



Examining the Operational Efficiency and Socio-Economic Influence of Farmer Producer Organizations (Fpos) in Telangana's Agricultural Sector

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Abstract

The study investigates the effectiveness and impact of Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) in Telangana, focusing on socio-economic profiles, service effectiveness, and beneficiary attitudes. Three FPOs in Warangal, Hanumakonda, Yadadri Bhongir, and Kodangal were selected based on government certification. A sample size of 300 beneficiaries was interviewed, revealing characteristics such as education level, occupation, and income. Analysis shows moderate levels of extension agency contact, information utilization, and market orientation. Beneficiaries' express satisfaction with enabled services, particularly market information dissemination. Notably, services like technology dissemination and procurement of inputs yield significant benefits, while areas like export and commodity exchanges lag. Overall effectiveness of FPO services is 80.02%. Impact assessment indicates medium to high levels of socioeconomic change post-FPO participation, including increased income, savings, and social benefits.

Keywords: Farmer Producer Organisations (Fpos), Socio-Economic Profiles, Impact Assessment, Commodity Exchanges.

1. Introduction

Agriculture in India is predominantly production oriented and plays a pivotal role in the Indian economy. Even though lack of advancement, poor management of supply chains and shrinking average farm holding sizes all slow down this progress. As a result of its awareness of these problems facing small and marginal farmers, the Indian government is actively promoting Farmers Producer Organisations (FPOs) [1]. FPOs help small and marginal farmers integrate so they can raise their incomes and improve their economic standing. The present investigation "Examining the Operational Efficiency and Socio-Economic Influence of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in Telangana's Agricultural Sector" was designed to study the socio-economic profile characteristics of beneficiaries of Farmer

Producer Organisations and to measure the effectiveness of enabled services and their impact before and after joining FPO and their attitude towards FPO. This study also aimed to find out the relationship and contribution between the impact and socio-economic characteristics [2]. It also aims to find out the relationship and contribution between the attitude and socio-economic characteristics. Also, the constraints experienced by the beneficiaries of Farmer Producer organizations and suggestions provided by the respondents were also studied. The present study was conducted in the state of TELANGANA. To find out the effectiveness of FPOs and the impact they create on the livelihoods of the beneficiaries, the experts suggested identifying and studying the best performing FPOs among them.



Accordingly, three Farmer Producer Organisations were selected in Warangal, Hanumakonda, Yadadri Bhongir, and Kodangal purposely, based on the categories that were functioning effectively according to the Government certification [3]. Considering the limitations of time and resources and the researcher's familiarity to work in the study area, the sample size was fixed as 300. From the three selected FPOs 100 beneficiaries were selected from each FPOs. The respondents were interviewed personally through a well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule. Arithmetic mean, percentage analysis, cumulative frequency and multiple regression were used to analyze the collected data. The salient findings of the study are detailed below. The study revealed that the majority of the respondents were middle aged, had higher secondary school level education, had agriculture as their primary occupation, belonged to the small farmers category, possessed medium level of farming experience and had medium level annual income. Majority of the respondents had medium level of extension agency contact, mass media exposure, information source utilization, information sharing behavior, achievement motivation, economic motivation, credibility, innovativeness and market orientation. Most of the respondents participated in more than two trainings and made their decision independently [4]. The rank wise distribution is based on the effectiveness score of each dimension which is reflected in the overall effectiveness of the enabled services of the Farmer Producer Organisation was found to be 80.02 per cent. Regarding impact, the majority of the beneficiaries had a direct impact on the socioeconomic circumstances in the research area. Around ninety per cent of the respondents had medium and more levels of socioeconomic impact towards Farmer Producer Organisations. After joining the FPO, the impact levels of annual income, annual savings, employment generation, empowerment, social benefits, food security, habitation security,

educational security and natural resources of the respondents had changed from less to medium level. The findings also showed that after joining a Farmer Producer Organisation, the beneficiaries had gradually increased their impact level [5]. To ascertain the significance of the difference in impact level before and after joining Farmer Producer Organizations, the data was subjected to a Paired *t*-test. The obtained results shown that by reversing the null hypothesis, the probability value was found to be significant at the one percentage level and showed that there was a high significant difference in annual income, annual savings, employment generation, empowerment, social benefits, food security, habitation security, educational security, and natural resource availability among the beneficiaries before and after joining in Farmer Producer Organisation. Regarding attitude, larger portions of the respondents had a moderately and highly favorable attitude towards Farmer Producer Organisations [6].

