

Training need assessment of women members in selected farmer producer organizations (FPOs) of Karnataka

*BOJJAGANI JHANSI¹, ANNAPURNA N. KALAL¹, N. RAJESHWARI¹, G N.MARADDI² AND GEETA CHITAGUBBI³

¹Department of Extension and Communication Management, ²Department of Agricultural Extension

³Department of Family Resource Management

College of Community Science, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, India

*E-mail : jhansibrp@gmail.com

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Abstract: Agriculture sector provides gainful employment and livelihood for majority of the population and contributes significantly to the national income and in India it accounts for 17.60 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Indian agricultural sector facing several challenges like small and fragmented land-holdings, climate change, diversification due to rapid urbanization, inadequate market and storage facilities, unorganized sector, lack of credit facilities and low knowledge on supply chain management and business plans. Hence the study was conducted in Karnataka during the year of 2022-23. Study was carried out in three Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) from Karnataka have been selected. A total of 90 women members constitute the sample size. Data was collected through interview schedule and analyzed through mean scores and index percentage. Study concludes that, highest index score 81.11 was observed for training on skills for marketing of products at large scale and business skills and ranked I. Whereas, highest index score in personal constraint, expressed by majority of the women members was, they were unable to manage time between household work and FPO work with index score of (86.66) and it ranked I. With regard to marketing majority expressed that, price fluctuation every year and distress sale as a constraint with index score 81.11 and ranked I. Great majority (93.33) of FPO members expressed that, high initial share capital/membership charge in FPOs as a constraint and ranked I in administration. With respect to services and benefits more than half (56.66) of the respondents expressed that, non- availability of custom hiring services at FPO as a constrain and ranked I. Study results also indicated that great majority (93.33) of FPO members suggested that, they want proper guidance towards packaging, grading, branding, processing and marketing especially for value added products should be given by FPOs for better participation.

Key words: Constraints, Farmer producer organization (FPO), Training needs, Women members

Introduction

Agriculture sector provides gainful employment and livelihood for majority of the population and contributes significantly to the national income and in India it accounts for 17.60 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It engages almost 54.60 per cent of the country's workforce. Majority (86.00%) of the operational land holdings belong to small and marginal farmers. More than 46.00 per cent of the total production is contributed from small and marginal farmers.

Indian agricultural sector facing several challenges like small and fragmented land-holdings, climate change, diversification due to rapid urbanization, inadequate market and storage facilities, unorganized sector, lack of credit facilities and low knowledge on supply chain management and business plans. Hence farmers are facing problems like lack of support for inputs, credit and marketing of their produce. Because of low remunerative price, price fluctuations, intermediaries, inappropriate marketing etc., the farmers are often driven in to debt cycle. Especially women producers, who are often excluded or have their participation restrained in organizations, face additional challenges, such as cultural and legal discrimination, which prevent them from accessing productive assets, finance, education and technology. In this context collectivization of producers small and marginal farmers, into producer organizations has emerged as one of the most effective institutional mechanism to address the various challenges of agriculture. Hence, as per the recommendation of the Y K Alagh Committee

in 2002, the Government of India introduced the concept of Producers Companies (PCs) after the amendment of the Companies Act 1956 (Manaswi *et al.* 2018; Singh *et al.* 2022).

Training needs analysis is one of the crucial steps towards identifying the area of FPO women members' interest, design & development of curriculum that can be best suit to the existing real condition of the women members. It also helps in planning appropriate training programmes for women members in Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) for better participation. In the present study, it was found that most of the women members attended training programmes through Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs). In order to identify women members training needs for effective functioning of Farmer Producer Organization, study was conducted in Karnataka with the specific objectives given below

- Training need assessment of women members in selected Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) of Karnataka.
- To identify constraints and to enlist suggestions by women members in FPO.

Methodology

Research design as "The plan, structure and a strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answer to research question and control variance" (Kerlinger, 1973). The research design employed in the current study is "Ex-post facto" design

means the data collected after the events occurred, Robinson (1976) defined ex-post facto research design as any systematic empirical enquiry in to which the independent variables have not been directly manipulated because they have already occurred or they are inherently not manipulable. The study was conducted in Karnataka during 2022-23. In Karnataka three districts *viz*, Belgaum, Bijapur and Gadag districts coming under the jurisdiction of the University of Agricultural Sciences have been selected.. From each district one Farmer Producer Organization (FPO) which has minimum 30 women members in FPO has been selected purposively.

