

International Journal of Agriculture Extension and Social Development

Volume 9; Issue 1; January 2026; Page No. 575-578

Received: 05-11-2025
Accepted: 09-12-2025

Indexed Journal
Peer Reviewed Journal

Assessing skill gap of directors of farmer producer organisation in Tripura

¹Sajina, ²B Saha, ³Nirdesh and ⁴AD Raval

¹Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Fishery Extension, Faculty of Fishery Sciences, WBUAFS, Chakgaria, Kolkata, West Bengal, India

²Professor, Department of Fishery Extension, Faculty of Fishery Sciences, WBUAFS, Chakgaria, Kolkata, West Bengal, India

³M.F.Sc. Scholar, Department of Fisheries Extension, Economics and Statistics, College of Fisheries, Lembucherra, Central Agricultural University (I), Tripura, India

⁴Ph.D. Scholar, Central Institute of Fisheries Education, Off Yaari Road, Panch Marg, Versova, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.33545/26180723.2026.v9.i1h.2977>

Corresponding Author: Sajina

Abstract

In recent years, the Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) movement has accelerated. Millions of small and marginal farmers are drawn to these collectives and their numbers are continuously rising. Management skills are critical to the effective operation of FPOs. For FPOs to become more proficient, skill and competency development is therefore urgently needed. In order to assess the skill gap of office bearers of FPOs, an empirical study was conducted in Farmer Producer Organisations of Tripura. Satadol Fish Farmers Producer Company Limited, Bagma Agri Producer Company Limited, Chaudhadevta Organic Producer Company Limited, Chokreng Organic Farmers Producer Company Limited, and Hillstop Horti Producer Company Limited were purposively selected for the study. A sample of 20 officials which included 15 Directors (3 directors from each FPOs) and 5 CEOs (1 CEOs from each FPOs) were selected randomly from the selected FPOs. In the skill gap analysis, the highest skill gap was found in effective use of delegation (skill gap =1.95) and the lowest skill gap was witnessed in systematic approach to planning (skill gap=0.9). In the most /least important skill scaling, the most important skill as perceived by officials was leadership skills with a combined mean score of 2.9. Systematic approach to planning (-1.15) was perceived as the least important skills, according to the officials. This paper shows the significance of incorporating capacity building programmes, trainings for the officials of FPOs to improve the performance.

Keywords: Skill gap, farmer producer organisation, Tripura, board of directors, CEOs

Introduction

Millions of small landowners in India rely on agriculture as their primary source of income. The viability and profitability of farming are seriously threatened by the decreasing trends in land holdings. FPOs can play a significant role in developing nations like India, where small and marginal farmers with limited resources dominate agriculture. They can mobilize and organize these farmers for better market access, increased bargaining power, higher prices for their produce, and improved information dissemination (Bachke, 2009) ^[1]. To effectively manage FPOs, managers require a diverse range of skills. These management skills include technical skills, conceptual skills, decision making skills, communication skills and interpersonal skills (Owek, 2021) ^[7].

Several studies have mentioned lack of skill gap among the officials of FPOs as a major obstacle. According to Saha *et al.*, (2022) ^[10] adopting need-based training is a critical accelerator that can motivate FPO members to put in more effort in order to achieve larger returns, ultimately leading to the success of FPOs. Management skills are crucial to the effective operation of FPOs. Sajina *et al.*, (2025) ^[11] discovered in her research in Tripura, that 25% of officials

were effective, the rest (55%) were inexperienced. Only 20% of them had expert-level abilities and skills. They stress the value of skill-building initiatives for officials in order to raise FPO performance.

