

## ATTITUDE OF FARMER PRODUCER ORGANIZATIONS MEMBERS TOWARDS THE ORGANIZATION

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### ABSTRACT

*Farmers' organizations considered as the main pathway in improving the productivity, profitability and sustainability of small and marginal farmers in the nation. Therefore, it had become a paramount importance to study the attitude of farmers towards the Farmer producer Organization (FPO). The study was conducted in purposively selected Mysuru district of Karnataka state. In the district, Mysuru and K.R.Nagara taluks were selected. The two organizations Varuna Horticulture Farmer Producer Company Limited (VHFPC) and Arkeshwara Horticulture Farmer Producer Company Limited (AHFPC) were purposively selected. It was found that as high as 36.67 per cent of farmers possessed more favorable attitude towards FPOs, while 35.83 and 27.50 per cent of farmers possessed less favorable and favorable attitude towards FPOs, respectively. The VHFPC members had attitude mean score of 69.67 and the AHFPC members had the attitude mean score as 80.67, thus there is a significant difference at one per cent level with the t- value of 12.34 between VHFPC members and AHFPC members' attitude towards the farmers producer organization. Attitudes are acquired through experience and exert a directive influence on subsequent behavior and moreover, help individuals to interpret new information and to make decisions more efficiently than would otherwise be the case.*

**Keywords:** attitude, farmers producer organizations, agriculture, members of the FPO.

### INTRODUCTION

Farmers' organizations considered as the main pathway in improving the productivity, profitability and sustainability of small and marginal farmers in the nation. Collective action by farmers as producer organizations can reduce transaction costs in markets, achieve some market strength and increase their representation in national and international markets (NABARD, 2015). For small and marginal farmers, producer organizations are considered to be the prominent formal organizations to achieve competitiveness in the market (Venkatesan, 2017). Small and marginal farmers are dominating the landscape of our nation with approximately 75 per cent of the total farming community. So, there is a need to aggregate these small and marginal farmers in order to offset fragmentation in landholding and bring benefits of economies of scale (Asha, 2018). Organizing producers into formal management entities help to initiate collective decision on cultivation to make the best use of market intelligence as well as create opportunities for farmers to get involved in value adding decisions and activities such as input supply, credit, pre-cooling, processing, marketing and distribution (Kumar *et al.* 2021).

The instrument of FPOs registered as Farmer Producer Company (FPC) is emerging to be effective. As FPCs offer a wide range of benefits compared to other formats of aggregation of the farmers. FPC members are able to leverage collective strength and bargaining power to access financial and non-financial services and appropriate technologies leading to reduction in transaction costs (Venkattakumar and Sontakki, 2012). Members can also collectively tap high value markets and enter into partnerships with private entities on equitable terms. FPOs focused on addressing issue of crop planning, technology infusion, input supply and primary marketing (Verma, 2017). There is a rising concern that the farmers organizations can act as a potential driving force for agricultural and rural development. Farmers organizations are working as 'engines' of development that can uphold the pennon of development even ahead of local level, offering benefits to the rest of the society. Therefore, it had become a paramount importance to study the attitude of farmers towards the Farmer producer Organization (FPO), as attitude forms an essential component for better participation and success of any innovative organizational setup (Yeragorla *et al.*, 2021). Attitudes are acquired through experience and exert a directive influence on subsequent behavior and moreover, help individuals to interpret new information and

to make decisions more efficiently than would otherwise be the case. Hence, this paper aims at studying the attitude of the farmers towards the organization.

## OBJECTIVE

To measure the attitude of farmer producer organizations members towards the organization

## METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted purposively in Mysuru district of Karnataka state because of highest number of crop specific FPOs (10 FPOs) are operating in the district out of 182 FPOs in Karnataka state. In the district Mysuru and K.R.Nagara taluks were selected purposively in order to bring a contrast between two areas showcasing the extremes, one representing the area most favorable for fruits i.e. Mysuru and the other, portraying the area with most favorable conditions for vegetables i.e. K.R.Nagara. The two organizations Varuna Horticulture Farmer Producer Company Limited (VHFPC) and Arkeshwara Horticulture Farmer Producer Company Limited (AHFPC) were purposively selected as they adequately represent successful and assessable case studies of farmer organizations. In addition, both of them involve small and marginal farmers. The organizations are located in