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

The research design serves as the comprehensive plan, structure, and strategic framework formulated to address the research inquiries effectively while managing variables and ensuring rigor [7]. It guides the researcher in systematically obtaining answers to the research questions and achieving the study's objectives. In this study, an ex-post facto research design was employed. This design is particularly suitable for investigations aiming to analyze relationships and associations between variables in existing conditions, as it allows researchers to examine phenomena retrospectively [8]. By leveraging historical data and existing conditions, ex-post facto research provides valuable insights into causal relationships and patterns that may not be feasible to explore through experimental methods. The choice of an ex-post facto design aligns with the nature of the research questions, which focus on understanding factual information and uncovering empirical evidence. This design's flexibility enables

the exploration of various dimensions of the research problem, accommodating multiple variables and perspectives. Moreover, the ex-post facto design offers practical advantages, such as its adaptability to real-world settings and the ability to study phenomena as they naturally occur. By leveraging available data and observational methods, this design facilitates a holistic understanding of the research context and allows for nuanced analyses of complex phenomena [9]. Overall, the selection of the ex-post facto research design underscores the study's commitment to conducting rigorous and insightful investigations into the effectiveness and impact of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in Telangana. It provides a robust framework for exploring the socio-economic dynamics and identifying key factors contributing to the success and challenges of FPO initiatives."

2.2 Locale of the Study

2.2.1 Selection of Farmer Producer Organisation

TELANGANA Government has been supporting Farmer Producer Organisations since 2014. So far 125 Farmer Producer Organisations have been promoted through TELANGANA Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (Department of Agriculture Marketing & Agri Business, TELANGANA, 2023). Besides, Self-promoted and FPOs promoted by other agencies are also functioning. Currently, there are around 600 Farmer Producer Organisations registered in the State of TELANGANA. The Government of TELANGANA will continue to support and promote FPO through various schemes. The objectives of the study can be achieved only by knowing the effectiveness of FPO with the beneficiaries and the impact it has had on their livelihoods. It was decided to select the best performing FPOs for this study according to experts. Based on that the following three Farmer Producer Organisations were selected for this study [10]. All these three have been declared as the best FPO by the State Government of TELANGANA among the

Farmer Producer Organisation functioning across the State [11].

Name of the Farmer Producer Organisations

1. Kodangal Farmer Producer Organisation
 2. Duggondi Farmer Producer Organisation
 3. People action for creative education (PEACE)
1. Nagapuri Raithu Seva raithu Vuthpathidarula Samstha limited.

2.2.2 Selection Of Districts

The research study was carried out in the state of Telangana, specifically targeting three districts: Kodangal, Duggondi, and Bhongiri. These districts were selected based on their reputation for hosting some of the best-performing Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in the region [12]. The decision to focus on these districts was deliberate, as it allowed for a concentrated analysis of FPO effectiveness and impact within a diverse geographical area in Figure 1. The selection criteria for FPOs included factors such as operational efficiency, market penetration, and socio-economic impact on local communities [13].