Selection of FPOs

From each district states one FPO was selected based on the criteria in which maximum women members' participation in FPO and the FPOs should be registered under company act. Farmer producer organizations which are doing agricultural activities, horticultural activities and fisheries were purposively selected for the current study. Selected FPOs should recognize under National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) or Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC). Thus, three Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) from Karnataka have been selected. Form each selected FPO 30 women members participating actively were randomly selected. Hence, a total of 90 women members from FPO constitute the sample size. Data was collected through interview schedule and analyzed through mean scores and index percentage.

Results and discussion

Training need assessment of women member in Farmer Producer Organization

Results from Table 1 indicated that, training need assessment of women members in Farmer Producer Organization (FPO).

Table 1. Training need assessment of women members in Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)

| Topics for Training | Karnataka (n = 90) | | | | n=90 |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|------|
| | FPO-H ₁ (n=30) | FPO-A ₁ (n=30) | FPO-F ₁ (n=30) | Total (n ₁ = 90) | |
| Training on various technical services (Related to farm activity management such as water management, crop based training) | 0.70 (70.00) | 0.76 (76.66) | 0.73 (73.33) | 0.73 (73.33) | V |
| Drudgery reducing activities and equipments (Related to machinery operating) | 0.96 (96.66) | 0.70 (70.00) | 0.60 (60.00) | 0.75 (75.55) | III |
| Skills for marketing of products at large scale and business skills | 0.86 (86.66) | 0.80 (80.00) | 0.76 (76.66) | 0.81 (81.11) | I |
| Value addition of produce (Dry flower crafts, jams, jelly, fish and prawns pickle) | 0.66 (66.66) | 0.63 (63.33) | 0.93 (93.33) | 0.74 (74.44) | IV |
| Skills on digital technology | 0.76 (76.66) | 0.90 (90.00) | 0.50 (50.00) | 0.72 (72.22) | VI |
| Awareness on savings, credit and insurance | 0.83 (83.33) | 0.70 (70.00) | 0.86 (86.66) | 0.80 (80.00) | II |
| Leadership development | 0.66 (66.66) | 0.73 (73.33) | 0.53 (53.33) | 0.64 (64.44) | VII |
| Other income generating activities | 0.60 (60.00) | 0.46 (46.66) | 0.63 (63.33) | 0.56 (56.66) | VIII |
| Any other (Management of FPO as Directors, higher posts in FPO etc) | 0.33 (33.33) | 0.53 (53.33) | 0.36 (36.66) | 0.41 (41.11) | IX |

*Multiple responses are possible

Highest index score 81.11 was observed for training on skills for marketing of products at large scale and business skills and ranked I. It was observed during data collection that, FPO women members from Karnataka the need to receive training on income generating activities. The reason might be the respondents were small and marginal farmers and their income was medium and not enough to meet all the requirements. So they felt that they could earn additional income from other activities if they could get training in non-farm based activities. Moreover, they do not have farm work all round the year. So they work to take up income generating activities during slack season.

Whereas, training on awareness on savings, credit and insurance ranked II with an index score 80.00 followed by training on drudgery reducing activities and equipments (related to machinery operating) with an index score 75.55 and ranked III. The FPO will do the direct marketing after procurement of agricultural produce. This will enable women members to save in terms of time, transaction costs, weightment losses, distress sales, price fluctuations, transportation, quality maintenance etc., Hence few women members expressed the training need to enhancing skills for marketing of products at large scale and business skills for better price.

With respect to training on value addition of produce (Dry flower crafts, jams, jelly, fish and prawns pickle) index score was 74.44 and ranked IV followed by training on various technical services (Related to farm activity management such as water management, crop based training) with an index score 73.33 and ranked V. Majority of the respondents expressed that they want training on value addition of produce (Dry flower crafts, jams, jelly, fish and prawns pickle). Training in processing aspect helps them to prepare value added products like. By adding value to products women can earn more money by using

Training need assessment of women

their time efficiently during off season thereby, they may earn for their livelihood. FPO plays a major role in sensitizing women members and making them realize the importance of women empowerment. Very few of women were making an independent financial decision in the past few years due to modernization. The women members gain from collective wisdom in managing their finances and disturbing the benefits among themselves. If women has own decision making power, she can come out to do work. Hence this might be reason that, majority of respondents from both the states expressed that they want training on awareness on savings, credit and insurance Index score for training on skills on digital technology was 72.22 followed by training on leadership development (64.44). Many of the respondents expressed that, they want training on skills on digital technology. It might be due to increasing digital literacy through training and capacity building of women farmers through their FPOs will go a long way in keeping them up to date with technological tools. Few respondents expressed that, they want training on leadership development. It might be to enhance leadership skills and it will ensure their long-term and financial viability. Whereas, index score was 56.66 for training on other income generating activities. Index score for training on any other activities (Management of FPO as Directors, higher posts in FPO etc.) was 41.11.