There is an urgent need to train those involved in FPO management or to mandate certain credentials for FPO officials, as every study on the operation of FPOs has highlighted inadequate professional management as a major hurdle. This will help increase FPO effectiveness (Chaudhary, 2023) ^[4]. In order to maintain their commercial operations and make their FPOs lucrative and sustainable for all shareholders, FPOs also need technical and management expertise (Kumar *et al.*, 2022) ^[6]. According to Chintala (2022) ^[3] the success of an FPO depends on the choice of CEOs, so it is important to make sure that a competent individual with a positive outlook is chosen. Roy *et al.*, (2022) ^[8] noted lack of expertise among FPC directors in a number of areas, including FPC management, financial management, business, marketing, soft skills for FPC organizational development, and digital technology.

Indian agriculture is evolving from a subsistence-based economy to a commercial, production-focused, and income-driven one. The FPO concept has emerged as a suitable

model for this transition. In the early 2000s, independent farmer organizations were deemed necessary to facilitate farmers' integration into businesses they control. These organizations would focus on the well-being of farmers, business operations, and sustainability.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Tripura during the year 2023-24. A total number of 5 actively working FPOs which are at least three years old and having more than 500 members were purposively selected. The selected FPOs were Satadol Fish Farmers Producer Company Limited, Bagma Agri Producer Company Limited, Chaudhadevta Organic Producer Company Limited, Chokreng Organic Farmers Producer Company Limited and Hillstop Horti Producer Company Limited. A sample of 20 officials which included 15 Director (3 directors from each FPOs) and 5 CEOs (1 CEOs from each FPOs) were selected randomly from the above 5 FPOs. Skill gap describes the situation in which workers skills are incompetent for doing the job (Shravan *et al.*, 2019) [9]. Information was collected through personal interviews using specially developed interview schedule. A quantitative technique was used to examine the skill gap among FPO officials, including the board of directors and CEOs. In this study, eleven (11) skills were identified which included leadership skills, networking skills, communication skills, negotiation skills, skills for effective use of delegation, managerial skills, inter personal skills, systematic approach to planning, business model development skills, team work skills and understanding current economic and industry conditions. A structured interview schedule was used to interview the representatives of the chosen FPOs in order to assess their skill levels. The skills evaluation assisted in identifying any potential skill gaps that authorities may have. The CEOs of the FPOs and the Board of Directors were requested to complete a skills assessment using a Likert scale with a range from 1 to 5 as, 1 = None = possess no knowledge, understanding, or applicable of the skill, 2 = Basic = possess limited knowledge, understanding, or application of the skill, 3 = Intermediate = possess an adequate understanding and application of the skill, 4 = Skilled = possess significant understanding and application of the skill, 5 = Expert = possess extensive understanding and regarded as a skill expert

The Board of Directors and CEOs were requested to

perform a skills evaluation in order to compare their present skill level to their past skill level, which refers to skill before joining the FPOs. Out of the eleven skills taken into consideration, the most crucial skill was determined using the most/ least skill approach in the line with Finn and Louviere (1992) [5]. The choice set of skills was chosen using Cochran & Cox's Balanced Incomplete Block Design (BIBD) from 1950 [2].

Results and Discussion

Skill gap analysis/Skill assessment of office bearers

A quantitative technique was used to examine the skill gap among FPO officials, including the Board of Directors and CEOs. The Board of Directors were asked about the skill of CEOs before joining FPOs and the current skill. Like this, CEOs were asked about director's skill before joining of FPOs and the current skill they possessed. Here, eleven (11) skills were identified. The results from both directors and CEOs were aggregated to allow us to look at the overall skill level before joining versus overall skill level at current situation. By using 5-point Likert scales, the average skill level for each 11 skills were identified as shown in Table 1

Table 1: Skill gap analysis/Skill assessment of the office bearers (n=20)

Sl. No.	Name of the skills	Skill Before joining (n=20)	Current skill level	Skill gap
1.	Leadership skills	2.30	3.50	1.2
2.	Networking skills	2.20	3.30	1.1
3.	Communication skills	2.65	3.65	1
4.	Negotiation skills	1.85	3.15	1
5.	Skills for effective use of delegation	2.20	4.15	1.95
6.	Managerial skills	2.05	3.80	1.75
7.	Inter personal skills	2.15	3.50	1.35
8.	Systematic approach to planning	2.15	3.05	0.9
9.	Business model development skills	1.70	3.45	1.75
10.	Team work skills	2.35	3.85	1.5
11.	Understanding current Economic and industry conditions	1.85	3.05	1.2

