



ISSN (E): 2277- 7695

ISSN (P): 2349-8242

NAAS Rating: 5.03

TPI 2019; 8(4): 686-689

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www.thepharmajournal.com

Received: 23-02-2019

Accepted: 24-03-2019

Deepa Singh

PhD. Scholar, Division of Extension Education, ICAR-IVRI, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, India

BP Singh

Principal Scientist, Division of Extension Education, ICAR-IVRI, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, India

Rita Bharti

PhD. Scholar, Division of Extension Education, ICAR-IVRI, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, India

KI Pordhiya

PhD. Scholar, Division of Extension Education, ICAR-IVRI, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, India

A socio - economic and socio-psychological appraisal of farmer producer organisations

Deepa Singh, BP Singh, Rita Bharti and KI Pordhiya

Abstract

Lower farm productivity, lower resource use efficiency and lower farm income are the major issues of the majority of the farmers in India. The Farmer Producer Organisation (FPOs) work on concept of economy of scale and collective action and have emerged as a bright ray of hope to mitigate few of these issues to some extent. Considering these facts, this study was undertaken to analyse the socio-economic and socio-psychological characteristic of the members of FPOs by selecting 240 respondents, as members of four FPOs of Madhya Pradesh (M.P.). The findings revealed that majority of the Farmer Interest Groups (FIGs) members were male, middle aged, literate and had high livestock rearing experience. Majority were characterized by nuclear families, marginal categories of farmers, small herd size and agriculture as the main occupation for their livelihood, low income with medium level of economic motivation, market orientation and achievement motivation. There is need to promote and support the activities of FPOs so as to inculcate the competitiveness among farmers and increase their share and profit in agricultural enterprise.

Keywords: Farmer producer organisations (FPOs), farmer interest groups (FIGs), economic motivation, market orientation and achievement motivation

Introduction

A Farmer Producer Organization (FPO) is a legal entity which can be a producer company, a cooperative society or any other legal firm which provides the sharing of profits/benefits among the members. FPOs are generally formed by primary producers, viz. farmers, milk producers, fishermen, weavers, rural artisans, craftsmen etc. In India, land holding doesn't support economy of scale as most of the farmers are small and marginal with average land holding of 1.33 hectare/farmer household (NAFIS, 2016-17) [4]. Due to this fragmentation and disorganisation, the small and marginal farmers are at disadvantageous position not only in use of technology and input but also in the accessibility to the market. The farmer collectivisation was considered as one of the important element to solve their problem and on this basis the FPOs were formed in 2002 by amendment in the Companies Act, 1956. The FPOs are promoted in India by SFAC, NABARD, state governments and other organisations. Under 12th five year plan, promotion and strengthening of FPOs has been one of the key strategies to achieve the inclusive agricultural growth. With this background, an effort has been made to study and report the socio-economic status of the farmer members of FPOs.

Material and Methods

This study was conducted in four districts, in State of Madhya Pradesh viz. Damoh, Satna, Shahdol and Sidhi. From the selected districts, one Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO) was selected randomly from each one viz. Jabera Krishak Producer Company Limited, Gavinath Krishak Company producer Limited, Birsinghpur Farmer Producer Company Limited, and Churhat Women Poultry Producer Company Limited from each district, respectively. The list of FPOs available online was used for assorting. Further from each FPO, 20 Farmer Interest Groups (FIGs) were selected randomly, thus total eighty FIGs were included in study. After this, from each FIG, 3 members comprising one leader and two members of the group were selected randomly. Hence, from each FPOs 60 members were included in sample; consequently a total number of 240 respondents were finally selected for the study. The ex-post facto research design was used in the study and data were collected with the help of pre-tested structured interview schedule.

Correspondence

Deepa Singh

PhD. Scholar, Division of Extension Education, ICAR-IVRI, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, India

Results and Discussion

1. Socio-personal characteristics

The table 1 reflects that majority of the FIG members (48.33%) were middle-aged between the age group of 40-51 years and the youth involvement was least. The reason may be that rural youth are less attracted to farming and many of those who are employed in this sector are also dissatisfied, and if given a chance, they would like to quit farming (GOI, 2005) [2].

In the gender distribution, majority of the respondents (61.25%) were male which may be concluded that women representation as primary agriculture worker is very less in India and they are mostly involved in carrying out the most labor intensive and unskilled work. In India only 32.8 per cent women are primary agriculture workers in contrast to 81.1 per cent of men (census 2011) [1].

