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An analysis of profile characteristics of FPO members in Nagar Kurnool and Wanaparthy districts of Telangana

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Abstract

The paper focused on studying the socio-economic profile of selected Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and their members in Telangana state. The study primarily analysed the personal, social, and communication characteristics of FPO members. A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. Four FPOs two from each promoting institution, which had been actively functioning for more than three years were purposively selected from Nagar Kurnool and Wanaparthy districts, and a total sample of 120 respondents was selected through simple random sampling using the chit method. Data were collected using a structured interview schedule.

The results of the study revealed that a majority of the FPO members belonged to the middle age group (75%) and had nuclear family type (81%). Nearly three-fourth of the member farmers were male (71%) with medium family size (79%). A little more than half of the member farmers were small farmers with land holding between 2.5 and 5 acres (52.5%) and possessed medium farming experience (72.5%). Nearly three-fourth of the members adopted irrigated farming. With respect to communication characteristics, most of the respondents had medium level of extension agency contact (68.34%), medium social participation (71%), and medium level of mass media exposure (62.5%). Majority of the members exhibited medium cosmopolitanism (59%), medium risk preference (61.5%), and medium economic motivation (65.84%). Most of the member farmers owned a television (91.6%), indicating better access to information and communication sources. The findings related to socio-economic status revealed that a little more than one-fourth (27.5%) of member farmers were educated up to middle school and little less than one-fourth (23.5%) of non-members were educated up to middle school, 37.5 per cent of member farmers were having Agriculture as primary occupation and 33.34 per cent of non-members were unskilled workers. Nearly half (46.66%) of the member farmers were in the medium annual income category.

Keywords: Farmer producer organisations, socio-economic characteristics, communication characteristics, profile characteristics

1. Introduction

Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) have emerged as an important institutional mechanism to strengthen the position of small and marginal farmers in the agricultural value chain. The primary objective of FPOs is to enable smallholder farmers to achieve economies of scale by improving access to inputs, credit, technology, and markets, thereby enhancing their bargaining power and reducing production and transaction risks. Effective functioning of FPOs largely depends on the strength of their governance, management systems, and capital structure.

In India, where agriculture is predominantly characterized by fragmented small holdings, nearly 85 per cent of operational holdings are less than two hectares. These farmers face multiple challenges such as limited access to information, poor market linkages, high cost of credit, and exploitation by intermediaries. To address these issues, the Government of India and NABARD have been promoting FPOs as a collective approach for improving farmers' socio-economic conditions.

Telangana state has witnessed a rapid expansion of FPOs, with several organisations functioning successfully across different districts. In this context, understanding the profile characteristics of FPO members becomes essential to assess their participation and the potential of these organisations. Hence, the present study focuses on analysing the socio-economic and communication characteristics of FPO members in Nagar Kurnool and Wanaparthy districts of

Telangana state.

2. Materials and Methods

A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. Out of the 33 districts of Telangana state, two districts namely Nagar Kurnool and Wanaparthy were selected through simple random sampling using the chit method. With regard to the selection of Producer Organisation Promoting Institutions (POPIs), Child Care Organization (CCO) NGO from Nagar Kurnool district and Society for Integration and Rural Development (SIRD) NGO from Wanaparthy district were purposively selected, as they have been actively promoting FPOs for the past five years.

A list of FPOs promoted by the two NGOs was prepared, and four FPOs, two from each promoting institution, which had been actively functioning for more than three years, were purposively selected for the study. From each of the selected FPOs, thirty farmer members were selected by following simple random sampling using the chit method. Thus, the sample constituted a total of 120 FPO members for the present investigation.

The present study aimed to examine the profile of the selected FPOs and their members to understand the nature of farmers involved in these organisations. For this, seventeen profile characteristics were identified, and data were collected from the respondents using a structured interview schedule. The collected data were analyzed using statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, and the exclusive class interval method, and the respondents were subsequently categorized into appropriate groups.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Profile of Selected Farmer Producer Organizations

3.1.1 Wanaparthy Girijana Fruit Producer Company Ltd. (WGFPCL) was registered on 27.06.2017. It is actively providing input services and procurement services to its shareholders. The total number of shareholders is 368, it has share capital contribution of Rs1200 per membership. The share capital of FPO is 4,41,600. All the members of FPO had contributed to the share capital. Most of the members of the FPO are tribal farmers. The members of FPO are from nine villages *Rajapeta Thanda, Kashimnagar Thanda, Dathayapally Thanda, Balakistapur Thanda, Savaigudem Thanda, Kandireega Thanda, Gurumilakunta Thanda, Megya Thanda, Waddevatta Thanda*. It has five members board of directors and one CEO who received training about procurement and marketing activities of FPO from NABARD. It has five years business plan prepared for providing input services seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and procurement of mango.