the Mysuru and K.R.Nagara taluk of Mysuru district. Thus, these two taluks were purposively selected. The respondents for the study were the members in the organizations. Total 120 members consisting 60 from each organization who are growing Banana and Tomato crop were selected by simple random sampling technique for the study. Ex-post facto research design was used for the study and attitude was operationally defined as the degree of positive or negative feelings or effect of members towards Farmer Producer Organization. The method suggested by Likert, (1932) and Edwards (1969) in developing summated rating scale was followed in the construction of the scale to measure the attitude of farmers towards Farmer Producer Organizations. The attitude scale developed was administered to 120 FPO members. The data were coded and analysed with descriptive statistics viz., frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, etc. using Microsoft Excel 2019, and t and chi square tests were performed using R version 4.0.3.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Statement-wise attitude of farmer producer organizations members towards the organization

The statement-wise attitude of the respondents were presented in the Table.1.

**Table 1: Statement-wise attitude of farmer producer organizations members towards the organization** (n=120)

Sr. No.	Attitude statements	VHFPC members (n <sub>1</sub> =60)		AHFPC members (n <sub>2</sub> =60)		Pooled sample (n=120)	
		Attitude score	Rank	Attitude score	Rank	Attitude score	Rank
1	FPOs help in increasing confidence among farmers	202	VIII	247	IV	450	VII
2	FPOs provide needful information on improved agricultural practices	172	XIII	255	III	429	IX
3	FPOs is not a long- term solution to the problems of price inflation	161	XVIII	217	XV	381	XVII
4	FPOs is a boon for farmers	145	XIX	233	VI	382	XVI
5	FPOs mismanages the local resources	220	V	227	IX	452	VI
6	Much is talked about FPOs, but little work is done	135	XXI	227	IX	368	XVIII
7	Organizing farmers into groups is waste of money	129	XXII	227	IX	366	XIX
8	FPOs have created more problems for members than solving	169	XVI	184	XX	361	XX
9	Attending FPOs work is time consuming for the members	182	XII	192	XIX	383	XV
10	Activities of FPOs are not as per members needs	256	II	261	II	524	II

Sr. No.	Attitude statements	VHFPC members (n <sub>1</sub> =60)		AHFPC members (n <sub>2</sub> =60)		Pooled sample (n=120)	
		Attitude score	Rank	Attitude score	Rank	Attitude score	Rank
11	FPOs is a prospective system to empower farmers	213	VII	202	XVII	426	X
12	FPOs are not potential enough to bring about agricultural development	201	IX	232	VIII	445	VIII
13	FPOs is farmers friendly approach to sale farm products	142	XX	150	XXII	305	XXII
14	FPOs induces cosmopolitness of its members	220	V	227	IX	461	V
15	FPOs inculcate the decision-making ability among their members	248	III	233	VI	496	III
16	FPOs work on the principle of democracy	172	XIII	218	XIV	406	XIV
17	FPOs provide need-based consultancy services to the members	186	X	208	XVI	411	XI
18	FPOs is not rigid as co-operatives	276	I	272	I	566	I
19	Administration / management of FPOs involve too much of autocracy	172	XIII	220	XIII	411	XI
20	FPOs increase overhead charges	229	IV	236	V	485	IV
21	Benefits from government / other institutions could be availed by FPOs members	186	X	200	XVIII	407	XIII
22	Peer pressure affects the functioning of Farmers Producer Organization	164	XVII	172	XXI	358	XXI

Among 22 statements listed, “FPOs is not rigid as co-operatives” was ranked one (I), “Activities of FPOs are not as per member’s needs” was ranked second (II), “FPOs inculcate the decision-making ability among their members” was ranked third (III). While, “Peer pressure affects the functioning of Farmers Producer Organization” was ranked twenty one (XXI) and “FPOs is farmers friendly approach to sale farm products” was ranked last (XXII). FPOs provide platform for sharing experience among the members. The possible reason for this could be that the FPOs have brought farmers together into a group and farmers perceive it as an opportunity to socialize and learn together which is the one of the principles of group approach. The FPOs have brought together all the categories of farmers whether big, small or marginal farmers and provided them a platform to share their knowledge in the group (Mukharjee, 2018). The necessity of the formation of FPOs was to avail the benefits from the government. The possibility of interacting directly with the line departments such as agriculture, horticulture, forestry, fishery, animal husbandry, banks and various credit institutions might be the reason for the members to have get favorable attitude towards benefits from government/ other institutions could be availed by FPOs (Dechamma *et al.* 2020).

