

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE OCCURRED AS A RESULT OF CONVERGENCE OF FARMERS' CLUBS AND FARMERS' INTEREST GROUPS IN ANAND DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Farmers' Clubs (FCs) are grass root level informal forums. Such Clubs are organised by rural branches of banks with the support and financial assistance of NABARD. The District Administration of Anand district had taken initiative of Convergence of FCs and FIGs in Anand District and setting up Farmers' Groups in all 365 villages of the district. The Navsari Agricultural University was assigned the task to take up the study on impact assessment of Farmers' Clubs on socio-economic condition of members of clubs in specific and rural development in general. The present study was carried out in Anand district to assess the techno-socio-economic change (consequences) occurred amongst farming community as a result of new initiative 'Convergence of Farmers' Clubs and Farmers' Interest Groups in Anand District and setting up Farmers' Groups in all 365 villages of the district'. 47 villages/converged Farmers' Clubs (FCs+FIGs) were selected from 365 villages /Farmers' Clubs by using proportionate random sampling technique assuring that all talukas must be represented proportionately. Bases on data as well observation of experienced study team, it can be obviously said that by and large, the socio-economic change has been occurred due to convergence of Farmers' Clubs and Farmers' Interest Groups in Anand District. Since, it has brought significant change as increase in area under field crops, increase in use of improved varieties, increase in crop production, increase in use of farm machinery, and increase in annual income from both agriculture and livestock. The findings also revealed the significant improvement in household materials, clothing pattern, savings and home amenities of the farmers. The converged Farmers' Clubs, thus, have played an important role in accelerating agricultural productivity and effecting a positive change in life standard of the rural farming community in Anand district.

Keywords : socio-economic change, FIGs, farmers' club

INTRODUCTION

Farmers' Interest Groups (FIGs) were formed under ATMA in Anand district during 2010-11. The developmental activities to be taken by FIGs were perceived by Anand district administration all most same to the FCs. Considering this fact and importance of FCs and FIGs in development of rural society, the District Administration of Anand district has taken up itself the challenge of covering every single village of the district under NABARD's Farmer Club Programme during Swarnim Krishi Mahotsav Festival 2010. The District Administration of Anand district had taken initiative of Convergence of FCs and FIGs in Anand District and setting up Farmers' Groups in all 365 villages of the district.

OBJECTIVE

To know the socio-economic change occurred as a result of convergence of farmers' clubs and farmers' interest

groups in Anand district

METHODOLOGY

A list of 365 Farmers' Clubs and 425 Farmers' Interest Groups of all the talukas of Anand district was collected from the District Panchayat, Anand. Statistically, minimum sample size should be of 10 % to total size of population for inferring empirical results from the collected data. Keeping in view this principle, 47 villages/converged Farmers' Clubs (FCs+FIGs) were selected from 365 villages /Farmers' Clubs by using proportionate random sampling technique assuring that all talukas must be represented proportionately. Data were collected with the help of structural schedule by personal interview from the member groups of total 47 Farmers' Clubs. The aims and objectives of the study were explained to the respondents, so as to get free response from them.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 : Technology adopted after joining in farmers' clubs n=47

Sr. No.	Technology adopted	No. of farmers club	Percent
1	Agriculture		
	1 Improved seeds	40	85.11
	2 Fertilizer dose	32	68.09
	3 Weedicide	21	44.68
	4 Micronutrient	38	80.85
	5 Farm Mechanization	26	55.32
2	Horticulture		
	1 Tissue culture	14	29.79
	2 Green house/ net house	12	25.53
3	Animal husbandry		
	1 Mineral mixture	44	93.62
	2 Vaccination	40	85.11
	3 Deworming	42	89.36
	4 Housing	26	55.32

The data in Table 1 indicate that majority of farmers clubs have adopted improved seeds and Micronutrient in agriculture while Mineral mixture, Deworming and Vaccination in animal husbandry

Table 4: Benefits of Governmental Schemes taken by converged farmers' clubs n=47

Sr. No.	Governmental Schemes	Benefits	Number	Percent
1	ATMA Project	1 Training	40	85.11
		2 Demonstration	24	51.06
		3 Exposure Visit	23	48.94
		4 Award	8	17.02
		5 Farm School	7	14.89
2	RKVY	Critical input kits	25	53.19
3	NHM	Green house, Demonstrations	8	17.02
4	Krushi Mahotsav	Awareness of agril. and allied technology	45	95.74
5	KVK	Training	15	31.91
6	FTC	Training	14	29.79

As per the data mentioned in Table 4, majority of converged farmers clubs have taken the benefit of Krushi Mahotsav and training in ATMA project.