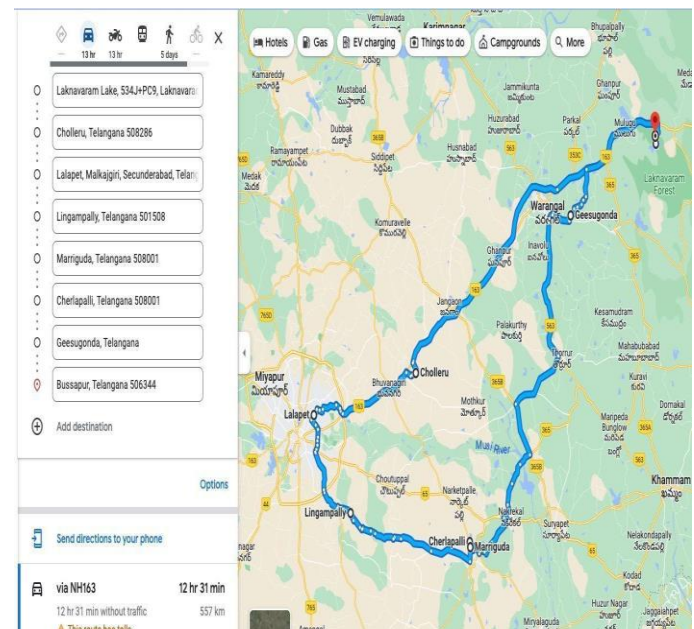


Figure 1 First Study Visit to Collect the Fpos Information

By choosing districts with well-established FPOs, the study aimed to capture a comprehensive understanding of successful FPO models and their contribution to rural development. Figure 2 provides a visual representation of the study area, highlighting the selected districts of Kodangal, Duggondi, and Bhongiri. This geographical focus enables a targeted investigation into the performance and outcomes of FPO initiatives within specific local contexts [14].

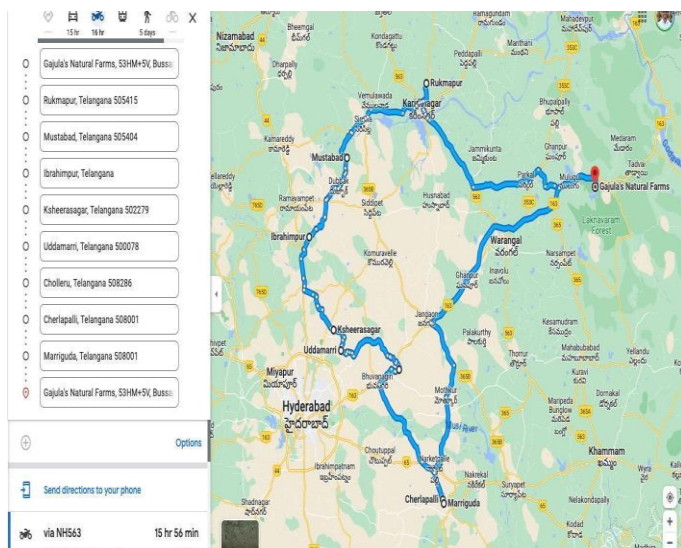


Figure 2 Second Study Visit to Collect the FPOS Information

2.2.3 Selection of the Respondents

Due to constraints in terms of time, resources, and the researcher's familiarity with the study area, a sample size of 300 was determined for the study. In order to assess the impacts of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), only beneficiaries who had been associated with an FPO for a minimum of 5 years were considered eligible respondents. Utilizing proportional random sampling techniques, 300 respondents were selected from the three chosen FPOs, with 100 beneficiaries allocated per FPO. This sampling approach ensured representation from each FPO while adhering to the study's requirements.

Further details regarding the distribution of respondents across each FPO can be found in Table 1 [15].

Table1 Distribution of Respondents Across Each FPO

Name of the FPO	Kodangal Farmer Producer Organisation	Duggondi Farmer Producer Organisation	PEACE Producer Organisation	3
District	Kodangal	Warangal	Yadadri Bhongir	3
Total number of beneficiaries associated	988	890	1255	3133
Total number of respondents selected	100	100	100	300

3. Results and Discussion

Selection, Operationalization and Measurement of Variables: The variables used in this study, their operational definition and their measurements are detailed below

Selection and Measurement of Independent Variables: By reviewing various relevant literature and discussion with Extension Scientists, a list of 27 independent variables that could possibly influence the dependent variable was prepared. The list of variables was sent to CEOs consisting of the Extension officers working in the various FPOs to ascertain the degree of relevance of each of these variables for the study. The responses of CEOs were quantified by assigning scores of 3, 2 and 1 for 'most relevant', 'relevant' and 'irrelevant' respectively (Appendix-I). The variables with 80.00

per cent relevancy score and above were selected. Totally 10 variables were selected for this study, they were 1). Age, 2). Educational Status, 3). Occupational Status, 4). Farm Size, 5). Farming Experience, 6). Annual Income, 7). Extension Agency Contact, 8). Economic Motivation, and 9). Credibility, 10). Market Orientation

3.1 Age

Age was operationalized as the number of completed years of the respondent at the time of enquiry and the chronological was taken as the measure. The respondents were classified into three categories as followed by Jadhav (2018).