The results shown in the above table 1 are positive; all the officials have been seen to improved their skill level after joining the FPOs. The highest skill gap can be seen in Skills for effective use of delegation (skill gap =1.95) and the lowest in Systematic approach to planning (skill gap=0.9).

Table 2: Results for CEOs and directors' competency/skill assessments

Sl. No.	Name of the skills	Directors skill before joining (n=15)	Directors present skill (n=15)	Skill gap	CEOs skill before joining (n=5)	CEOs current skill (n=5)	Skill gap
1.	Leadership skills	2.46	3.46	1	1.8	3.6	1.8
2.	Networking skills	2.33	3.26	0.93	1.8	3.4	1.6
3.	Communication skills	2.8	3.6	0.8	2.2	3.8	1.6
4.	Negotiation skills	1.93	3.06	1.13	1.6	3.4	1.8
5.	Skills for effective use of delegation	2.33	4.2	1.87	1.8	4	2.2
6.	Managerial skills	2.13	3.73	1.6	1.8	4	2.2
7.	Inter personal skills	2.2	3.33	1.13	2	4	2
8.	Systematic approach to planning	2.26	3	0.74	1.8	3.2	1.4
9.	Business model development skills	1.6	3.46	2.86	2	3.4	1.4
10.	Team work skills	2.4	4	1.6	2.2	3.4	1.2
11.	Understanding current Economic and industry conditions	1.93	3	1.07	1.6	3.2	1.6

As presented in Table 2, both CEOs, and directors, shown an improvement in all competencies from "Before" to "Current." However, it has been seen and demanding further research to identify why more than 70 per cent of skills have not reached the "skilled" level yet. This finding might suggest that training is utmost important for some directors across all the skills in order to reach a skilled level. However, as shown in the above table, both Skills for effective use of delegation and Managerial skills of the directors have impressively improved (skill gap score 2.2) as perceived by the CEOs.

In the skill areas of leadership skills, networking skills, negotiation skills, managerial skills, delegation skills, systematic approach to planning, CEOs believed that directors had much more improvement from when they were new to the Board. Directors also believed the same but their self-assessment was much lower than the assessment did by the CEOs.

However, in the skill areas such as business model development and team work skills, Directors believed they had much more improvement in these skill areas from when they were new to the board. However, CEOs believed the improvement of directors weren't quite as high as claimed. Further, on an average CEOs didn't believe their directors have reached a score of 4, the "Skilled" level on these areas.

Most /Least Important skill scaling

By using "most" preferred option and the "least" preferred skill scaling, made it possible to identify the knowledge and

skill gaps that the CEOs and Directors needed to fill in order to be inspired and informed. The participants were asked to assess the significance of each of the eleven choice sets, each comprising five skills or objects, from most to least significant. Of the 11 decision sets, there were five occurrences of each talent. If the skill was determined to be the most important within that group of skills, it was given a value of 1, and if it was determined to be the least important, it was given a value of -1. All other skills in that were denoted with a "0". There are five possible scores, ranging from "-5" to "5". When a skill receives a score of "-5," it means that it was selected as the least significant, and when it receives a score of "-5," it means that it was selected as the most significant each of the 11 decision sets.

Most /least important skill ranking

In the most /least important skill scaling (Table 3), the most important skill as perceived by officials was leadership skills with a combined mean score of 2.9 ranked first place, followed by communication skills with a score of 2.8 and ranked second. Skills for effective use of delegation ranked third with a score of 2.1. Systematic approach to planning (-1.15), Networking skill (-1.25), Business model development skills (-2.7) were perceived as the least important skills, according to the officials. The result signifies that greater attention should be paid to identifying and addressing skill gaps so as to help them improve on these aspects.

