As more men move out of farming, women must take greater roles in agriculture. Even the recent (2011) census of India data, indicate the numerical predominance of women in agriculture. However, women’s labour contributions in various works in agriculture alongside significant resource constraints raise significant questions on whether their increased involvement can actually empower women financially or otherwise. To deal with the complex issues involved in examining this question, one needs first to investigate whether those women, who are currently involved in agriculture, actually like their involvement in farming or not. This paper investigates this less-explored area based on a survey of 5935 households followed up by a structured interviews of 800 women farmers. The research, jointly funded by the Indian Council of Social Science Research and the Australian Research Council, conducted during 2015-16 across diverse geographical locations in India (two states, eight districts and sixteen villages). The states, Gujarat and West Bengal, were selected for the survey, given their diverse cropping patterns, agro-climatic conditions and economic trajectories. The study investigated, among other things, how women perceive their involvements and their futures in farming-related work, which is carried out without ownership rights and with limited technical knowledge. It examined what the caste-class patterns are, where relevant, within the broader perceptions? What roles do cropping pattern, economic-social structure and geographical location play in women’s perceptions? Last but not the least, what are the implications of the choices that women make for sustainability? Women associated with farming reported the lack of ‘other’ income earning opportunities in the local economy as the major reason for their involvement in farming. Compared to class (the size of land holding used as an indicator), social hierarchy (measured by caste) plays a more important role in women farmer’s perceptions towards farming. Our analysis suggests that higher labour contributions in agriculture do not necessarily lead to women’s empowerment, which was measured in terms of decision-making in selected areas. The findings have great implications for future sustainability of agriculture in rural India, and call for an alternative path of rural development that would be gender sensitive and sustainable.