Due to less extension contact, women members have no idea about what to learn, where to learn and how to learn. Hence few of FPO women members from both the states expressed that (40-50) they want training on management of FPO as Directors, higher posts in FPO etc. Majority of women members were small and marginal farmers and no programmes targets small and marginal women farmers. Hence they might have got less opportunity to attend training programmes. The findings were similar to Hmingthanzuala et al. (2016), Uchenna and Okafor (2015), Gantasala and Gantasala (2017) and Barbazett (2006).

Constraints faced by women members of Farmer Producers Organizations

A. Personal constraints

Results from Table.2 indicated that highest index score in personal constraint, expressed by majority of the women members was, they were unable to manage time between household work and FPO work with index score of (86.66) and it ranked I followed by lack of adequate communication skills to communicate with higher officers as a constrain with index score (76.66) and ranked II. Increased workload in fields/FPOs as constrain and ranked III with 72.22 index score, followed by lack of adequate training facilities by FPOs (65.55) as a constraint and ranked IV. More than half (58.88) of FPO members expressed that, FPO is far away to reach for trainings and general body meetings as a constraint and ranked V. Whereas, more than half (53.33) of the respondents expressed that, lack of motivation from family members to contest for FPO elections as a constraint and ranked VI followed by less than half (47.77) of the respondents expressed that, lack of awareness about credit sources as a constraint and ranked VII. Less than one third (27.77) of them expressed that, non-cooperation among female functionaries as

a constraint ranked VIII.

B. Marketing constraints

Majority expressed that, Price fluctuation every year and distress sale as a constraint with index score 81.11 and ranked I. Less than half of the FPO women members expressed distant location of market and high cost of transportation to reach FPO as a constrain with index score 46.66 and ranked II followed by lack of latest market information (34.44).

C. Administration

Great majority (93.33) of FPO members expressed that, high initial share capital/membership charge in FPOs as a constraint and ranked I followed by complexity of registration process as a constraint (80.00) and ranked II. Less than one third (23.33) of Karnataka FPO women members expressed that, inadequate staff members as a constraint followed by lack of government support as a constraint (10.00).

D. Services and benefits/ operational constraint

More than half (56.66) of the respondents expressed that, non- availability of custom hiring services at FPO as constrain and ranked I. Whereas, nearly half (47.77) of them expressed that, lack of adequate number of godowns, storehouses at FPO as a constraint and ranked II followed lack of well-developed processing facility as a constraint (43.33).

3. Suggestions by women members of Farmer Producers Organizations

Results from Table.3 indicated that great majority (93.33) of FPO members suggested that, they want proper guidance towards packaging, grading, branding, processing and marketing especially for value added products and was ranked I. FPO plays a major role in sensitizing women members and making them to realize the importance of women empowerment. The women members gain from collective wisdom in managing their finances and distributing the benefits among themselves. Training in processing aspect helps them to prepare value added products. By adding value to products women can earn more money by using their leisure time efficiently during off season thereby, they may earn for their livelihood. Hence great majority FPO members suggested that, proper guidance towards packaging, grading, branding, processing and marketing especially for value added products. Majority (66.66) suggested that, concept of FPC's should be explained in easy language to non-members. It might be because farmer's/ women members had low education and many of them were not aware of FPO concept. Wide publicity in easy language with the help of ICT tools can help farmers become more productive and get better access to market information, finance and other facilities and services. It also enhances non-members to become FPO members. Half (50.00) of the respondents suggested that, they want regular trainings. 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 suggesting to have regular trainings. Whereas less than half (47.77) of the respondents suggested that, logistic facilities should be given. FPO

