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## Profile of farmer producer organization (FPO) members in Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh

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### Abstract

The present study was carried out to know the profile of FPO members in Anantapuramu and Chittoor districts of Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh over a randomly drawn sample of 240 FPO members. The results revealed that majority of the FPO members were in middle age (62.50%), completed high school education (38.75%), small farmers (54.58%), medium level of farming experience (52.08%), annual income (55.83%), had high level of extension contact (47.50%), medium level of mass media exposure (42.08%), high level of innovativeness (51.25%), medium level of training undergone (46.25%), high level of economic orientation (42.50%), medium level of social participation (47.50%), market orientation (50.42), high level of achievement motivation (54.58%), medium level of scientific orientation (49.17), risk orientation (41.25%), cosmopolitaness (43.75%) and credit orientation (45.00%).

**Keywords:** Profile, farmer producer organizations (FPO), members, Andhra Pradesh

### 1. Introduction

India is a farming based country and majority of the farmers were small and marginal and illiterate. Hence there is lack of organization among them to get suitable market price which is a serious problem of Indian agriculture. Because of low remunerative price, price fluctuations, intermediaries, inappropriate marketing etc., the farmers are often driven in to debt cycle. These constraints can be overcome by farmers, organizing themselves into Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs). Farmers Producer organization is a legal entity form of a company which is hybrid between cooperative societies and private limited companies and it is formed and operated by farmers.

Farmer Producer Organizations enables member farmers to reap the benefits of economies of scale in purchase of inputs, processing and marketing of their produce. Forming a FPO can also provide access to timely and adequate credit, capacity building programs, exposure visits, interaction with various resource institutes and provide linkage to forward and backward institutes. This brings better socio-economic impact on the farming community. So, it is necessary to study the profile of members how it will influence the performance and socio-economic benefits of members after joining in the FPO.

### 2. Material and Methods

The present study was conducted by following *Ex post facto* research design. Two districts viz., Anantapuramu and Chittoor districts of Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh were purposively selected based on highest number of FPOs. From each selected district three FPOs functioning from more than three years were purposively selected, thus making a total of six FPOs. From each of the selected FPO, 40 members were selected by following simple random sampling procedure, thus making a total of 240 members as the sample of the study. After review of literature and consultation with experts as set of 17 personal, psychological and socio-economic variables were selected. The data were collected through a structured comprehensive interview schedule and analysis was done with suitable statistical tools drawing meaningful interpretations.

### 3. Results and Discussion

The FPO members were distributed into different categories based on their selected profile characteristics and the results were presented in the table 1.

#### 1. Age

The data given in table 1 illustrated that, nearly two - third (62.50%) of FPO members were

middle aged followed by old (22.92%) and young age (14.58%).

From the above table it was evident that majority of the FPO members belonged to middle aged category. The possible reason might be that young farmers were not interested to continue farming as their fore fathers did and they had shifted to other commercial enterprises and jobs while old aged farmers might have withdrawn from agriculture and handed over the lands to successors. Hence most of the FPO members belonged to middle aged category. Similar results were reported by Ahire *et al.* (2015)<sup>[1]</sup> and Elizabeth and Meena (2019)<sup>[5]</sup>.

## 2. Education

The data presented in table 1 portrayed that 38.75 per cent of the FPO members were educated up to high school followed by college level (17.08%), primary school (15.42%), middle school (14.17%), illiterate (11.66%) and functionally literate (2.92%).

From the above table it could be observed that majority of the FPO members were educated up to high school level. This trend might be due to the fact that majority of the FPO members who constituted small and medium farmers could not go for higher education because of their financial problems and non-availability of higher educational facilities in their villages. The results were in tune with results of Karthik *et al.* (2016)<sup>[10]</sup> and Gopi *et al.* (2017)<sup>[8]</sup>.

## 3. Farm size

An outlook from the table 1 inferred that more than half 54.58 per cent of the FPO members were small farmers followed by 23.75 per cent medium farmers, 13.33 per cent were marginal farmers and only 8.33 per cent of them were big farmers.

The probable cause for this trend might be that, the target group of FPOs was small and marginal farmers. Marginal farmers were facing financial constraints and they were resource poor, so even the share capital Rs.1100/- trending to high amount to them. Hence most of the beneficiaries constituted were under the small farmers category. This finding was in conformity with the finding of Ahire *et al.* (2015)<sup>[1]</sup> and Chopade *et al.* (2019)<sup>[3]</sup>.

