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Farmers Perception on the Communication Behaviour and Usefulness of Farmer Producer Organizations in Namakkal District of Tamil Nadu

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture is the main occupation of the vast majority of the population of India. Producers companies can help smallholder farmers participate in emerging high-value markets, such as the export market and the unfolding modern retail sector in India. Farmer producer organizations (FPO) need to strengthen support service for small farmers developing a link between farmers and purchasers of agricultural produce. The study was conducted among four assisting FPOs with 45 respondents in Namakkal district of Tamil Nadu. Data were collected through a well-structured interview schedule among the respondents of four farmer producers companies select randomly. The data collected were coded, tabulated, ranked and the result was interpreted worked out. Overall the respondent's member perception score was ranged between "good" to "excellent".

Keywords: *Farmer producer organization usefulness; outcomes; communication behavior; perception.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the main occupation of the vast majority of the population of India. Various types of agricultural products are produced in India and the marketing of all these products is a complex process. Farmers do not have access to direct market and are selling their produce to the intermediaries. Because of intermediaries their profit margin is reduced and their farming business becomes a non-viable one. While indebtedness is often cited as the immediate reason for distress (Reserve Bank of India, 2006; [1], deeper issues are related to vulnerability to risks in agriculture production. These issues include the lower scale of operation, lack of information, poor communication linkages with the wider markets and consequent exploitation by intermediaries in procuring inputs and marketing fresh produce, access to and cost of credit [2]. Improvement in the status of the farmer is possible only through diversification and commercialization of their agricultural activities. This is possible only through implementation of agricultural policy reforms, introducing sustainable agricultural practices, optimizing input efficiency, bringing about institutional change, developing human resources capital and through the participation of the non-governmental sector in agriculture. There is a need to strengthen support services for small farmers by developing a link between farmers and purchasers of agricultural produce. small and marginal farmers who are the main manufacturers of agricultural output and linked with the corporate buyers [3]. Currently such types of linkages are either non-existence or very weak. It is well recognized that the commercialization of small-scale, resource-poor farmers is closely linked to higher productivity, greater specialization and higher income [4].

Farmers could mobilize in groups and build their associations called as Farmer Producer Organization (FPOs) to plan and implement product specific cluster/ commercial crop cycles. FPO is a means to bring together the small and marginal farmers and other small producers to build their own business enterprise that will be managed by professionals. FPO can help farmers in production of various agricultural produce as well as during the process of marketing the crops. Farmer organizations offer small farmers to participate in the market more effectively and collectively, they are in a better position to reduce transaction costs of accessing inputs and outputs, obtaining the necessary

market information, securing access to new technologies and to tap into high value markets, allowing them to compete with larger farmers and agribusinesses [5].

The study is therefore proposed to assess the perception of the usefulness of Farmer Producer Organizations. Those studying for communication behaviour FPOs in improving the livelihood of the farming community by collecting information from the existing FPOs. Perceptions of FPO members regarding the communication behaviour provided by the FPO it could be a workout and the challenges the benefits.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was purposively conducted at Namakkal district of Tamil Nadu in order to identify the role of farmer producer organisations in improving the livelihood of the farming community. At present, there are three Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) functioning under the administrative control of Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University. Among these KVKs, the KVK functioning at Namakkal is liaising with maximum FPOs than the other KVKs. A sample size of 45 respondents was selected randomly from among four FPOs functioning at Chinnamalini, Ponmalai, Aandalurgate and Karanodai villages of Namakkal district.

Interview method was selected as an appropriate tool for data collection. An interview schedule incorporating all the variables pertaining to the objective was developed and data were collected through personal interview with the selected respondents. The data collected were coded, tabulated and mean, percentage workout and results interpreted. Perception in this study refers to the level of communication behaviour and group orientation, usefulness & outcomes and overall of satisfaction as a member of farmers producers organization. It was ascertained through a list of statements on each aspect of perception. The measurement procedure followed is presented below.

2.1 Perception Interms of Communication Behaviour and Group Orientation

The perception of the respondents towards communication behaviour and group orientation was ascertained under five statements using a five point continuum ranging from 'excellent to poor' with a score of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1

respectively. The statements were developed for the study in consultation with the expert and available literature. The mean score arrived for each statement and categorized as high to low level of perception. Subsequently over all mean score for all the five statements was obtained and ranked.

2.2 Perception of the Usefulness and Outcomes among the Beneficiaries

The perception of the respondents towards usefulness and outcome was ascertained under five statements using a five point continuum ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' with a score of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The statements were developed for the study in consultation with the expert and available literature. The mean score was arrived for each statement and categorized as 'high to low' level of perception. Subsequently over all mean score for all the five statements was obtained and ranked.

