



ISSN (E): 2277-7695
ISSN (P): 2349-8242
NAAS Rating: 5.23
TPI 2022; SP-11(6): 491-494
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www.thepharmajournal.com
Received: 03-03-2022
Accepted: 06-04-2022

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Maladies and remedies in farmers' interest groups expressed by farmers in Bangalore urban district of Karnataka

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Abstract

Farmers Interest Group (FIG) is self-managed, independent group of farmers with a shared goal and interest. The members work together to achieve the goal by pooling their existing resources, gaining better access to resources and to share in the resulting benefits. The present study was undertaken to document the maladies faced by the members of FIGs and to seek their Remedies to overcome them in Anekal taluk of Bengaluru urban district during 2019-20. In total 120 respondents were considered for the study and personal interview method was adopted for collection of data. The data was analysed using frequency and percentage analysis. The results of the study revealed that, inefficient market linkages (99.10%), extension staff do not visit farmer's field (97.50%), inefficient management of the FIG (85.83%), Difference of opinion among the members of the FIG while taking the important decisions (67.50%) were the major maladies expressed by members. Regular visits of Extension staff to the farmers' fields (99.10%), Adequate quantity of inputs be made available to all the members (98.33%), FIG should function efficiently by ensuring the coordination among the members of FIG (97.50%) and Subsidy should be given to all the farm inputs (95.83%) were the Remedies to overcome the maladies.

Keywords: Coordination, farmers interest group, goal, maladies members, remedies and resources

Introduction

Farmers in India remain poor as they are not able to obtain better prices despite of the hard work they do in order to reap harvests. They are not in a position to determine the price for their own produce. The need of the hour is to establish commodity groups, farmer's interest groups and farmer's federation so that they gain the confidence to fix price for their produce. National policy for farmer, 2007 suggested community/group based extension approach. Collectivization of small farmers is an effective way to improve access to technology, inputs, and markets. Integrating farmers with the value chain will provide the net return to farmers (Kumar *et. al.*, 2019) [2].

The concept of a farmer producer company (FPC) has emerged as an inclusive concept to address the issues of farmers, especially, small, and marginal farmers (Babu and Patoju, 2021) [1]. Farmers Interest Group (FIG) is a self-managed, independent group of farmers with a shared goal and interest are part of the FPC/O. The members work together to achieve the goal by pooling their existing resources, gaining better access to other resources and to share in the resulting benefits. FIGs will get informal recognition from agriculture and horticulture departments.

The core functions of FIG are

The FIGs are formed with the core function to act as collateral through group pressure to avail loans from FPC or FPO to which they belong to, ensure optimal production strategies, provision of required critical inputs, meet domestic and market needs, maintain common infrastructure – such as farm ponds, bore wells, tractors and other necessary equipments which cannot be afforded by single farmer but can be owned by group, link with the local government at panchayat level to access fund from NREGA, Watersheds and other agriculture development programme.

Benefits of Forming Farmers Interest Group

Benefits of forming FIFs may be to have access to technical and market information, improved bargaining power, likely to maintain useful and relevant activities, high motivation for sustainability, building social cohesion. Thus, completely supporting the member farmer's

right from the production till marketing as well as savings for the future.

With this background the current study was undertaken to document the maladies faced by the members of FIGs despite of its core functions and benefits of forming FIGs and to seek their Remedies to overcome the same.

Methodology

The present study was conducted in Anekal taluk of Bengaluru urban district of Karnataka during 2019. With the aim to document the maladies faced by the members of FIGs and to seek their Remedies to overcome them. Ex-post-facto research design was adopted, as the actions have already occurred and the researcher didn't have chance to manipulate the events already took place. The design could be used, to deduce theories, identify the behavioural phenomenon and explore conditions under which phenomenon occurs.

Sample and sampling procedure

Anekal Horticulture Producer Company Ltd., Anekal was purposively selected as it was working on horticultural produce around Bangalore city. Six Gram Panchayats were selected randomly from Anekal taluk for the study. Further, two FIGs from each panchayat were selected which were under the operation by Anekal Horticulture Producer Company Ltd. Ten FIG members from each of the selected FIGs were considered by applying simple random sampling technique. In total 120 respondents were selected for the study.

The detailed name of Gram panchayat and name of FIGs selected from each of six Gram Panchayat and the respective two FIGs selected from each of the panchayat and the number of respondents selected from each of the FIGs are presented on the Table 1.