## 4. Farming experience

It is evident from the table 1 that more than half (52.08%) of the members had medium level of farming experience followed by high (31.25%) and low (16.67%) levels of farming experience and all the members had more than three years experience in FPO.

The reasons for this might be that majority of the respondents belonged to middle age followed by old age group. Younger generation has not chosen farming as a profession and it was continued by their parents only. Many farmers were engaged in agriculture after their secondary or intermediate education. Hence most of the FPO members had medium farming experience. This result was in accordance with the findings of Darshan (2019)<sup>[4]</sup>.

## 5. Annual income

It is keenly observed from table 1 that 55.83 per cent of the members had medium annual income followed by low (34.17%) and high (10.00%) levels of annual income.

The annual income of a family determines the standard of farmers in terms of their economic status. It describes the nature of the investment on the farm by the farmers in the

society. Higher annual income of the family might have given scope for free sense of thinking towards the development of the farm and growing of crops. On the other side, low annual income shrinks the opportunities and the farmers always must be under defensive state of their farm activities. Hence this trend was observed with similar findings of Golwad and Kamble (2013) and Gayatri *et al.* (2016)<sup>[6]</sup>.

## 6. Extension contact

The table 1 projected that 47.50 per cent of the members had high extension contact followed by medium (37.50%) and low (15.00%) levels of extension contact.

The probable reason might be that most of the FPO members had regular contact with promoting agencies such as Andhra Pradesh Drought Mitigation Project (APDMP), District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), NGOs and agricultural allied department officials. Promoting agencies have a tie-up with agricultural university, Regional Agricultural Research Stations (RARS), Agricultural Research Stations (ARS), District Agricultural Advisory and Transfer of Technology Centre (DDATTC) and KVK (Krishi Vigyan Kendra) for training programmes of master trainers, members on production and management aspects. So the FPO members had frequent contact with scientists for seeking technical information. The farmers sought timely extension support from promoting agencies and resource agencies for their day to day farm operations for better productivity through FPO. Hence this trend was observed with similar findings of Kalra *et al.* (2013)<sup>[9]</sup> and Velangani (2014)<sup>[18]</sup>.

## 7. Mass media exposure

It is heartening to note from table 1 that 42.08 per cent of the FPO members had medium level of mass media exposure followed by high (37.92%) and low (20.00%) levels of mass media exposure.

Mass media plays a vital role in farming and reflects public opinion, connecting the world to individuals and reproducing the self-image of society. The role of mass media in agricultural development is to communicate the feasible farm technologies in such a manner to attract the attention of farmers, help them to understand and remember the message and ultimately facilitate them to take appropriate decision. The above trend has been observed as FPO members had regular access to newspapers, journals, television, mobile applications and contacts with fellow FPO members. This finding had drawn its support from the findings of Siddeswari (2018)<sup>[15]</sup> and Singh *et al.* (2019)<sup>[16]</sup>.

## 8. Innovativeness

It is obvious from the table 1 that 51.25 per cent of the FPO members had high level of innovativeness followed by medium (36.67%) and low (12.08%) levels of innovativeness.

This trend might be due to the fact that majority of the FPO members were of middle aged had middle school education, mass media exposure and high level of extension contact which favored them to try new technologies and were able to update their knowledge and skills time to time. They were receptive to new ideas and were interested and enthusiastic to learn new ways of farming which resulted in high innovativeness. Some FPO members were of more traditional type with less education, low extension contact and low mass media exposure making them unable to reach out for changes towards modern technologies, thus had low innovativeness. Similar finding was reported by Darshan (2019)<sup>[4]</sup>.

### 9. Training undergone

It is transparent from the table 1 that 46.25 per cent of the FPO members had medium level of training followed by high (28.75%) and low (25.00%) levels of training.

As FPO is new concept, members felt training as an important component to understand and implement it. Few members belonged to high training undergone category as they knew the importance of training. Some enthusiastic farmers participated in training programs regularly organized by the promoting and facilitating agencies. Lack of awareness among few farmers regarding usefulness of training programs, improper planning and organization of training programs on the part of promoting and facilitating agencies, farmers being busy with their farm operations, lack of interest in sparing their time to participate in the training programs were the probable reasons for the remaining farmers to be in low category of training. Similar findings were observed with the findings of Karthik *et al.* (2016)<sup>[10]</sup> and Naveenkumar and Rathakrishnan (2017)<sup>[12]</sup>.

