

ATTITUDE OF THE FARMERS TOWARDS FARMERS INTEREST GROUP IN ANAND DISTRICT OF GUJARAT

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ABSTRACT

The present investigation was undertaken in Anand district of Gujarat state. Ten Farmers Interest Groups (FIGs) from Anand district were selected randomly, from the two Talukas namely, Anand and Borsad where, fairly good numbers of Farmers Interest Groups were available. From the Anand Taluka, villages, viz. Ravdapura, Chikhodra, Gopalpura, Sudan and Vanskhiliya, while from the Borsad Taluka, villages, viz. Singlav, Virsad, Bhadrans, Motisherdi and Zarola were selected and randomly 10 respondents from each selected village were selected. Thus, a random sample of 100 farmers was selected for the study. A scale developed by department of Extension Education was used to measure attitude of the farmers towards FIG. From the above results, it can be concluded that majority of the members of FIG groups had middle age group (64.00 per cent), secondary to higher secondary level of education (61.00 per cent), low to medium level of farming experience (69.00 per cent), membership in milk cooperatives (98.00 per cent), marginal to small farm holding and up to 200000 rupees of annual income (60.00 per cent), medium to very high level of extension contact (64.00 per cent), medium to very high level of mass media exposure (67.00 per cent) and positive to highly positive overall attitude towards FIG (63.00 per cent). The result also indicates that the concept of FIG has been positively or highly positively felt or considered as an important system to solve those issues which are difficult to solve individually (93.00 per cent), acquire costly inputs which are difficult to manage single-handedly (71.00 per cent), bridge gap between extension personnel and farmers (80.00 per cent), produce or create expected outcome (50.00 per cent), take meaningful membership (85.00 per cent), improve input buying capacity of farmers (82.00 per cent), provide forum to the farmers in sharing advantageous issues (68.00 per cent), empower farmers (59.00 per cent) and to provide structure to empower women (68.00 per cent). However 55.00 per cent of the farmers either simply or strongly felt chances of conflict due to FIG among the farmers and 46.00 per cent felt possibility of conflict between resource poor farmers and rich farmers.

Keywords: Attitude, FIG, profile of FIG farmers

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) is a registered society at the district level, which works with different agriculture related institutions for sustainable agricultural development of the district. The main objective of this system is to coordinate the various agricultural research and extension activities at the district level. It is also responsible for decentralization of public agriculture technology system. An important element in the ATMA model is the involvement of farmers' organizations in decentralized decision-making, planning, priority-setting and monitoring and evaluation. Formations of Farmers' Interest Groups are an important agenda for extension services.

The formation of the Farmer's Interest Group (FIGs) with the help of public organizations, private organizations, NGOs, Para Extension Workers and private input dealers in

all the blocks and villages of the district is one of the major objectives of ATMA. When the small farmers are facilitated to organize groups, trained and guided properly, they can attain tremendous development goal which would eventually make the group self-reliant and self-sufficient. The FIG is a self-managed, independent group of farmers with a shared goal and interest. The members work together to achieve one common goal by pooling their existing resources, gaining better access to other resources and to share in the resulting benefits. The Farmer's Interest Groups (FIGs) and farmer's federation help in gaining the confidence of farmers for production and fixing the price for their produce. Many groups are formed under ATMA in every district of the country, but no one has studied feelings of farmers towards FIG in the state particularly in Anand district. Under such circumstances to understand the feeling of the farmers, this study was planned with following objectives.

OBJECTIVES

- (1) To study the profile of the member farmers of Farmers Interest Group
- (2) To measure the attitude of member farmers towards Farmers Interest Group

METHODOLOGY

The present investigation was undertaken in Anand district of Gujarat state. Ten Farmers Interest Groups from Anand district were selected randomly, from the two Talukas namely, Anand and Borsad where, fairly good numbers of Farmers Interest Groups were available. From the Anand Taluka, villages, viz. Ravdapura, Chikhodra, Gopalpura, Sudan and Vanskhiliya, while from the Borsad Taluka, villages, viz. Singlav, Virsad, Bhadrans, Motisherdi and Zarola were selected and randomly 10 respondents from each selected village were selected. Thus, a random sample of 100 farmers was selected for the study. A scale developed by Chauhan and Patel (2016) was used to measure attitude of the farmers towards FIG. This scale was developed based on methods adopted by Chauhan, *et al.* (2015*), Chauhan, *et al.* (2015) and Patel and Chauhan (2013) and Darji *et al.* (2017).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The profile of the member farmers of Farmers Interest Group

Table 1 : The FIG member farmers according to their age n=100

| Sr. No | Age group | Number | Per cent |
|--------|-----------------------------------|--------|----------|
| 1 | Young age group (up to 30years) | 20 | 20.00 |
| 2 | Middle age group (31 to 55 years) | 64 | 64.00 |
| 3 | Old age group (Above 55 years) | 16 | 16.00 |

The findings of Table 1 indicate that majority of (64.00 per cent) the member farmers of FIGs belonged to middle age group, followed by 20.00 and 16.00 per cent of them were from young age and old age groups. The result indicates that middle aged farmers due their higher and responsible role in farming than those of young and old aged farmers realized more significance to be a part of FIGs than those of young and old aged.