A further perusal of table 1 depicts that about 31.25 per cent of the farmers belonged to general category followed by OBC (29.58%), Scheduled tribe (20.83%) and Scheduled caste (20.83%), reason may be that most of the land holdings are

owned by the farmers by general and OBC category and were also more aware about government schemes. The socio economic and caste census (SECC, 2011) [11] also revealed that majority of the rural households in M.P. belonged to OBC and general category (59.51%) followed by ST (25.29%) and SC (15.2%). Regarding the literacy it was found that majority of the farmers were literate (69.42%) and with respect to formal education, most of them had primary education (27.92%). The same findings were reported by Nishi *et al.* (2011) [4]. Sarma (2013) [9]. Kureel *et al.* (2015) [3]. In their respective studies, while Ramesh *et al.* (2016) [8] find that member of Mahagrapes farmer organisation in Maharashtra had high level of education with zero illiteracy. Further it was also found that majority of the FIG members (37.92%) had high level of experiences followed by low (31.25%) and medium (30.83%) experience in livestock rearing (6-17 years). Livestock rearing is a traditional occupation in most of the families and contributes tremendously in livelihood security of farmers.

Table 1: Socio-personal characteristic of FIG members

Socio-personal characteristics	Damoh (n=60)	Satna (n=60)	Shahdol (n=60)	Sidhi (n=60)	Total (240)
Age (Years)					
Young(28-39)	14 (23.33)	13 (21.67)	10 (16.67)	10 (16.67)	47 (19.58)
Middle(40-51)	28 (43.67)	30 (50.00)	36 (60.00)	22 (36.67)	116 (48.33)
Old (52-60)	18 (30.00)	17 (28.33)	14 (23.33)	18 (30.00)	67 (27.92)
Mean ± SD	43.68±11.88	42.52±11.23	41.53± 9.43	43.67±13.18	42.85±11.63
Gender					
Male	52(86.67)	55 (91.67)	40(66.67)	0(0.00)	142(61.25)
Female	8 (13.33)	5(8.33)	20(33.33)	60(100.00)	93(38.75)
Caste					
General	22(36.67)	31 (51.67)	22 (36.67)	0 (0.00)	75 (31.25)
OBC	18 (30.00)	29 (48.33)	24 (40.00)	0 (0.00)	71 (29.58)
SC	10 (16.67)	0 (0.00)	6 (10.00)	28 (46.67)	44 (18.33)
ST	10 (16.67)	0 (0.00)	8 (13.33)	32 (53.33)	50 (20.83)
Education					
Illiterate	7 (11.67)	6 (10.00)	20 (33.33)	40 (66.67)	73 (30.42)
Primary	20 (33.33)	17 (28.33)	15 (25.00)	15 (25.00)	67 (27.92)
Medium	10 (16.67)	13 (21.67)	10 (16.67)	5 (8.33)	38 (15.83)
Higher	10 (16.67)	11 (18.33)	10 (16.67)	0 (0.00)	31 (12.92)
Intermediate	10 (16.67)	10 (16.67)	3 (5.00)	0 (0.00)	23 (9.58)
Graduation	3 (5.00)	3 (5.00)	2 (3.33)	0 (0.00)	8 (3.33)
Mean ± SD	2.08 ± 1.45	2.17±1.38	1.45±1.41	0.42±0.65	1.53±1.35
Livestock rearing experience (years)					
Low (6-17)	25 (41.67)	15 (25.00)	14 (23.33)	21 (35.00)	75 (31.25)
Medium (18-29)	16 (26.67)	23 (38.33)	19 (31.67)	16 (26.67)	74 (30.83)
High (30-41)	19 (31.67)	22 (36.67)	27 (45.00)	23 (38.33)	91 (37.92)
Mean ± S.D	21.89±10.92	24.43±10.14	25.22±10.10	24.033±10.92	23.89 10.54

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

2. Family description

An analysis of family characteristic of FIG members reveals that most of the farmers had nuclear family (70.42%) with small size (3-6 members) in each family. A look into occupation reflects that agriculture is the main occupation for most of the families (50.41%) followed by animal husbandry (24.17%).The agriculture and animal husbandry run hand in

hand since ancient period, so the mixed and integrated farming is most widely practiced farming among farmers because of its cultural acceptability and compatibility. Sangameswaran *et al.* (2016) [10]. also reported that agriculture was the primary occupation of the respondents followed by mixed farming.

