integrated water management strategies in livestock and fish farming systems. Dr. Shivendra Kumar, Professor, College of Fisheries, Dholi, highlighted the importance of sustainable aquaculture practices for enhancing farmers’ income and ensuring nutritional security.

Dr. Ajay Kumar, Principal Scientist, in his remarks, stressed the adoption of resource-efficient technologies and the need to create awareness among farmers for the judicious use of water.

The technical session featured a series of expert presentations. Dr. Santosh S. Mali discussed solar-driven water management technologies and their potential to reduce

dependence on conventional energy sources. Dr. Rakesh Kumar shared insights on efficient water management in rice fallow areas, offering practical solutions to improve water use efficiency. Dr. Arti Kumari spoke on Sensor based water management for future-ready farming systems, focusing on the integration of modern technologies in agriculture.

A major highlight of the programme was the farmer–scientist interaction session, where farmers actively engaged with experts to discuss field-level challenges and practical solutions for efficient water management. To promote the adoption of improved technologies, essential agricultural inputs such as water pumps, Swarna mixture, milk cans, and drought-tolerant varieties like Swarna Shreya were distributed among the participants. The programme was supported under the SCSP plan of network projects on Buffalo Improvement and under the SCSP plan of network projects on Animal Genetic Resources.

In addition, the farmers were provided field exposure to integrated farming systems, pressurized irrigation fields, irrigation pumps, solar energy unit, etc, which offered valuable hands-on insights into sustainable and resource-efficient farming practices, thereby further enriching the participants’ learning experience. The Water Innovation Hackathon 2026 flyer was also launched by International Water Management Institute during the event.

The event was concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Arti Kumari. A total of 140 participants, including ~80 farmers from Gaya and Araria districts, attended the programme.