Table 2 Distribution of Ages in Chronological Order

S. No	Category	Age (in years)
1	Young	Up to 35 years
2	Middle	Above 35 to below 45 years
3	Old	Above 45 years

Table 3 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Age (N = 300)

S.No	Category	Number	Per cent
1	Young	20	06.67
2	Middle	190	63.33
3	Old	90	30.00
	Total	300	100.00

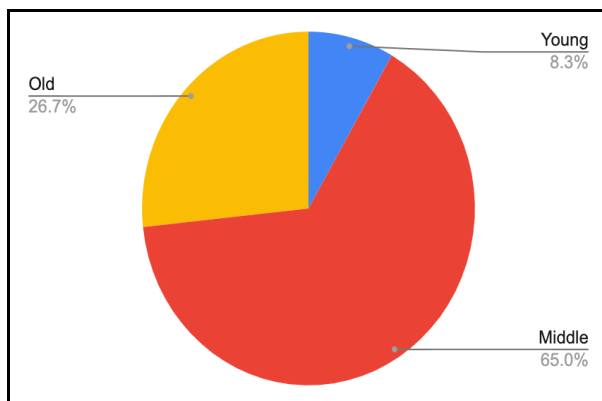


Figure 3 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Age

It can be observed from Table 2, the majority (63.33 per cent) of the respondents belonged to the middle age group followed by 30.00 per cent belonged to the old age group and 06.67 per cent were found in the young age group. Hence it may infer that the respondents of the middle age group were more enthusiastic and interested in involving the participation in Farmer Producer Organisations. This finding is in line with the findings of Jadhav (2018) in Figure 3.

3.2 Educational Status

Educational status was operationalised as the extent of literacy attained by the respondents at the time of survey. Illiterate was an individual who did not know how to read and write. Primary level of education referred to the formal schooling up to fifth standard. Middle school education referred to the education from sixth to eighth standard. Secondary education meant the education from ninth to tenth standard. Higher secondary education meant the education from eleventh to twelfth standard. Collegiate education refers to a degree/diploma after schooling. The following scoring procedure as followed by Sneha (2019) was used in this study.

Table 4 Educational Status Scoring Procedure

S. No	Level of Education	Score
1	Illiterate	1
2	Primary school level	2
3	Middle school level	3
4	High school level	4
5	Higher secondary level	5
6	Collegiate	6

Educational status of an individual is considered as one of the most influencing factors in the decision-making process in day-to-day life. The results on distribution of respondents according to their educational status are presented in Table 3 and Figure 4.

Table 5 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Educational Status (N = 300)

S.No	Category	Number	Percent
1	Illiterates	27	09.00
2	Primary school level	20	06.67
3	Middle school level	31	10.33
4	High school level	100	33.33
5	Higher Secondary level	110	36.67
6	Collegiate	12	04.00
	Total	300	100.00

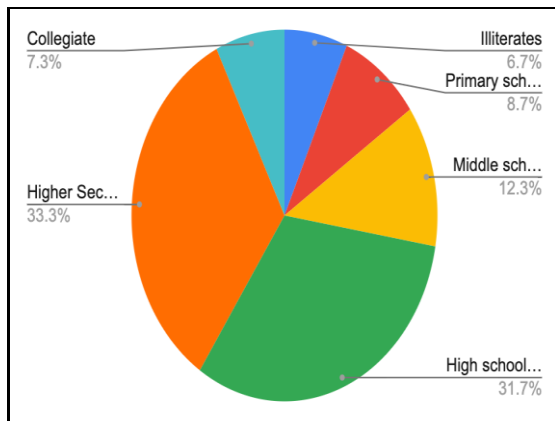


Figure 4 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Educational Status

It could be perceived from the Table 5, the majority (36.67 per cent) of the respondents had higher secondary school followed by high school (33.33 percent), middle school (10.33 per cent), Illiterates (09.00 percent), primary school (06.67 per cent) and collegiate (04.00 per cent). It may be inferred that the majority of the respondents had completed school education. Most of the villages in the study area are having educational facilities up to higher secondary level. This could be the possible reason for most of the respondents having a primary to higher secondary level of education. These may be the possible reasons for the different educational levels observed in the

present study and it may help them to easily adopt the various services provided by Farmer Producer Organisations. These findings are in accordance with the findings of Ankur (2020) and Sidharth Dash and Mazhar (2021).

3.3 Occupational Status

Occupational status was operationalized as the profession, in which the respondent spends much of his time, money and resources as a means of livelihood to maintain himself and his family. Hence, it was assumed that one who paid full attention to farming alone would be able to pay more as well as respondent attention to his profession rather than those who have other subsidiary occupations along with farming. The following scoring procedure adopted by Sneha (2019) was used in the study.