Table 2: Family description of FIG members

Family description	Damoh (n=60)	Satna (n=60)	Shahdol (n=60)	Sidhi (n=60)	Total (240)
Family type					
Nuclear	41(68.33)	40 (66.67)	43 (71.67)	45 (75.00)	169 (70.42)
Joint	19 (31.67)	20 (33.33)	14 (23.33)	15 (25.00)	68 (28.33)
Family size					

Small (3-6)	34 (56.67)	30 (50.00)	26 (43.33)	40 (66.67)	130 (54.17)
Medium (7-10)	16 (26.67)	17 (28.33)	17 (28.33)	8 (13.33)	58 (24.17)
Large (11-13)	10 (16.67)	13 (21.67)	17 (28.33)	12 (20.00)	52 (21.67)
Mean ± SD	7.066 ± 3.48	7.15±3.30	7.72±3.46	6.32± 3.01	7.06± 3.44
Main Occupation					
Agriculture	36 (60.00)	42 (70.00)	38 (53.33)	5 (8.33)	121 (50.41)
Animal husbandry	9 (15.00)	8 (13.33)	6 (10.00)	35 (58.33)	58 (24.16)
Labor	9 (15.00)	0 (0.00)	9 (15.00)	20 (33.33)	38 (15.83)
Business	0 (0.00)	6 (10.00)	4 (6.67)	0 (0.00)	10 (4.17)
Service	6 (10.00)	4 (6.67)	3 (5.00)	0 (0.00)	13 5.42)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

3. Socio-economic characteristic

A perusal of table 3 unfolds that a significant proportion of FIG members were marginal (43.33%) and small farmers (30.42%).The reason is that mostly small and marginal farmers had disadvantage in marketing and bargaining because of that they are one who are mostly interested in FIGs to work collectively. Also, according to NSSO (2014) [6], 75 per cent of rural household are marginal farmers, followed by small (10.00%) landless (7.4%), semi-medium (5.00%), medium (1.9%) and large (0.24%). Majority (70.83%) of the

farmers possess small herd size followed by medium (17.50%) and large herd size (7.5 %). The reason for low herd size may be attributed to unavailability of labour, scarcity of feed and fodder and higher cost of production per unit of livestock.

It could be observed that most of the farmers come under low (40.67%) income group followed by medium (20.83%) and high (3.33%) income groups. The earlier data also revealed that majority of the respondents were marginal farmers and had low herd size which apparently leads to low income.

Table 3: Socio-economic characteristic of FIG members

Socio-economic characteristic	Damoh (n=60)	Satna (n=60)	Shahdol (n=60)	Sidhi (n=60)	Total (240)
Land holding(in hectares)					
Landless(0)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	25 (41.67)	25 (10.42)
Marginal (upto 2.5)	28 (46.67)	25 (41.67)	20 (33.33)	31 (51.67)	104 (43.33)
Small (2.5-5)	16 (26.67)	25 (41.67)	28 (46.67)	4 (6.67)	73 (30.42)
Medium (5-10)	10 (16.67)	6 (10.00)	8 (13.33)	0 (0.00)	24 (10.00)
Large (>10)	6 (10.00)	4 (6.67)	4 (6.67)	0 (0.00)	14 (5.83)
Herd size (cattle equivalent)					
Small (1.60-3.24)	43 (71.67))	35 (58.33)	34 (56.67)	58 (96.67)	170(70.83)
Medium(3.25-4.84)	12 (20.00)	18 (30.00)	10(16.67)	2 (3.33)	42 (17.50)
Large(4.85-6.52)	5 (8.33)	7 (11.67)	6 (10.00)	0 (0.00)	18 (7.5)
Annual income (Rs.)					
Low (35,000-1,06,666)	11 (18.33)	9 (15.00)	17 (28.33)	60 (100.00)	97 (40.67)
Medium (1,06,667-1,78,332)	29 (48.33)	31 (51.67)	33 (55.00)	0 (0.00)	93 (38.75)
High(1,06,667-2,50,00)	20 (33.33)	20 (33.33)	10 (16.67)	0 (0.00)	50 20.83)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

4. Communication characteristic

As far as communication is concerned, majority of the FIG members (49.16 %) had medium level of mass media exposure, the use of mobile phones was ranked first and was most frequently used mass media source by FIG members followed by radio (II), television (III), newspaper (IV) and demonstration (V). Further, about 47.50 per cent of the respondents had medium level of extension agency contact and among the personal localite sources; neighbours were most often used source for getting information followed by family members, friends and progressive farmers. While for personal cosmopolite or formal sources, more often

approached to access the information were cooperatives, KVKs, subject matter specialist and banks.