Table 1: Details of Farmer Interest Groups and sample size selected for the study

Sl. No.	Name of gram panchayat	Name of FIGs	No of respondents selected
1.	Samandhuru	Samandhuru thotagarike belegarara sangha	10
		Karagadamma thotagarike belegarara sangha	10
2.	Balluru	Kodalipura thotagarike belegarara sangha	10
		Bhasaveshwara thotagarike belegarara sangha	10
3.	Karpuru	Sri Rama thotagarike belegarara sangha	10
		Karpuru thotagarike belegarara sangha	10
4.	Mayasandra	Mayasandra thotagarike belegarara sangha	10
		Manchanahalli thotagarike belegarara sangha	10
5.	Byagadadenahalli	Koonmadivala thotagarike belegarara sangha	10
		Soppalli thotagarike belegarara sangha	10
6.	Hennagara	Hennagara thotagarike belegarara sangha	10
		Yellammadevi thotagarike belegarara sangha	10
Total			120

Data collection

The data was collected using well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule and personal interview method was adopted to obtain the essential information from FIG members. The data generated was analysed using frequency and percentage and the maladies and the Remedies were ranked using garrets rank.

Result and Discussion

Table 2: Services provided by Farmer Producer Company (FPC) Anekal

Sl. No.	Services provided by FPC
1.	Capacity building programme
2.	Exposer visit/study tour
3.	Demonstrations
4.	Leadership development programme
5.	Providing inputs like seeds, fertilizers etc.

Table 2 depicts the services rendered by FPC to its members since from its inception, it clearly indicates that, Farmer Producer Company, Anekal was able to organise capacity building programmes, study tour as exposure visit to let its members to get to know new and innovative ideas which in future can be adopted by them. It also could able to organise demonstrations to show the worth of new ideas or technologies in horticulture in general and vegetable science in particular. As FIGs contain 20 group of members of FPC, in order to lead them in all FIGs formed under FPC, it has organised leadership development programme to equip the leaders with leadership quality and thus he/she will be able to control the group. As a means of business activity, FPC has undertaken initiation of providing its members with the necessary inputs such as seeds, fertilizers etc. this will help the farmers in reducing the cost of cultivation by avoiding transportation cost.

Table 3: Maladies expressed by FIG members (n=120)

Sl. No.	Maladies	Frequency	Percentage	Ranks
1.	Inefficient market linkages	119	99.10	I
2.	Extension staffs do not visit farmers field	117	97.50	II
3.	The inefficient management of the FIG	103	85.83	III
4.	Difference of opinion among the members of the FIG while taking the important decisions	81	67.50	IV
5.	Insufficient supply of inputs at subsidized rates	52	43.33	V
6.	Information related to the problems encountered by farmers are not available	22	18.33	VI
7.	Supply of inputs to dominant farmers	16	13.33	VII
8.	Lack of support and coordination among the members	12	10.00	VIII
9.	Non-availability of need-based inputs at right time	7	05.83	IX
10.	High membership fee to become the member of FIG	4	03.33	X

*Multiple response

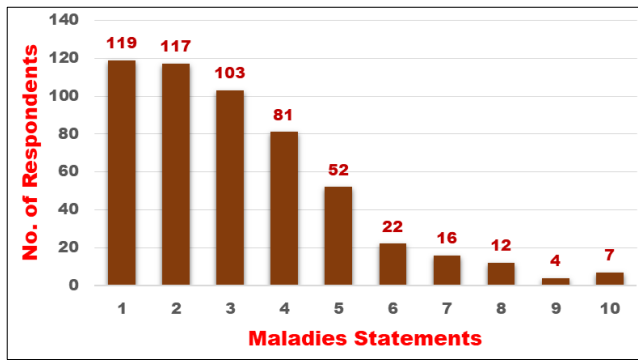


Fig 1: Maladies expressed by FIG members

The maladies faced by FIG members are presented in Table 3 and Figure 1 revealed that inefficient market linkages were expressed by almost all the members (99.10%) of FIGs, and this obtained first rank, this might be because FIGs under study did not have a market linkage for the produce that the member farmers grown. The vast majority (97.50%) of the members of FIGs expressed that, extension personnel does not visit farmer’s field (rank II), as there was a poor performance of extension personnel in the study area. The majority (85.83%) of the members expressed that, inefficient management of the FIG (rank III). As there were no full-