Table 6 Occupational Status Scoring Procedure

S.No	Occupation	Score
1	Agriculture as the primary occupation	2
2	Agriculture as the secondary occupation	1

The results on distribution of respondents according to their occupational status are presented in Table 6 and Figure 5.

Table 7 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Occupational Status (N = 300)

S.No	Category	Number	Percent
1	Agriculture as the primary occupation	256	85.33
2	Agriculture as the secondary occupation	44	14.67
	Total	300	100.00

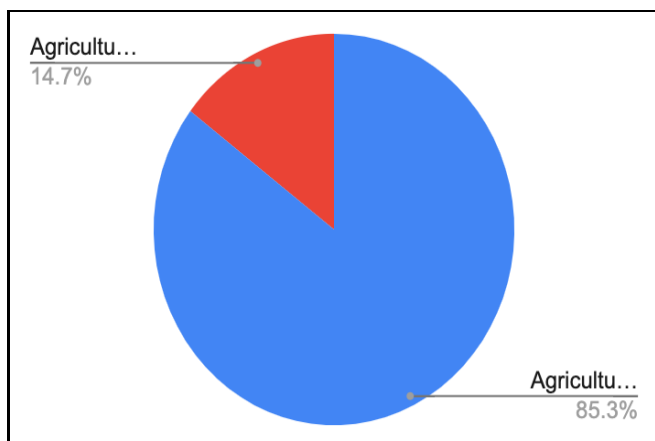


Figure 5 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Occupational Status

It is interesting to note from Table 7, the majority (85.33 per cent) of the respondents were found to have agriculture as the primary occupation followed by respondents with agriculture as the secondary occupation consist of only a very limited portion (14.67 per cent). It could be concluded that the majority of the farmers depend only on agriculture for their family income. There are no industries in the study area. Hence there are no opportunities for them to get any other jobs. And also, this may be due to the fact that as hundred percent of the respondents possessed land holdings, hence it is quite natural for the most of the respondents to have agriculture as their main occupation. The findings derive support from the findings of Renuka Rani (2021).

3.4 Farm Size

Farm size has been referred to the total extent of land possessed and operated by the respondent at the time of inquiry. The actual size of land holding is taken as a measure for working out the statistical analysis for each respondent. The area was classified into three categories as used by Reena (2021) in Figure 6.

According to Table 7, the majority (44.67 per cent) of the respondents belonged to the category of small farmers followed by 28.33 per cent of

the respondents were marginal farmers and 27.00 per cent of the respondents were big farmers. Land holdings may be shrinking as a result of population pressure and the preference for nuclear families. This may be the reason that the percentage of marginal and small farmers is increasing rapidly. This finding is in association with the findings of Rajini Devi (2021).

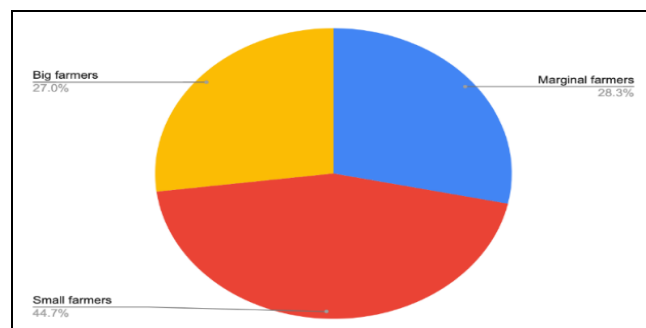


Figure 6 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Farm Size

Table 8 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Farm Size (N = 300)

S.No	Category	Number	Per cent
1	Marginal farmers	85	28.33
2	Small farmers	134	44.67
3	Big farmers	81	27.00
	Total	300	100.00

3.5 Farming Experience

Farming experience was operationalised as the number of completed years of experience in farming. One score was allotted to every one year of experience as followed by Niruban chakkaravarthy (2018). The respondents were further classified into three categories as low, medium, and high based on their farming experience by using cumulative frequency methods. To know about the experience

of the respondents in farming, required data were collected and tabulated in Table 8 and Figure 7.