3.1.2 Thimmaipally Thanda Farmer Producer Company Ltd. (TTFPCL) was registered on 23.01.2018. It is actively carrying out the business activities like providing input services viz. fertilizers, pesticides etc. The total number of shareholders

are 524 and has share capital contribution of Rs1200 per membership. The total share capital of FPO is 6,28,800. The members of the FPO are from six villages viz. *Thimmaipally Thanda, Katavaram Thanda, Ramachandrapuram, Gatla Ganipur, Addakul, Chinuguntapally Thanda*. It has five Board of directors and one CEO who received training about management and processing activities from NABARD. It has its 5 years business plan prepared for input sales- seeds, neem oil, sprayers, organic vegetable market, red gram and groundnut procurement.

3.1.3 Kollapur Farmer Producer Company Ltd. (KFPCL) was registered on 29.01.2016. It is actively performing business activities from the last five years. The total number of shareholders are 609 and share capital contribution is Rs1000 per membership. The total share capital is 6,09,000. The members of the FPO are from nine villages viz. *Kollapur, Narlapur, Yelluru, Yenmenbetla, Ramapur, Kalvakolu, Mukkidigunda, Ramnaik tanda, Bollaram*. It has five board of directors and one CEO and all of them received trainings in processing and marketing activities. It provides input services i.e. fertilizers, pesticides, seeds to its members. It also procured mangoes from the members and were able to get good market linkages and good market price with the support of POPI. It also has custom hiring center where it provides farm implements and machinery to farmer members.

3.1.4 Panugal Farmer Producer Company Ltd. (PFPCL) was registered on 13.03.2018. It has a total of 412 shareholders and each contributing the share capital of Rs 1000 per membership. The total share capital of this FPO is 4,12,000. The members of FPO are from five villages viz. *Panugal, Chinna kothapally, Pedha muddunooru, Kalvarala, Kethapally*. It has five board of directors and one CEO and all of them received training for conducting FPO activities. It provides input services like fertilizers to its members. It has its five years business plan for providing processing facilities and custom hiring center and procurement of black gram.

3.2 Profile Characteristics of FPO Members

The data collected on the selected profile characteristics were analysed, interpreted, and accordingly the following results and conclusion were drawn.

3.2.1 Age

It was operationalized as the chronological age of the respondent in terms of the total number of years completed at the time of conducting the study. It is evident from the table 1, that the majority of the respondents belonged to the middle-aged category (63.3%) in WGFPCL, 83.3 per cent in TTFPCL, 63.3 per cent in KFPCL and 90.0 per cent in PFPCL. On the whole, most of the respondents belonged to the middle-aged group (75.0%). The results were in conformity with Darshan (2019) [2].

Table 1: Distribution of respondents based on their age, gender, family type and family size (n=120)

S. No.	Category	WGFPCL		TTFPCL		KFPCL		PFPCL		Total	
		F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
Age											
1	Young (up to 31 years)	4	13.3	1	3.3	6	20.0	2	6.7	13	11.8
2	Middle aged (31-47 years)	19	63.3	25	83.3	19	63.3	27	90	90	75
3	Old (More than 47 years)	7	23.3	4	13.3	5	16.7	1	3.3	17	14.2
Sex											
1	Male	19	63.3	22	73.3	16	53.3	28	93.3	85	70.8
2	Female	11	36.7	8	26.7	14	46.7	2	6.7	35	29.2

Family type											
1	Nuclear	27	90	25	83.3	23	76.7	22	73.3	97	80.8
2	Joint	3	10	5	16.7	7	23.3	8	26.7	23	19.2
Family size											
1	Small Family (< 4 members)	0	0	2	6.7	0	0	7	23.3	9	7.5
2	Medium family (4-7 members)	28	93.3	24	80.0	27	90.0	16	53.3	95	79
3	Large family (7 and more members)	2	6.7	4	13.3	3	10.0	7	23.3	16	13.5

3.2.2 Sex

It refers to person's biological characteristics. It is usually described as being male or female. It is evident from the Table 1, that the majority of the respondents were male in WGFPC (63.3%), TTFPC (73.3%), KFPCL (53.3%) and PFPCL (93.3%). Overall, most of the respondents were male (70.8%), followed by 29.2 per cent female respondents. This may be due to the patriarchal nature of farming and the greater participation of men in FPO activities and decision-making. The findings are in agreement with Kavin and Divya K. (2019) ^[3], who also reported that most FPO members were male.