The Table 2 indicates that 44.00, 19.00, 17.00 and 14.00 per cent of the FIG member farmers were with second-

ary, primary, higher secondary and graduate levels of education, while only 6.00 per cent of them were literate. The result indicates that majority (94.00 Per cent) of the FIG members were educated up to primary or above levels.

Table 2 : The FIG member farmers according to their farming experience n=100

| Sr. No. | Farming experience | Number | Per cent |
|---------|-------------------------|--------|----------|
| 1 | Low (up to 10 years) | 41 | 41 |
| 2 | Medium (11 to 20 years) | 28 | 28 |
| 3 | High (above 20 years) | 31 | 31 |

The data presented in Table 2 reveal that 41.00 per cent of the FIG member farmers had up to 10 years of farming experience, while 31.00 per cent and 28.00 per cent of them had above 20 years and 11 to 20 years of experience in farming, respectively. The result indicates that irrespective levels of experienced farmers shown almost comparable interest to be a part of FIG.

Table 3 : The FIG members according to their organizational participation n=100

| Sr. No. | Institute/organization | Number | Per cent |
|---------|------------------------|--------|----------|
| 1 | Gram Panchayat | 03 | 03.00 |
| 2 | Taluka Panchayat | 01 | 01.00 |
| 3 | District Panchayat | 01 | 01.00 |
| 4 | Milk Cooperative | 98 | 98.00 |

The data presented in Table 3 disclose that majority (98.00 per cent) of the member farmers of FIG had participation in milk cooperatives, 3.00 of them were with membership in Gram Panchayat and one per cent each of them was member in Taluka Panchayat and District Panchayat. The result reveals that 100 percent of the farmer members of FIG were active in village organization.

Table 4 : The FIG member farmers according to their land holding n=100

| Sr. No. | Category | Number | Per cent |
|---------|--------------------------|--------|----------|
| 1 | Marginal (up to 1.00 ha) | 38 | 38.00 |
| 2 | Small (1.01 to 2.00 ha) | 22 | 22.00 |
| 3 | Medium (2.01 to 4.00 ha) | 22 | 22.00 |
| 4 | Large (4.01 and above) | 18 | 18.00 |

It can be seen from the data in Table 5 that 38.00 per cent of the FIG members were marginal farmers, followed by 22.00 per cent each of them were small and medium land holding farmers and 18.00 per cent of them were large size of land holding farmers. The result indicates that irrespective sizes of land holding farmers demonstrated almost similar concern to be a part of FIG.

Table 5 : The FIG member farmers according to their annual income n=100

| Sr. No. | Category (₹) | Number | Per cent |
|---------|--------------------|--------|----------|
| 1 | Up to ₹ 100000 | 21 | 21.00 |
| 2 | ₹ 100001 to 200000 | 39 | 39.00 |
| 3 | Above ₹ 200000 | 40 | 40.00 |

Table 5 shows that 40.00 per cent of the member farmers of FIG had above ₹ 2, 00, 000 of annual income, followed by 39.00 of them were with ₹ 1, 00, 001 to 2, 00, 000 and 21.00 per cent of them were with above ₹ 2, 00, 000 of annual income.

The result indicates that irrespective levels of income holder farmers considered FIG as an important system of farmers' progress.

Table 6 : The FIG member farmers according to their extension contact n= 100

| Sr. No. | Category with Score | Number | Percent |
|---------|------------------------|--------|---------|
| 1 | Very low (Up to 2.40) | 22 | 22.00 |
| 2 | Low (2.41 to 4.80) | 14 | 14.00 |
| 3 | Medium (4.81 to 7.20) | 34 | 34.00 |
| 4 | High (7.21 to 9.60) | 16 | 16.00 |
| 5 | Very high(above 9.60) | 14 | 14.00 |

The data seen in Table 6 indicate that majority (64.00 per cent) of the FIG member farmers had medium to very high level of extension exposure, while 22.00 per cent of them were with very low and 14.00 per cent of them were with low level of extension exposure. The result indicates that farmers with irrespective levels of extension contact considered FIG as an important system to take benefit of growth.

Table 7 : The FIG member farmers according to their mass media exposure n=100

| Sr. No. | Category with Score | Number | Percent |
|---------|-----------------------|--------|---------|
| 1 | Very low (Up to 3.60) | 06 | 06.00 |
| 2 | Low (3.70 to 7.20) | 27 | 27.00 |
| 3 | Medium (7.30 to 10.8) | 27 | 27.00 |
| 4 | High (10.9 to 14.4) | 32 | 32.00 |
| 5 | Very high(above14.5) | 08 | 08.00 |

The data seen in Table 8 indicate that majority (67.00 per cent) of the FIG member farmers had medium to very high level of mass media exposure, while 27.00 per cent of them were with low and 6.00 per cent were with very low level of mass media exposure. The result indicates that farmers with irrespective levels of mass media exposure considered FIG as an essential structure to take advantages of development.