### 10. Economic orientation

It is apparent from table 1 that 42.50 per cent of the FPO members had high level of economic orientation followed by medium (29.17%) and low (28.33%) levels of economic

orientation.

The possible reason for this trend might be that in rural area, agriculture is the chief source for the income and the organizations like FPOs put effort to maximise the production of farmers and make them economically sound. Hence this trend is observed. This finding was in line with the finding of Parthiban *et al.* (2015)<sup>[13]</sup>.

### 11. Social participation

An overview of table 1 indicated that less than half (47.50) of the FPO members had medium level of social participation followed by high (35.83%) and low (16.67%) levels of social participation respectively.

The reason behind this might be that FPO is a rural community organization where farmers have a frequent contact with each other on activities of FPO as a board members, members for purchase committees, regular interactions with promoting agencies, facilitating agencies and officials of various departments made them aware the importance of social participation. This might be the probable reason for the medium level of social participation among majority of the respondents. This finding was in tune with findings of Ahire *et al.* (2015)<sup>[1]</sup>.

**Table 1:** Distribution of FPO members according to their profile (n=240)

S. No	Variables	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Mean	S.D.
1	Age	Young (<35 years)	35	14.58	-	-
		Middle (36-55 years)	150	62.50		
		Old (>56 years)	55	22.92		
2	Education	Illiterate	28	11.66	-	-
		Functionally literate	7	2.92		
		Primary school	37	15.42		
		Middle school	34	14.17		
		High school	93	38.75		
		College level	41	17.08		
3	Farm size	Marginal farmer (<2.5 acres)	32	13.33	-	-
		Small farmer (2.5 – 5.0 acres)	131	54.58		
		Medium farmer (5.0 – 10.00 acres)	57	23.75		
		Big farmer (more than 10.00 acres)	20	8.33		
4.	Farming experience	Low	40	16.67	28.49	14.24
		Medium	125	52.08		
		High	75	31.25		
5	Annual income	Low	82	34.17	84879.16	69299.70
		Medium annual income	134	55.83		
		High annual income	24	10.00		
6	Extension contact	Low	36	15.00	10.22	4.77
		Medium	90	37.50		
		High	114	47.50		
7	Mass media exposure	Low	48	20.00	6.57	3.93
		Medium	101	42.08		
		High	91	37.92		
8	Innovativeness	Low innovativeness	29	12.08	24.94	10.26
		Medium innovativeness	88	36.67		
		High innovativeness	123	51.25		
9	Training undergone	Low	60	25.00	6.73	4.46
		Medium	111	46.25		
		High	69	28.75		
10	Economic orientation	Low	68	28.33	17.23	8.46
		Medium	70	29.17		
		High	102	42.50		
11	Social participation	Low	40	16.67	13.41	3.49
		Medium	114	47.50		
		High	86	35.83		
12	Market orientation	Low	40	16.67	15.22	7.57
		Medium	121	50.42		
		High	79	32.91		

13	Achievement motivation	Low	42	17.50	19.21	8.59
		Medium	67	27.92		
		High	131	54.58		
14	Scientific orientation	Low	36	15.00	16.05	7.41
		Medium	118	49.17		
		High	86	35.83		
15	Risk orientation	Low	64	26.67	16.11	7.69
		Medium	99	41.25		
		High	77	32.08		
16	Cosmopolitaness	Low	59	24.58	15.15	7.41
		Medium	105	43.75		
		High	76	31.67		
17	Credit orientation	Low	43	17.92	9.29	4.68
		Medium	108	45.00		
		High	89	37.08		

### 12. Market orientation

It is indicated from the table 1 that a little more than half (50.42%) of the members had medium level of scientific orientation followed by high (32.91%) and low (16.67%) levels of scientific orientation.

The global changes of rapid population growth, urbanization and market liberalization, impact directly on farming making it more market-oriented and competitive. These trends have an effect on farmers who need to develop their management skills and competencies to cope with this changing farming environment. For farmers to be better managers and to run their businesses for profit, they need assistance from extension workers. For many extension agents, however, business management is often a challenge as their experience and practice has largely been focused on agricultural production and technology transfer. The main motto of the FPO is economies sale of produce which improve bargain power of the farmers and free from market intermediaries. So the farmers have strong consciousness about the purpose of the FPO. Hence, the above trend was noticed. The results derived support from the findings of Ahire *et al.* (2015)<sup>[1]</sup> and Singh *et al.* (2019)<sup>[16]</sup>.