3.2.3 Family type

It refers to the type of family to which respondent belongs to i.e. generally described as either nuclear family or joint family. Nuclear family is composed of parents and their children whereas joint family is an extended family which consists of parents, their children, spouses of their children and their offspring in one household. It is evident from the table 1, that the majority of the respondents belonged to nuclear families in WGFPC (90.0%), TTFPC (83.3%), KFPCL (76.7%) and PFPCL (73.3%). Overall, most of the respondents (80.8%) were from nuclear families, while only 19.2 per cent belonged to joint families. This indicates that, due to land fragmentation and changing socio-economic conditions, family structures in rural areas have shifted more towards a nuclear nature. The findings are in accordance with Singh *et al.* (2019) ^[4], who also reported that the proportion of nuclear families was higher than joint families among FPO members.

3.2.4 Family size

It refers to total number of persons residing in the household at the time of investigation. The respondents were categorized as small family, medium family and large family on the basis of mean (5.09) and standard deviation (1.81). It is evident from the table 1, that the majority of the respondents belonged to medium-sized families in WGFPC (93.3%), TTFPC (80.0%), KFPCL (90.0%) and PFPCL (53.3%). A smaller proportion of respondents belonged to large families in WGFPC (6.7%), TTFPC (13.3%), KFPCL (10.0%) and PFPCL (23.3%), while very few respondents belonged to small families in WGFPC (0.0%), TTFPC (6.7%), KFPCL (0.0%) and PFPCL (23.3%). Overall, the majority of the respondents (79.0%) belonged to medium-sized families, followed by large families (13.5%) and small families (7.5%). This may be due to the predominance of married couples living with two or more children in the study area. The findings are in line with Darshan (2019) ^[2], who also

reported that most of the respondents belonged to medium family size.

3.2.5 Land holding

It refers to the number of acres of land possessed by the respondent at the time of conducting the study. The data in the table 2, reveals that the majority of the respondents belonged to the category of small farmers in WGFPC (50.0%), TTFPC (56.7%), KFPCL (43.3%) and PFPCL (60.0%). This was followed by marginal farmers in WGFPC (43.3%), TTFPC (36.7%), KFPCL (26.7%) and PFPCL (20.0%). A smaller proportion of respondents fell under the semi-medium category in WGFPC (6.7%), TTFPC (3.3%), KFPCL (20.0%) and PFPCL (10.0%), while only a few respondents belonged to the medium farmer category in TTFPC (3.3%), KFPCL (10.0%) and PFPCL (10.0%). None of the respondents belonged to the large farmer category in any of the FPOs. Overall, the majority of the respondents (52.5%) were small farmers, followed by marginal farmers (31.5%). Only 10.0 per cent belonged to the semi-medium category and 6.0 per cent to the medium category. The higher proportion of small and marginal farmers may be attributed to the ancestral division and fragmentation of landholdings in the study area. The findings are in accordance with Kavin and Divya K. (2019) ^[3], Bachke (2009) ^[1], Shubhangi (2016) who also reported that most of the FPO members possessed small and marginal landholdings.

3.2.6 Farming experience

It refers to number of years of experience a respondent had in farming and allied sectors. The data in the table 2, indicates that the majority of the respondents belonged to the medium level of farming experience in WGFPC (73.3%), TTFPC (63.3%), KFPCL (80.0%) and PFPCL (73.3%). This was followed by respondents with low farming experience in WGFPC (16.7%), TTFPC (20.0%), KFPCL (10.0%) and PFPCL (16.7%). A comparatively smaller proportion of respondents had high farming experience in WGFPC (10.0%), TTFPC (16.7%), KFPCL (10.0%) and PFPCL (10.0%). On the whole, nearly three-fourths of the respondents (72.5%) possessed medium level farming experience, followed by 15.8 per cent with low farming experience, and only 11.7 per cent with high farming experience. The predominance of medium level farming experience may be attributed to the fact that most of the respondents belonged to the middle-age category at the time of investigation. The findings are in line with Darshan (2019) ^[2], who also reported that a majority of FPO farmers had medium level farming experience.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on their land holding, farming experience and type of farming (n=120)