2.3 The General Perception among Beneficiaries

The general perception of the respondents was ascertained under six statements using a five point continuum ranging from 'highly satisfied to least satisfied' with a score of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The statements were developed for the study in consultation with the experts. The mean score was arrived for each statement and categorized as high to low level of perception. Subsequently over all mean score for all the six statements was obtained and ranked.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Perception in Terms of Communication Behaviour and Group Orientation

Perception in this study referred to the process by which one would have the interest in communication and group orientation,

outcomes and usefulness and overall level of satisfaction through FPO as a member. The mean perception for these three categories was analysed under five criteria, six criteria and five criteria respectively. The results obtained are presented in Table 1.

The mean scores for each perception criteria were calculated separately. The overall perception of the FPO member means perception score is 3.7. This indicated that the respondent's perception ranged from excellent to good. With respect to the communication behaviour and group orientation the mean perception is 3.5 which indicated 'good' to 'excellent'.

The perception in terms of communication behaviour and group orientation were categorised under five criteria namely the extent of interaction among the members, the assigned group activities and assignments given helped in gaining experience, the overall ability to meet farming related activities, the extent of participation in various community welfare activities, obtained some intellectual challenges and the results are interpreted in Table 1.

Among the five criteria, the extent of interaction among the members (3.83) and the assigned group activities and assignments given helped in gaining experience (3.77) indicates satisfactory to a good level of perception. The respondent's perception ranged from satisfactory to mediocre for the criteria, overall ability to meet farming related activities (3.48) and the extent of participation in various community welfare activities and also obtained some intellectual challenges had a similar mean perception score of 3.41.

Communication behavior of the farmers refers to the degree to which a farmer exposes himself to various information sources communicating technology, the extent to which he processes the

Table 1. Perception in terms of communication behaviour and group orientation

Sl. no	Perception	Mean score	Rank
1.	The extent of interaction among the members	3.83	I
2.	The assigned group activities and assignments given helped in gaining experience	3.77	II
3.	The overall ability to meet farming related activities	3.48	III
4.	The extent of participation in various community welfare activities	3.41	IV
5.	Obtained some intellectual challenges	3.41	IV

Table 2. Perception in terms of usefulness and outcomes

Sl. no	Perception	Mean score	Rank
1.	FPO helped me to have better family livelihood activities	4.14	I
2.	Effective utilization of available resources of the farmer is highly possible through FPO	3.96	II
3.	FPO helps to reduce the loss in farming operations	3.92	III
4.	FPO helps in rendering additional revenue through farming activities	3.61	IV
5.	FPO acts as a source of socio-economic development to small & marginal farmers	3.44	V

Table 3. General perception

Sl. no	General perception	Mean Score	Rank
1.	How do you feel after joining FPO	4.26	I
2.	Are you interested to continue as a member of FPO	4.10	II
3.	Did the FPO meet your expectations	4.08	III
4.	Did you join FPO to improve the performance in the present position	3.65	IV
5.	FPO is useful to prepare myself to newer tasks & responsibility	3.52	V
6.	FPO helped me in gaining general information & farming knowledge	3.48	VI

information so received and the extent to which he uses or passes on the information so received to others.

3.2 Perception of the Usefulness and Outcomes among the Respondent

Table 2 indicated that the four criteria viz., FPO helped me to have better family livelihood activities (4.14), effective utilization of available resources of the farmer is highly possible through FPO (3.96), FPO helps to reduce the loss in farming operations (3.92) and FPO helps in rendering additional revenue through farming activities (3.61) exhibited a higher mean perception score. Whereas it was undecided for the criteria FPO acts as a source of socio-economic development to small and marginal farmers (3.44).

3.3 General Perception

It is evident from Table 3 that the following five criteria indicated a satisfactory level of perception viz., How do you feel after joining FPO (4.26), Are you interested to continue as a member of FPO (4.10), Did you FPO meet expectations (4.08), Did you criteria join FPO to improve the performance in the present position (3.65) and FPO is useful to prepare myself to newer tasks & responsibility (3.52). Whereas FPO helped me in gaining general information & farming knowledge had indicated an undecided level of perception with a mean score of 3.48.

4. CONCLUSION

The present study revealed that a majority of beneficiaries Perception among the respondents ranked 'good to excellent'. Perception of communication behaviour and group orientation primarily the extent of interaction among the members (3.83). KVKS are playing a major role in the functioning of the FPOs by providing training, demonstrations and dissemination of information on recent technologies. In this study communication behaviour of the farmer may be the outcome of different dimensions such as information input, information processing and output Information. The extent of interaction among the members discusses the farming system through group meeting.

The major disadvantage faced by some intellectual challenges. They have suggested that Conducting meetings and proper maintenance of book keeping records need to be improvised to control lobbying. Political intervention must be strictly prohibited otherwise that ruins the functioning of the producer company. Professional managers and technical staff for the strong forward and backward linkages need to be appointed. Training sessions must be conducted for the BoD to enhance the skills in various aspects of governance.

The success of these farmer producer organizations very much dependent on the commitment of the members. The integrity and quality leadership as well as the suitable market

environment are the most important factors for the successful growth of such farmer's organizations.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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