FPO members have ‘strongly agreed’ to the statement, ‘FPOs are boon to farmers. The FPOs are established with a motive of effective management of natural resources, easy reach of inputs to members, better utilization of farm machinery, implements and equipment’s, addressing labour problems, promotion of labour sharing in the FPOs creating local market for the produce, reducing the overhead charges during production and marketing of agricultural produce and improvement in the bargaining power of small and marginal farmers for the price, might be the conceivable reasons for the members to believe that FPO as boon to the farmers (Vinayakumar, 2018).

The results of the study indicate that most of the members ‘strongly disagreed’ with the statement, ‘FPO mismanages the local resources. The core objective of the FPOs is efficient management of natural resources like soil and water. The members have been trained on the integrated farming systems, mixed cropping, crop diversification, crop protection, water management and eco restoration. Hence, most of the members have ‘strongly disagreed’ with the statement. The results are in line with the study conducted by Gopala (2015) and Shivani *et al.* (2020).

**Table 2: Overall attitude of FPO members towards the organization**

(n=120)

Sr. No.	Attitude category	VHFPC members (n <sub>1</sub> =60)		AHFPC members (n <sub>2</sub> =60)		Pooled sample (n=120)	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Less favourable	17	28.33	17	28.33	43	35.83
2	Favourable	24	40.00	23	38.33	33	27.50
3	More favourable	19	31.67	20	33.34	44	36.67

**Overall attitude of FPO members towards the organization**

It can be visualized from the Table 2 that, 40.00% of VHFPC members had favorable attitude towards the FPOs, whereas in case of AHFPC members, 38.33% of them had favorable attitude. With respect to the pooled sample, it was found that as high as 36.67% of farmers possessed more favorable attitude towards FPOs. The possible reason could be that, the large number of members of FPO are small and marginal farmers in the project area and they felt the necessity of associations are more essential for their sustained development than large farmers. FPOs helps to enhance the producer share in the consumer rupee thereby enhancing the confidence among the peasants to continue in agriculture profession. The producer share in the consumer rupee has enhanced greatly and the net income of the farmers has raised to a considerable level. Apart from the cost reduction and resource management, the FPOs have also helped the members to involve in the income generating activities. Through FPOs, the members have received training on various aspects of agriculture production, processing, marketing, entrepreneurship and financial management might be the reasons for the majority of FPO members to have favorable attitude towards the associations (Patel, 2018).

**Table 3 : Test of significance in respect of attitude towards farmer producer organizations between VHFPC members and AHFPC members (n=120)**

Sr. No.	Particulars	Attitude mean score	t-value
1	VHFPC members (n=60)	69.67	12.34**
2	AHFPC members (n=60)	80.67	

\*\* Significant at 1 per cent level

**Test of significance in respect of attitude towards farmer producer**

The VHFPC members had attitude mean score of 69.67 and the AHFPC members had the attitude mean score as 80.67, thus there is a significant difference at one per cent

level with the t- value of 12.34 between VHFPC members and AHFPC members' attitude towards the farmers producer organization (Table 3). Majority of the psychological studies says that every individual or group will have different attitude or opinion towards something. Likewise, in this study both VHFPC members and AHFPC members were having different level attitudes towards FPOs. This is because the exposure and association of both VHFPC members and AHFPC members with respective FPOs is different. These results reflect the randomized sampling effects, and the similar results can be seen in the study conducted by Gopala, (2015).

**Association between profile characteristics of FPO members and their attitude towards FPOs**

The chi-square analysis was carried out to know the association between attitude and profile characteristics of FPO members (Table 4). Nine variables namely, education, achievement motivation, decision making ability, management orientation, economic motivation, risk orientation, innovative proneness, mass media exposure and training received were found to be significantly associated at five per cent level with the attitude of members of FPOs. The remaining three variables such as participation in activities of FPO, extension contact and extension participation were found significantly associated at one per cent level with the attitude of members towards FPOs. The variables such as age, family size, land holding, farming experience, cosmopolitaness, scientific orientation and social participation were found to have no significant association with the attitude of members towards FPOs.