### 13. Achievement motivation

The data pertaining to table 1 revealed that more than half (54.58%) of the FPO members had high level of achievement motivation followed by medium (27.92%) and low (17.50%) levels of achievement motivation respectively.

Achievement motivation is the need for excellence and significant accomplishment, despite what rewards may be offered after the achievement has been met. Such behavior is called achievement-oriented. Probably FPO members even though they were small and medium farmers with high extension contact had put efforts to maximise the production of farmers and make them economically sound. This finding was in conformity with the findings of Sharma and Varma (2008)<sup>[14]</sup> and Parthiban *et al.* (2015)<sup>[13]</sup>.

### 14. Scientific Orientation

It is evident from the table 1 that a little less than half (49.17%) of the FPO members had medium level of scientific orientation followed by high (35.83%) and low (15.00%) levels of scientific orientation.

It was learnt during the survey that majority of FPO members had craving for information on scientific technologies. Crops raised by them were more sensitive to weather and price fluctuations. For example, tomato was sensitive to price and weather problems, which made them to adopt scientific storage facilities to get fair price for their produce. Moreover, higher

percentage of scientific orientation is a good sign and speaks on the interest of respondents to perceive things scientifically. The results derived support from the findings of Siddeswari (2018)<sup>[15]</sup> and Sudhamani *et al.* (2020)<sup>[17]</sup>.

### 15. Risk orientation

The data in table 1 depicted that 41.25 per cent of the FPO members had medium level of risk orientation followed by high (32.08%) and low (26.67%) levels of risk orientation respectively.

Farmers live in an environment that is risky. There are risks associated with all aspects of their work. Farmers cannot make decisions without considering the risk that the future holds. Because the future is unpredictable, risk cannot be eliminated. Successful market oriented farm management depends on taking the right risks and managing them and to balance a farm's risk exposure with increasing profits. This trend of results might be due to majority of the FPO members were small and marginal farmers had small land holding and resource poor farmers with low standard of living. This might have prevented them in taking much risk over farming. The findings were in accordance with the studies conducted by Parthiban *et al.* (2015)<sup>[13]</sup> and Aitawade (2017)<sup>[2]</sup>.

### 16. Cosmopolitaness

It could be noticed from the table 1 that 43.75 per cent of the FPO members had medium level of cosmopolitaness followed by high (31.67%) and low (24.58%) levels of cosmopolitaness respectively.

The possible reason for the above trend might be that the FPO members as a board member and also member for purchase committee had to travel to various organizations like social, financial, technical institutes. They had regular interaction with promoting agencies, facilitating agencies and resource institutes. Members would travel frequently to nearby towns and cities for obtaining required inputs, marketing the produce and also the transport facilities were better. Hence, these factors were the reasons for medium level of cosmopolitaness. The results derived support from the findings of Parthiban *et al.* (2015)<sup>[13]</sup>, Chopade *et al.* (2019)<sup>[3]</sup> and Madhuri (2020)<sup>[11]</sup>.

### 17. Credit orientation

A glance at the table 1 showed that majority (45.00%) of the FPO members had medium credit orientation followed by high (37.08%) and low (17.92%) levels of credit orientation.

Credit is one of the most crucial inputs in all agricultural operations. The farmers need credit at right time, through right agency and in adequate quantity to realize maximum productivity. For a long time, the major source of agricultural

credit was private moneylenders. But this source of credit was inadequate, highly expensive and exploitative. To curtail this, a multi-agency approach consisting of cooperatives, commercial banks and regional rural banks credit has been adopted to provide cheaper, timely and adequate credit to farmers. Hence, the above trend was noticed. The result derives support from the findings of Siddeswari (2018) [15].

#### 4. Conclusion

The results revealed that majority of the FPO members belonged to middle age group, had high school level of education with small farm size, medium level of farming experience and more than three years experience in FPO. Majority of the members had medium level of annual income, high level of extension contact, medium level of mass media exposure, high level of innovativeness, medium level of training undergone, high level of economic orientation, medium level of social participation, market orientation, high level of achievement motivation, medium level of scientific orientation, risk orientation, cosmopolitanism and credit orientation. Since majority of the FPO members were in medium level with respect to most of the variables selected, based on the above findings there is immediate need to promote the ideology of FPO among members, focusing more on need and importance FPOs by means of training programmes, demonstrations, capacity building programmes, exposure visits, case studies etc.

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