Table 3: Most /least important skill ranking based on Combined Mean Score of Directors and CEOs (n=20):

Sl. No.	Name of the skills	Score given by directors (n=15)	Score given by CEOs (n=5)	Combined Mean score	Rank (based on combined score)
1.	Leadership skills	2.733	3	2.9	I
2.	Communication skills	2.8	3.2	2.8	II
3.	Skills for effective use of delegation	2.066	2.6	2.1	III
4.	Managerial skills	1.8	1.4	1.7	IV
5.	Team work skills	0.666	0.4	0.65	V
6.	Negotiation skills	-0.4	-2.4	-0.7	VI
7.	Understanding current Economic and industry conditions	-0.666	-1.8	-0.95	VII
8.	Inter personal skills	-0.866	-1.4	-0.95	VII
9.	Systematic approach to planning	-1.133	-1.2	-1.15	VIII
10.	Networking skills	-1.266	-1.4	-1.25	IX
11.	Business model development skills	-2.533	-2.8	-2.7	X

Conclusion

Directors of the FPOs must efficiently administer the Farmer Producer Organisations. This study could reveal the skill gaps of the office bearers of five Farmer Producer Organisations of Tripura. The findings have significance for institutions focusing on the development of skill gap among boards of directors for effective management of FPOs, including policy makers, trainers, and FPOs. Therefore, it is essential to create training materials and marketing plans to educate, empower, and professionalise office bearers of FPOs. These findings will help to formulate appropriate strategy according to the perception level of office bearers that would satisfy the performance of FPOs and thereby, fostering greater interest and needs toward farmer producer organisations. The other factors also need to be identified and addressed to facilitate the high performance of FPOs.

References

1. Bachke ME. Are farmers' organizations a good tool to improve small-scale farmers' welfare. In: Nordic Conference in Development Economics; 2009; Oscarsborg, Norway.
2. Cochran WG, Cox GM. Experimental designs. New York: Wiley; 1950.
3. Chintala GR, Mani G. Collectivisation of farmers and farm produces through Farmers Producer Organisations is benefitting farmers: some field level observations. Indian J Agric Econ. 2022;77(2):232-242.
4. Chaudhary N. Challenges faced by farm enterprises and current status of FPOs in India: a review. 2023.
5. Finn A, Louviere JJ. Determining the appropriate response to evidence of public concern: the case of food safety. J Public Policy Mark. 1992;11(2):12-25.

6. Kumar R, Kumar S, Pundir RS, Surjit V, Rao CS. FPOs in India: creating enabling ecosystem for their sustainability. Hyderabad (India): ICAR–National Academy of Agricultural Research Management; 2022. p. 22.
7. Owek JO, Onyango GM, Ahonobadha MA. Effect of management skills on performance of economic stimulus program financed aquaculture farms in Kisumu West Constituency, Kenya. *Pan Afr J Educ Soc Sci*. 2021;2(1):95-107.
8. Roy H, Jirli B, Maji S. Training need assessment of board of directors of farmer producer companies: an application of Borich's model. *Indian J Ext Educ*. 2022;58(3):113-119.
9. Shravan MB, Shivaramu MA. Assessment of skill gap to enhance workforce performance. *Int J Manag Technol Eng*. 2019;9(4):2249-7455.
10. Saha B, Talukdar D, Pandit A, De HK, Mondal U. Skill gap analysis of member farmers of FPO: a study in South Dinajpur district of West Bengal. *Indian J Ext Educ*. 2022;58(4):31-37.
11. Sajina, Maurya PK, Saha B, Nirdesh, Gupta R. Assessing managerial competency of directors of farmer producer organisation in Tripura. *Int J Agric Ext Soc Dev*. 2025;8(4):543-546.