The possible reason for the results obtained was that schooling facilities and learning facilities which in turn presumed to instill a favorable attitude of members towards FPOs. Education provides an opportunity for the people to derive advantages of becoming members of FPOs. Achievement motivation forces the individual towards reaching the goals which he/she has set to for himself and helps to acquire the knowledge and develop favourable attitude. The management aspects of the crop production have helped

the individual for better involvement in the management of crop production, processing, value addition and marketing activities social activities (Gummagolmath, 2021). Hence all the three variables might be significantly associated with overall attitude. Innovativeness had significant association with the attitude of members towards FPOs. The members are innovative in farming and participating in the activities of FPOs. The new technologies advocated by the farm scientists and extension personnel of Krishi Vignana Kendra were adopted for getting increased yield and income. There exist significant association between mass media participation and attitude of the members towards FPOs. Higher level of mass media participation would facilitate the members to develop habits of gathering information about the improved crop production activities and formation and advantages of becoming members to FPOs (Palaiah, 2016).

**Table 4: Association between profile characteristics of FPO members and their attitude towards FPOs (n=120)**

Sr. No.	Profile characteristics	Chi-square value
X <sub>1</sub>	Age	2.689 <sup>NS</sup>
X <sub>2</sub>	Education	10.029*
X <sub>3</sub>	Family size	1.281 <sup>NS</sup>
X <sub>4</sub>	Farming experience	3.334 <sup>NS</sup>
X <sub>5</sub>	Land holding	2.567 <sup>NS</sup>
X <sub>6</sub>	Achievement motivation	12.921*
X <sub>7</sub>	Cosmopolitaness	7.019 <sup>NS</sup>
X <sub>8</sub>	Decision making ability	12.818*
X <sub>9</sub>	Scientific orientation	7.192 <sup>NS</sup>
X <sub>10</sub>	Management orientation	10.928*
X <sub>11</sub>	Economic motivation	9.967*
X <sub>12</sub>	Risk orientation	9.580*
X <sub>13</sub>	Innovative proneness	11.928*
X <sub>14</sub>	Social participation	5.681 <sup>NS</sup>
X <sub>15</sub>	Mass media exposure	11.691*
X <sub>16</sub>	Participation in activities of FPO	13.028**
X <sub>17</sub>	Training received	11.920*
X <sub>18</sub>	Extension contact	14.998**
X <sub>19</sub>	Extension participation	15.021**

NS = Non-Significant; \*Significant at 5 % level;

\*\*Significant at 1 % level

Participation in training programmes was found to be significantly associated with the attitude of members towards FPOs. The participation in training programmes enhances the knowledge, skill and attitude of the members. Due to exposure to different training programmes the attitude

of members is directly influenced by the trainings (Darsana, 2020). The extension contact of the members was found to be significantly associated with their attitude towards the FPOs. The FPO members had regular contact with the agriculture officers, KVK scientists and farm scientists of UAS, Bangalore through FPOs. Due to their regular contact with the extension professionals the members have developed favourable attitude towards the FPOs. Extension participation of the members was found to be significantly associated with the attitude of the members towards FPOs. The participation in extension activities such as field visits, study tours, demonstrations, exhibitions and field experiments organized through FPOs might had helped them to have favourable attitude towards FPOs.

### CONCLUSION

Farmers organizations are working as ‘engines’ of development that can uphold the pennon of development even ahead of local level, offering benefits to the rest of the society. Therefore, it had become a paramount importance to study the attitude of farmers towards the Farmer producer Organization (FPO), as attitude forms an essential component for better participation and success of any innovative organizational setup. Attitudes are acquired through experience and exert a directive influence on subsequent behavior and moreover, help individuals to interpret new information and to make decisions more efficiently than would otherwise be the case. FPOs helps to enhance the producer share in the consumer rupee thereby enhancing the confidence among the peasants to continue in agriculture profession. The producer share in the consumer rupee has enhanced greatly and the net income of the farmers has raised to a considerable level. Apart from the cost reduction and resource management, the FPOs have also helped the members to involve in the income generating activities. Through FPOs, the members have received training on various aspects of agriculture production, processing, marketing, entrepreneurship and financial management might be the reasons for the majority of FPO members to have favorable attitude towards the associations.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All authors declare that no conflict of interest.

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Received : May 2022 : Accepted : June 2022