Table 9 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Farming Experience (N = 300)

S. No	Category	Number	Percent
1	Low	19	6.33
2	Medium	190	63.33
3	High	91	30.33

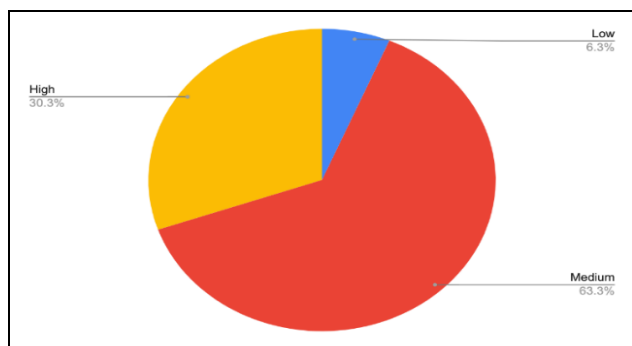


Figure 7 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Farming Experience

After analyzing Table 9, it is evident that the majority (63.33 percent) of respondents possessed a medium level of farming experience, while 30.33 percent of respondents were categorized as having a high level of farming experience. Only 6.34 percent of respondents demonstrated a low level of farming experience. The prevalence of medium farming experience among respondents aligns with their predominant age range, as observed in previous research by Darshan (2019).

3.6 Annual Income

Annual income was operationalized as the net income of the respondent and his family, for a year included from main and subsidiary occupations. One score was assigned to every thousand rupees of annual income. The scoring procedure followed by Kathiresan (2013) was adopted. It is defined as the total annual income received by the family

from all sources. The results on distribution of respondents according to their annual income are given in Table 10 and Figure 8.

Table 10 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Annual Income (N = 300)

S.No	Category	Number	Percent
1	Low	30	10.00
2	Medium	174	58.00
3	High	96	32.00
	Total	300	100.00

Table 10 shows that although 10% of respondents fell into the low level of annual income category, more than half (58.00%) of respondents had medium level annual income, followed by high level annual income (32.0%).

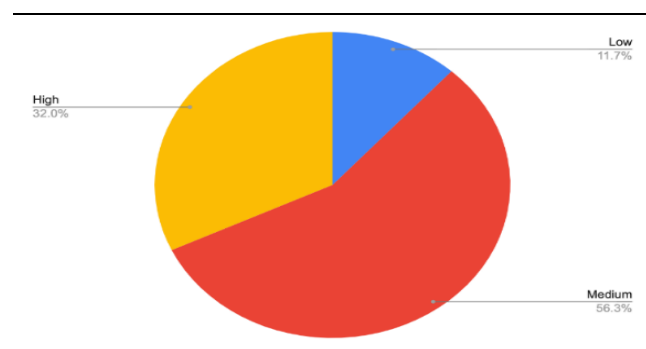


Figure 8 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Annual Income

This might be due to the fact that the majority of the respondents were engaged in farming traditionally and earn regular income from the farming. This finding is in parallel with the findings of Chopade (2019).

3.7 Extension Agency Contact

This refers to the extent to which the respondent has maintained contact with various Extension Agencies. The scoring procedure followed by Nadim (2020) was used in this study to measure the

extension agency contact of the respondents. Each score obtained by the respondent on the frequency was multiplied with the score of purpose of contact for every item and the scores were summed-up to arrive at a total score of contact with extension agency of an individual. To classify the respondents into three categories a low, medium and high cumulative frequency method was used in Figure 9.

Table 11 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Extension Agency Contact (N = 300)

S.No	Category	Number	Percent
1	Low	23	7.67
2	Medium	215	71.66
3	High	62	20.67

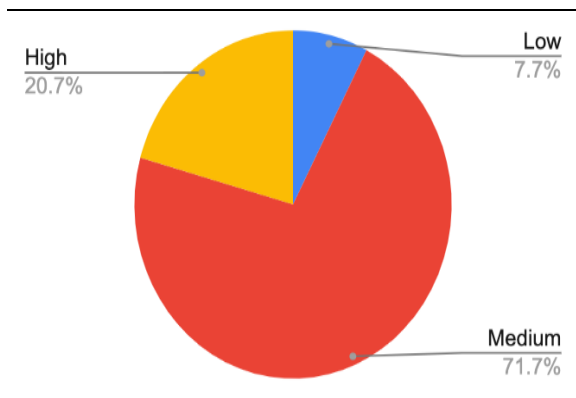


Figure 9 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Extension Agency Contact

The results of Table 11 show that the vast majority of respondents (71.66%) had medium levels of interaction with extension agencies, followed by high levels of contact (20.67%), and low levels of contact (very little, 07.67%). This could be because the majority of the beneficiaries regularly interact with FPO staff members and are well-educated. Additionally, it can be the result of government representatives setting up regular meetings with recipients to enlighten them about FPO. These

results are consistent with those of Sidharth Dash and Mazhar (2021).