The involvement of the respondents in social participation depicts that about 80.41per cent of the FIG members were participating in one or more social organisations, while 19.58 per cent didn't participate in any of the social organisation, more than 3/5th of the respondents had low participation in organizations. The result of the present study are in line with the findings of Sundaram (2012) [12] and Ramesh *et al.* (2016) [8] who reported that most of the members had low to medium level of social participation.

Table 4: Communication characteristics of FIG members

Communication characteristics	Damoh (n=60)	Satna (n=60)	Shahdol (n=60)	Sidhi (n=60)	Total (240)
Mass media exposure					
Low (3-6)	20(33.33)	22 (36.67)	20 (33.33)	21 (35.00)	83 (34.58)
Medium (7-9)	29(48.33)	28 (46.67)	27 (45.00)	34 (56.67)	118 (49.16)
High(10-12)	11(18.33)	10 (16.67)	13 (21.67)	5 (8.33)	39 (16.25)
Level of extension agency contact					
Low (3-5.66)	17(28.33)	20 (33.33)	24 (40.00)	16 (26.67)	77 (32.08)
Medium (5.67-8.33)	32(53.33)	24 (40.00)	26 (43.33)	32 (53.33)	114 (47.50)
High(8.34-11)	11(18.33)	16 (26.67)	10 (16.67)	12 (20.00)	49 (20.41)
Social participation					
No social participation	10(16.67)	11 (18.33)	12 (20.00)	14 (23.33)	47 (19.58)

Low (1-2)	24(40.00)	22 (36.67)	29 (48.33)	26 (43.33)	101 (42.08)
Medium (>2-3)	20(33.33)	15 (25.00)	14 (23.33)	17 (28.33)	66 (27.5)
High(>3)	6 (10.00)	12 (20.00)	5 (8.33)	3 (5.00)	26 (10.83)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

5. Socio-Psychological characteristic

Under socio-psychological variables, economic motivation, market orientation and achievement motivation were studied and presented in table 5 which depicts that most of the farmers (79.16%) had medium to high economic motivation, reason may be that in rural area, agriculture is the mainstay for the income and the organisations like FPOs put effort to maximise the production of farmers and make them economically sound. Further about 51.25 per cent of the respondents had medium level of market orientation. Purnima

(2005) reported that majority of the SHG members had medium level of market orientation.

The achievement motivation of majority of the farmers (47.08 %) was medium, most of the farmers included in study were financially weak and some of them were even unable to fulfil their basic necessities. It can be concluded that so sense of personal accomplishment was not of much importance for those members which may be the reason for their medium to low level of achievement motivation.

Table 5: Socio-Psychological characteristics of FIG members

Socio-Psychological characteristics	Damoh (n=60)	Satna (n=60)	Shahdol (n=60)	Sidhi (n=60)	Total (240)
Level of economic motivation					
Low (>1.68)	12 (20.00)	15 (25.00)	7 (11.67)	16 (26.67)	50(20.83)
Medium (1.68-2.58)	28 (46.67)	31 (51.67)	35 (58.33)	26 (43.33)	120(50.00)
High(> 3.5)	11(18.33)	12 (20.00)	10 (16.67)	15 (25.00)	48 (20.00)
Level of market orientation					
Low (>2.1)	19 (31.67)	17 (28.33)	18 (30.00)	15 (25.00)	69 (28.75)
Medium (2.1-3.5)	30 (50.00)	31(51.67)	32 (53.33)	30 (50.00)	123(51.25)
High(> 3.5)	11(18.33)	12 (20.00)	10 (16.67)	15 (25.00)	48 (20.00)
Level of achievement motivation					
Low (>1.87)	20 (33.33)	18 (30.00)	22 (36.67)	14 (23.33)	74 (30.83)
Medium (1.87-2.93)	32 (53.33)	30 (50.00)	20 (33.33)	31 (51.67)	113 (47.08)
High(> 2.93)	8(13.33)	12 (20.00)	9 (15.00)	15 (25.00)	44 (18.33)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

Conclusion

The FPOs are contributing in strengthening the farmers’ negotiation position in relation to the buyers, and reduce the transaction costs faced by farmers to bring them closer to the market, enabling them to derive benefit in agriculture. The socio-economic, communication and socio-psychological traits of farmers should be considered important by FPOs in promoting their programmes as they will give an insight and help to select appropriate action which can have an impact on members. The FPOs should work through mass media exposure and extension activities to make farmers more aware and reap the benefits of FPOs. The support of institutions like Farmer Producer Organisations will play prominent role in empowering small producers to make their agricultural enterprise more viable and profitable to improve upon their socio-economic status for their betterment.

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