S. No.	Category	WGFPCL		TTFPCL		KFPCL		PFPCL		Total	
		F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
Land holding											
1	Marginal Farmers (< 2.5 acres)	13	43.3	11	36.7	8	26.7	6	20	38	31.5
2	Small Farmers (2.5 – 5.0 acres)	15	50	17	56.7	13	43.3	18	60	63	52.5
3	Semi-medium Farmers (5-10 acres)	2	6.7	1	3.3	6	20	3	10	12	10
4	Medium Farmers (10-25 acres)	0	0	1	3.3	3	10	3	10	7	6
5	Large Farmers (> 25 acres)	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Farming experience											
1	Low (< 13 years)	5	16.7	6	20.0	3	10	5	16.7	19	15.8
2	Medium (13-26 years)	22	73.3	19	63.3	24	80	22	73.3	87	72.5
3	High (> 26 years)	3	10	5	16.7	3	10	3	10	14	11.7
Type of farming											
1	Irrigated farming	25	83.3	24	80	19	63.3	20	66.7	88	73.3
2	Rainfed farming	5	16.7	6	20	11	36.7	10	33.3	32	26.7

3.2.7 Type of farming

It refers to the farming type based on the amount of rainfall received. The data in the Table 2, indicates that the majority of the respondents adopted irrigated farming in WGFPC (83.3%), TTFPC (80.0%), KFPCL (63.3%) and PFPCL (66.7%). The remaining respondents adopted rainfed farming in WGFPC (16.7%), TTFPC (20.0%), KFPCL (36.7%) and PFPCL (33.3%). Overall, a higher proportion of the respondents (73.3%) practiced irrigated farming, while only 26.7 per cent depended on rainfed farming. This may be due to the fact that the average annual rainfall in the study area is less than 750 mm, which necessitates the adoption of irrigated farming practices.

3.2.8 Education

It could be observed from the table 3, that the majority of the respondents in WGFPC were educated up to middle school

(30.0%), followed by high school (20.0%) and primary school (16.7%). In TTFPC, most of the members had education up to primary and middle school level (20.0% each), while 13.3 per cent had completed intermediate education. In KFPCL, the highest proportion of respondents were educated up to middle school (36.7%), followed by primary school (23.3%) and high school (20.0%). Similarly, in PFPCL, the majority of the respondents had education up to primary school (26.7%) and middle school (23.3%), while 23.3 per cent had completed intermediate education. From the above observation, it can be concluded that most of the FPO members had basic education up to primary and middle school level, with comparatively better educational attainment among members of KFPCL and PFPCL. The lower proportion of graduates in all the FPOs indicates that economic constraints and early engagement in agriculture might have limited their access to higher education.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents based on their education, occupation and annual income (n=120)

S. No.	Category	WGFPCl		TTFPCl		KFPCL		PFPCL		Total	
		F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
Education											
1.	Graduate or postgraduate	3	10	3	10	2	6.7	3	10	11	9.1
2.	Intermediate or post high school diploma	0	0	4	13.3	1	3.3	7	23.3	12	10
3.	High school certificate	6	20	6	20	6	20	3	10	21	17.5
4.	Middle school certificate	9	30	6	20	11	36.7	7	23.3	33	27.5
5.	Primary school certificate	5	16.7	6	20	7	23.3	8	26.7	26	21.7
6.	Literate	5	16.7	2	6.7	1	3.3	2	6.7	10	8.3
7.	Illiterate	2	6.7	3	10	2	6.7	0	0	7	5.8
Occupation											
1.	Profession	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2.	Semi- profession	0	0	1	3.3	0	0	0	0	1	0.8
3.	Clerical,shop owner	2	6.7	3	10	2	2	2	6.7	7	5.8
4.	Skilled worker	5	16.7	6	20	7	5	5	16.7	23	19.2
5.	Agriculture	12	40	9	30	8	16	16	53.3	45	37.5
6.	Unskilled worker	11	36.7	7	23.3	9	4	4	13.3	33	27.5
7.	Unemployed	0	0	4	13.3	4	3	3	10	11	9.2
Annual income											
1.	Very high (>4,97,160)	2	6.7	4	13.3	1	3.3	1	3.3	8	6.7
2.	High (2,48,580-4,97,148)	7	23.3	8	26.7	6	20	5	16.7	26	21.7
3.	Medium (1,86,432- 2,48,568)	14	46.7	11	36.7	16	53.3	15	50	56	46.7
4.	Semi-medium (1,24,284-1,86,420)	4	13.3	5	16.7	4	13.3	6	20	19	15.8
5.	Low (74,568- 1,24,272)	2	6.7	2	6.7	2	6.7	1	3.3	7	5.8
6.	Very low (25,104- 74,556)	1	3.3	0	0	1	3.3	2	6.7	4	3.3
7.	Extremely low (<25,092)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