Table 8 : The FIG members according to their overall attitude towards FIG n=100

| Sr. No. | Category with Score | Frequency | Per cent |
|---------|----------------------------|-----------|----------|
| 1 | Highly Negative (Up to 12) | 07 | 07.00 |
| 2 | Negative (13 to 24) | 01 | 01.00 |
| 3 | Neutral (25 to 36) | 29 | 29.00 |
| 4 | Positive (37 to 48) | 55 | 55.00 |
| 5 | Highly Positive (above 48) | 08 | 08.00 |

The result seen in Table 8 indicates that majority (63.00 per cent) of the FIG member farmers had positive to highly positive overall attitude towards FIG, while 29.00 per cent of them were with neutral attitude, 7.00 per cent with highly negative and 1.0 per cent of them with negative overall attitude towards FIG. The result discloses that majority of the FIG member farmers had positive to highly positive feelings towards FIG as an important arrangement to take advantages of development. The results are complimentary with Prajapati (2017), Katole (2017) and Haseena (2017).

Table 9 : The FIG members according to in-depth attitude towards FIG**n= 100**

| Sr. No | Statements | Member farmers with responses in per cent | | | | |
|--------|--|---|----|----|----|-----|
| | | SA | A | UD | DA | SDA |
| 1 | I think that Farmers Interest Group (FIG) provides opportunity to solve those issues which are difficult to solve individually (+) | 36 | 57 | 05 | 02 | 00 |
| 2 | I think that FIG creates conflict among the farmers(-) | 19 | 36 | 14 | 12 | 19 |
| 3 | I feel that FIG helps in acquiring costly inputs which are difficult to manage single-handedly (+) | 12 | 59 | 23 | 04 | 02 |
| 4 | I think FIG is ideal platform to bridge extension personnel with farmers (+) | 15 | 65 | 13 | 03 | 04 |
| 5 | I believe that FIG means too many cooks spoil the broth (-) | 07 | 18 | 25 | 37 | 13 |
| 6 | I think that FIG creates conflict between resource poor and rich farmers (-) | 22 | 32 | 21 | 17 | 08 |
| 7 | I like to be a member of FIG(+) | 26 | 59 | 14 | 01 | 00 |
| 8 | I believe that input buying capacity of farmer improves joining FIG (+) | 26 | 56 | 15 | 03 | 00 |
| 9 | I believe that FIG creates misunderstanding within the farmers(-) | 13 | 33 | 17 | 09 | 28 |
| 10 | I believe that FIG provides forum in sharing advantageous issues (+) | 24 | 44 | 29 | 02 | 01 |
| 11 | I feel that FIG is a prospective system to empower farmers (+) | 27 | 32 | 37 | 03 | 01 |
| 12 | I feel that FIG is a potential tool for women empowerment (+) | 24 | 44 | 17 | 02 | 13 |

The result shown in Table 9 indicates that the concept of FIG has been positively or highly positively felt or considered as an important system to solve those issues which are difficult to solve individually (93.00 per cent), acquire costly inputs which are difficult to manage single-handedly (71.00 per cent), bridge gap between extension personnel and farmers (80.00 per cent), produce or create expected outcome (50.00 per cent), take meaningful membership (85.00 per cent), improve input buying capacity of farmers (82.00 per cent), provide forum to the farmers in sharing advantageous issues (68.00 per cent), empower farmers (59.00 per cent) and to provide structure to empower women (68.00 per cent). However 55.00 per cent of the farmers either simply or strongly felt chances of conflict due to FIG among the farmers and 46.00 per cent felt possibility of conflict between resource poor farmers and rich farmers.

CONCLUSION

From the above results, it can be concluded that majority of the members of FIG groups had middle age group (64.00 per cent), secondary to higher secondary level of education (61.00 per cent), low to medium level of farming

experience (69.00 per cent), membership in milk cooperatives (98.00 per cent), marginal to small farm holding and up to 200000 ` of annual income (60.00 per cent), medium to very high level of extension contact (64. .00 per cent), medium to very high level of mass media exposure (67.00 per cent) and positive to highly positive overall attitude towards FIG (63.00 per cent). The result also indicates that the concept of FIG has been positively or highly positively felt or considered as an important system to solve those issues which are difficult to solve individually (93.00 per cent), acquire costly inputs which are difficult to manage single-handedly (71.00 per cent), bridge gap between extension personnel and farmers (80.00 per cent), produce or create expected outcome (50.00 per cent), take meaningful membership (85.00 per cent), improve input buying capacity of farmers (82.00 per cent), provide forum to the farmers in sharing advantageous issues (68.00 per cent), empower farmers (59.00 per cent) and to provide structure to empower women (68.00 per cent). However 55.00 per cent of the farmers either simply or strongly felt chances of conflict due to FIG among the farmers and 46.00 per cent felt possibility of conflict between resource poor farmers and rich farmers.

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