Table 2 : Socio-economic change occurred after convergence of farmers' clubs n=47

Sr. No.	Type of change	Number	Percent
1	Standard of living increased	33	70.21
2	Food habit	34	72.34
3	Inhabitation	33	70.21
4	Property increased	31	65.96
5	Children education improved	36	76.60
6	Internal facility of vehicle increased	37	78.72
7	Savings increased	24	51.06
8	Increased in number of milch animal	36	76.60

The data revealed in table 2 that socio-economic development with respect to standard of living, food habit, inhabitation, property, children education, mobility through vehicles and savings have been increased.

Table 3 : Change occurred in agricultural practices after convergence of farmers' clubs n=47

Sr. No.	Agricultural practices	Number	Percent
1	Soil & water analysis	42	89.36
2	Drip irrigation	12	25.53
3	Improved variety adopted	40	85.11
4	Integrated variety management	24	51.06
5	Biofertilizer	40	85.11
6	Soil improvement	38	80.85

More than 80.00 % FCs have used soil & water analysis, low cost bio-fertilizer and soil amendments for betterment of soil health.

Constraints and issues in farmers clubs before convergence

Before 2010 a total of 109 Farmers Clubs were in the district. During the Krishi Mahotsav-2010, additional 159 clubs were formed, hence the total of 368 clubs (100% convergence) were established. District Administration from top to bottom played very vital role in formation of these clubs.

- ◆ Since Banks were not actively involved in formation of these clubs and linkage between Branch Managers and Farmers Clubs affiliated to their branch was not up to desired level for effective functioning of these clubs.
- ◆ In some cases, Branch Managers were not recognizing Farmers Clubs as their own clubs. Even some of the Clubs were facing difficulties in opening savings account in the Bank branch where they are affiliated.
- ◆ Due to non-monitoring of clubs by service area bank branches, regular meetings were not taking place by the members.
- ◆ Due to lack of regular meetings, leaderships were not rotated or efforts were not made to increase/review memberships in the clubs.
- ◆ Before convergence between ATMA FIGs and FCs, around 50% of clubs were not registered under ATMA groups .
- ◆ Farmers Clubs were not getting priority in any of Govt initiatives such as seeds distribution under seed village scheme, crop demonstrations etc.

Benefits of convergence of farmers club programme

- ◆ As a result of convergence of FCs and FIGs, members of both the groups could be benefitted as following.
- ◆ The benefits of demonstrations, seed distribution, subsidy and agricultural inputs under various governmental schemes namely, RKVY, NHM, NFSM could be gained properly by the members of the Clubs.
- ◆ The Govt. of India has started the ATMA as an extension reforms, hence the converged FCs have been proved benefitted for trainings, exposure visits, demonstrations and other activities being carried out under ATMA.

- ◆ The members of FCs could be involved in social and health programmes of Government.
- ◆ The members of FCs could be benefitted in terms of smooth credit flow from the finance institutions and have forged better bank borrower relationship.

CONCLUSION

Bases on data as well observation of experienced study team, it can be obviously said that by and large, the socio-economic change has been occurred due to convergence of Farmers' Clubs and Farmers' Interest Groups in Anand District.

Since, it has brought significant change as increase in area under field crops, increase in use of improved varieties, increase in crop production, increase in use of farm machinery, and increase in annual income from both agriculture and livestock

The findings also revealed the significant improvement in household materials, clothing pattern, savings and home amenities of the farmers. The converged Farmers' Clubs, thus, have played an important role in accelerating agricultural productivity and effecting a positive change in life standard of the rural farming community. The finding is in line with the findings of Kavadi *et al.*, (2014), Patel *et al.*, (2016) and Vinaya *et al.*, (201)

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