3.8 Economic Motivation

Economic motivation was operationalised in terms of profit maximization and the relative value placed by the respondent on economic ends. In this study it was measured with the help of the scale adopted by Jadhav (2018). The scale consisted of six statements of which the first five were positive and the last one was negative. The scoring procedure adopted was as follows.

Table 12 Economic Motivation Scoring Procedure

S.No	Response	Scores for positive statements	Scores for negative statements
1	Strongly agree	7	1
2	Agree	5	3
3	Undecided Disagree	4	4
4	Disagree	3	5
5	Strongly Disagree	1	7

Motivation is fundamental to achieve economic development. Economic motivation is an important factor in pursuing innovation in agriculture. The results on distribution of the respondents according to their level of economic motivation are presented in Table 12 and Figure 10.

Table 13 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Economic Motivation (N = 300)

S.No	Category	Number	Per cent
1	Low	34	11.33
2	Medium	212	70.67
3	High	54	18
	Total	300	100

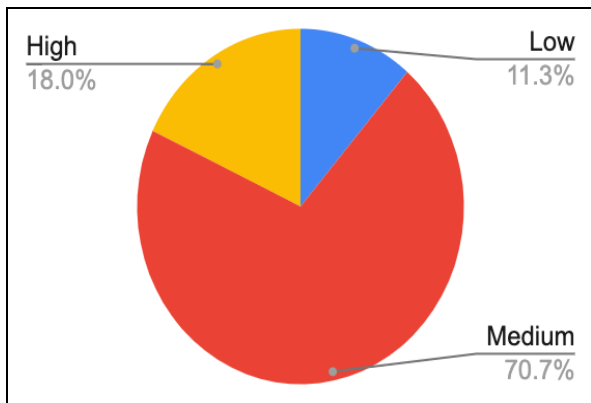


Figure 10 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Economic Motivation

The results revealed from Table 13, that the majority (70.67 per cent) of the respondents were observed to have medium level of economic motivation followed by 18.00 per cent of the respondents spotted in high levels of economic motivation and remaining 11.33 per cent of respondents had low level of economic motivation. This may be due to the fact that almost all the respondents were naturally interested in increasing their income. This finding derives support from Chopade (2019).

3.9 Credibility of Information From FPO

Credibility was operationally defined as the degree to which a communication source is perceived as trustworthy, accurate, complete, latest and competent by the farmers. The scoring procedure adopted by Suriyapriya (2018) was used in this study.

The schedule consists of three statements and the response of each statement was measured over a three-point continuum i.e., agree, undecided and disagree and scores of 3, 2 and 1 were given respectively. The respondents were classified into low, medium and high categories using cumulative frequency. By demonstrating a high level of expertise in a particular field, a person can gain the respect of others and be seen as credible and self-assured. This characteristic, whether assessed in an interpersonal or institutional setting, is an interaction

variable because it is the result of a particular communication behavior. Table 13 Figure 11 shows the outcomes of the distribution of FPO beneficiaries based on their credibility.

Table 14 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Credibility of Information from FPO (N = 300)

S.No	Category	Number	Per cent
1	Low	88	29.33
2	Medium	132	44
3	High	80	26.67
	Total	300	100

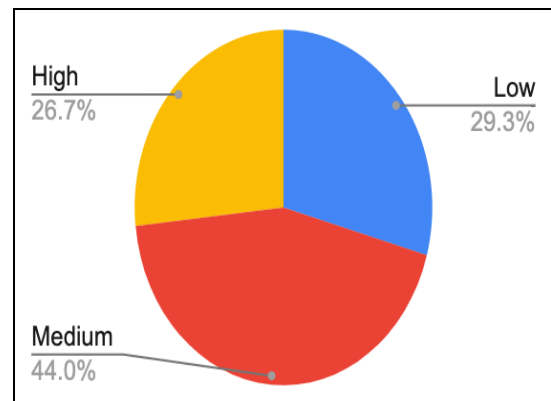


Figure 11 Distribution of Respondents According to Perception on Credibility of Information From FPO

Table 14 provided evidence that the majority (44.00 per cent) of the respondents were found to perceive a medium level of credibility followed by 29.33 per cent of the respondents were accounted to low level of credibility and 26.67 per cent of respondents had witnessed a high level of credibility of information from FPO. This credibility may have been due to the fact that most of them have maintained the extension agency contacts. The above results coincide with the findings of Armstrong and Gandhi (2012) and Suriyapriya (2018).