pledged managing authorities hence, more than two-thirds (67.50%) of the members expressed that, the difference of opinion among the members of the FIG while taking the important decisions (Rank IV) as one of the major maladies faced them. This might be because of lack of cooperation and understanding among the members of FIGs, this is in line with the result of Raghuprasad and others who conducted research in 2004. Insufficient supply of inputs at subsidized rates (Rank V) was expressed by less than half (43.33%) of the FIG members, though they were purchasing input in bulk but they were not provided at a subsidized rate. Information related to the problems encountered by farmers are not available (Rank VI) was opined by 18.33 per cent of the members. Supply of inputs to few farmers (Rank VII) a malady felt by 13.33 per cent of them. Lack of support and coordination among the members (Rank VIII) was the opinion of 10.00 per cent of the members. Non-availability of need based inputs at right time (Rank IX) was opined by less proportion (05.83%) of the members, information play an important role in agriculture and timely delivery of information is paramount and members were not given information on timely. High membership fee to become the member of FIG (Rank X) was expressed by negligible proportion (03.33%) of the respondents, were the maladies faced by the farmers interest group members.

Table 4: Remedies offered by FIGs members to overcome maladies (n=120)

Sl. No.	Remedies	Frequency	Percentage	Ranks
1.	Regular visits to be made by Extension personnel to the farmers’ fields	119	99.10	I
2.	Adequate quantity of inputs be made available to all the members	118	98.33	II
3.	FIG should function efficiently by ensuring the coordination amongst the members of FIG	117	97.50	III
4.	Subsidy should be given to all the farm inputs	115	95.83	IV
5.	Information related to the problems encountered by the problems should be made available through proper arrangement of the training programs	113	94.16	V
6.	Need based inputs should be made available at FIG	110	91.66	VI
7.	No tagging purchase of one input to another	109	90.83	VII
8.	Supply of inputs to all categories of farmers	106	88.33	VIII

*Multiple responses

Remedies offered by FIGs to overcome maladies

It could be observed from Table 4 that, among the Remedies given by FIG members, were arranged rank-wise for interpretation. Regular visits to be made by Extension personnel to the farmers’ fields (rank I) was suggested by the vast majority (99.10%) of the members, this might be because of the fact that members felt that based on the regular visit of extension personnel will provide timely information for the undertaking of timely operations. An adequate quantity of inputs be made available to all the members (Rank II) was suggested by the overwhelming majority (98.33%) of the members, mainly because the input was given only to a few members and the same was not available to other members. FIG should function efficiently by ensuring the coordination amongst the members of FIG (Rank III) was expressed by the vast majority (97.50%) of the members, this might be because of the feeling that only with good coordination would lead to the achievement of goal and objective of FIGs. The graphical representation of the remedies offered by FIG members are presented in Fig 2.

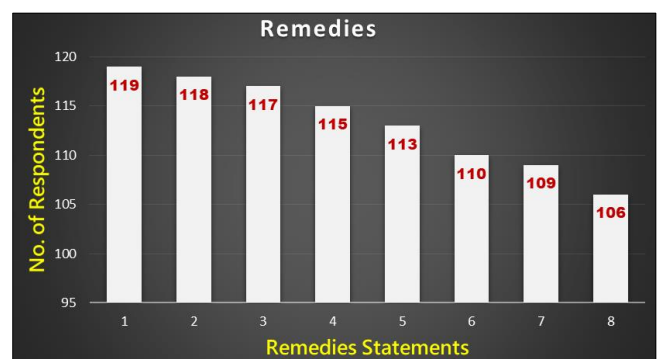


Fig 2: Remedies offered by FIGs to overcome maladies

Among the major Remedy given by the FIG members, subsidy should be given to all the farm inputs (Rank IV) was expressed by 95.83 per cent of the members, as it was difficult to purchase high cost inputs by majority of poor members hence they wanted input at subsidized rate, in 2000, the similar was quoted by Pratap and co-authors. Majority

(94.16%) of the members proposed that, the information related to the problems encountered by the problems should be made available through proper arrangement of the training programs (Rank V), as members wanted training programme related to different aspects of farming so that they do better than what they were doing. Need based inputs should be made available at FIG (Rank VI) was opined by 91.66 per cent of the members. No tagging purchase of one input to another (Rank VII) was the Remedy of 90.83 per cent of the members. Supply of inputs to all categories of farmers (Rank VIII) was recommended by 88.33 per cent of the members.

Conclusion

FIGs are formed to have collaborative effort to ease in procuring the required inputs, have access to the needy and timely information, linking to market along with market intelligence and transportation facility to ensure high profit. However, few FIGs under Farmer Producer Company (FPC) are not working efficiently in the lines of its aims and objectives. This may lead to have poor performance of FPC and the member farmers doesn't enjoy the benefits. In this regard the proper management has to be made by the concerned authority to see that the very purpose of the formation of FIG is served by benefiting the members and satisfying them.

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