Table 2. Constraints faced by women members of Farmer Producers Organizations

| Statements | Mean score (Index) | n=90 |
|---|--------------------|------|
| A. Personal constraints | | |
| Increased workload in field/FPOs | 0.72 (72.22) | III |
| Lack of motivation from family members to contest for FPO elections | 0.52 (52.22) | V1 |
| Unable to manage time between household work and FPO work | 0.86 (86.66) | I |
| Non-cooperation among female functionaries | 0.27 (27.77) | VIII |
| Lack of adequate communication skills to communicate with higher officers | 0.76 (76.66) | II |
| Lack of adequate training facilities by FPOs | 0.65 (65.55) | IV |
| Lack of awareness about credit sources | 0.47 (47.77) | VII |
| FPO is far away to reach for trainings and general body meetings | 0.58 (58.88) | V |
| B. Marketing constraints | | |
| Distant Location of market and high cost of transportation to reach FPO | 0.46 (46.66) | II |
| Lack of latest market information | 0.34 (34.44) | III |
| Price fluctuation every year and distress sale. | 0.81 (81.11) | I |
| C. Administration constraints | | |
| Inadequate staff members | 0.23 (23.33) | III |
| Lack of government support | 0.10 (10.00) | IV |
| Complexity of registration process | 0.80 (80.00) | II |
| High initial share capital/membership charge in FPOs | 0.93 (93.33) | I |
| D. Services constraints | | |
| Non- availability of custom hiring services at FPO | 0.56 (56.66) | I |
| Lack of adequate number of godowns, storehouses at FPO | 0.47 (47.77) | II |
| Lack of well-developed processing facility | 0.43 (43.33) | III |

* Multiple responses are possible

Table 3. Suggestions by women members of Farmer Producers Organizations

| Suggestions | Mean score (Index) | n=90 |
|--|--------------------|------|
| Management team of FPO, should share real time information about FPO's with women members | 0.42(42.22) | VI |
| Logistic facilities should be given | 0.47 (47.77) | IV |
| Government need to extend all the benefits to improve FPO | 0.10 (10.00) | VIII |
| Forward and backward linkages with other organizations (NABARD, KVKS, NGOs etc..) through FPO | 0.46(46.66) | V |
| Regular trainings to members of FPO's | 0.50 (50.00) | III |
| Concept of FPC's should be explained in easy language to non members | 0.66 (66.66) | II |
| Proper guidance towards packaging, grading, branding, processing and marketing especially for value added products | 0.93(93.33) | I |
| Any other | 0.23(23.33) | VII |

*Multiple responses are possible

undertake aggregation of smaller lots of farmer-members' produce; add value to make them more marketable. It also facilitates market information about the produce for judicious decision in production and marketing. It provides logistics services such as storage, transportation, loading/unloading etc. on shared cost basis. Less than half (46.66) suggested that, forward and backward linkages with other organizations (NABARD, KVKS, NGOs etc..) through FPO.

Less than half (42.22) of Karnataka FPO women members suggested that, management team of FPO, should share real time information about FPO's with women members. 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. The main objective of FPO is to provide service and benefits to members and make them to improve their socio-economic conditions. In few FPOs real time information was not shared to the members to avail the benefits from the government.

Only few of them (10.00) suggested that, government need to extend all the benefits to improve FPO. However, FPO markets the aggregated produce with better negotiation strength to the buyers and in the marketing channels offering better and remunerative prices. With respect to any others (storage facilities/access to inputs etc..) less than one third (23.33) members suggested. The findings were in the line with the results reported by Chauhan *et al.* (2021), Tiwari and Upadhyay (2021), Chopade *et al.* (2019), Dewangan (2018) and Bansal *et al.* (2017).

Conclusion

The present study concludes training need assessment and constraints by women members' in selected Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) of Karnataka. Highest index score 81.11 was observed for training on skills for marketing of products at large scale and business skills and ranked I. Whereas, highest index score in personal constraint, as expressed by majority of

Training need assessment of women

the women members was, they were unable to manage time between household work and FPO work with index score of (86.66) and it ranked I. With regard to marketing majority expressed that, price fluctuation every year and distress sale as a constraint with index score 81.11 and ranked I. Great majority (93.33) of FPO members expressed that, high initial share capital/membership charge in FPOs as a constraint and ranked I in administration.

With respect to services and benefits more than half (56.66) of the respondents expressed that, non- availability of custom hiring services at FPO as a constrain and ranked I. Study results also indicated that great majority (93.33) of FPO members suggested that, they want proper guidance towards packaging, grading, branding, processing and marketing especially for value added products should be given by FPOs for better participation.

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