3.10 Market Orientation

The success of a productive enterprise depends to a greater extent on the ability of a farmer to make intelligent buying of inputs and selling of the produce. Marketing orientation is therefore an important component of sustainable development. The scoring procedure followed by Vankudothu (2014) was adopted in this study.

Table 15 Market Orientation Scoring Procedure

S.No	Response	Scores for positive statements	Scores for negative statements
1	Strongly agree	7	1
2	Agree	5	3
3	Undecided	4	4
4	Disagree	3	5
5	Strongly Disagree	1	7

Market Orientation is perceived as the organizational culture that most effectively and efficiently generates the appropriate behaviors for the establishment of superior value for buyers, thereby ensuring the business to constant higher performance (Narver and Slater, 1990). Table 15 Figure 12. presents the distribution of FPO beneficiaries in relation to market orientation.

Table 16 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Market Orientation (N = 300)

S.No	Category	Number	Percent
1	Low	21	7
2	Medium	240	80
3	High	39	13
	Total	300	100

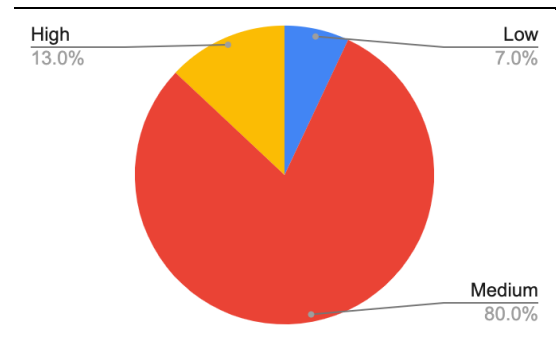


Figure 12 Distribution of Respondents According to Their Market Orientation

It could be observed from Table 16 that the majority (80.00 per cent) of the respondents had medium level of market orientation followed by 13.00 per cent of the respondents had high level of market orientation and very less (07.00 per cent) percentage of respondents had low level of market orientation in Figure 13.

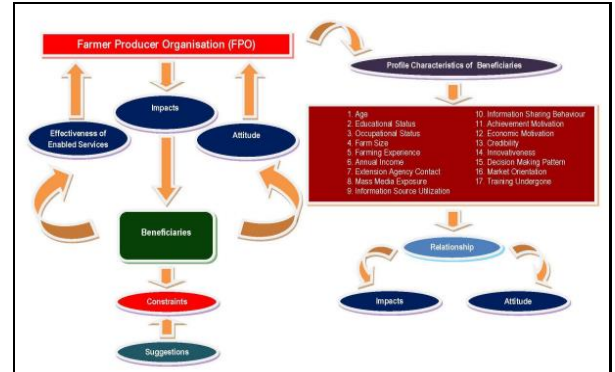


Figure 13 Conceptual Model of The Study

This may be due to the fact that the majority of the respondents had enough confidence to fix the price for their own produce and ensure their marketing performance after joining the Farmer Producer Organisation. These findings are in correlation with the findings of Vankudothu (2014).

Conclusion & Salient Findings of the Study

The study findings indicate that a majority (63.33 percent) of respondents were in the middle age group, with 91.00 percent having completed



education up to the higher secondary level. Additionally, an overwhelming majority (85.33 percent) identified agriculture as their primary occupation, and nearly half (44.67 percent) had land holdings of less than 5 acres. Moreover, a majority (63.33 percent) had a medium level of farming experience (10 to 15 years), while approximately three-fifths (58.00 percent) reported a medium level of annual income. Furthermore, nearly three-fourths (71.66 percent) had medium-level contact with extension agencies, and a majority (70.67 percent) exhibited a medium level of economic motivation. Additionally, 70.67 percent had medium and high levels of credibility, while 80.00 percent demonstrated a medium level of market orientation.

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