3.2.9 Occupation

It could be observed from the table 3, that the majority of the respondents in WGFPC were engaged as unskilled workers (36.7%), followed by agriculture (40.0%) and skilled work (16.7%), while only 6.7 per cent were shop owners. In TTFPC, most of the members were involved in agriculture (30.0%) and skilled work (20.0%), whereas 23.3 per cent were unskilled workers and 13.3 per cent were unemployed. In KFPCL, the highest proportion of respondents were associated with agriculture (16.0%) and skilled work (5.0%), followed by unskilled workers (4.0%) and unemployed (3.0%), while only 2.0 per cent were shop owners and 3.3 per cent were semi-

professionals. Similarly, in PFPCL, the majority of the respondents had agriculture as their primary occupation (53.3%), followed by unskilled workers (13.3%) and skilled workers (16.7%), whereas 6.7 per cent were shop owners and 10.0 per cent were unemployed. From the above observation, it can be concluded that agriculture was the predominant occupation among the FPO members across all the FPOs, particularly in PFPCL and WGFPC. The presence of a considerable proportion of unskilled and skilled workers in all the FPOs indicates that many farmers were dependent on subsidiary occupations to supplement their agricultural income. None of the respondents were employed in any particular profession, which

reflects the agrarian background of the member farmers. These findings are in line with Kavin and Divya K (2019) ^[3], who reported that agriculture was the primary occupation for most of the FPO members.

3.2.10 Annual income

It could be observed from the table 3, that the majority of the respondents in WGFPCCL belonged to the medium income category (46.7%), followed by high income (23.3%) and semi-medium income (13.3%), while 6.7 per cent were under very high and low income categories. In TTFPCCL, most of the members had medium income (36.7%), followed by high income (26.7%) and semi-medium income (16.7%), whereas 13.3 per cent were in the very high income category. In KFPCL, the highest proportion of respondents were under medium income category (53.3%), followed by high income (20.0%) and semi-medium income (13.3%), while only 3.3 per cent fell under very high, low, and very low income groups. Similarly, in PFPCL, half of the respondents were in the medium income category (50.0%), followed by high income (16.7%) and semi-medium income (20.0%), whereas 6.7 per cent had very low income and only 3.3 per cent belonged to very high and low income groups. From the above observation, it can be concluded that most of the FPO members across all the FPOs were in the medium annual income category, indicating a moderate level of economic status among the farmers. The presence of farmers in high and semi-medium income categories suggests that FPO membership may help improve their financial stability through better access to inputs, services, and markets. The relatively lower percentage of farmers in very low and low income

categories indicates that only a small section of members were economically vulnerable. These findings are consistent with Darshan (2019) ^[2], who also reported that most of the FPO members fall under the medium income category.

3.2.11 Extension agency contact

It refers to respondent's frequency of contact with the change agents like gram sevak, village extension officer, agriculture officer, block development officer, scientist and other formal change agent. It could be observed from the table 4, that the majority of the respondents in WGFPCCL had medium level of extension agency contact (73.3%), while 20.0 per cent had high level and only 6.7 per cent had low level of contact. In TTFPCCL, most of the members also fell under the medium category (70.0%), followed by high level of contact (26.7%) and only 3.3 per cent under low contact. Similarly, in KFPCL, the majority of the respondents possessed medium extension agency contact (70.0%), while 16.7 per cent had high level and 13.3 per cent had low level contact. In PFPCL, most of the members had medium level of extension agency contact (60.0%), followed by high contact (36.7%) and only 3.3 per cent in the low category. From the above observation, it can be concluded that most of the FPO members across all the FPOs had medium to high level of extension agency contact, indicating their active interaction with agricultural extension personnel for technical guidance and support. The comparatively higher proportion of farmers with high contact in PFPCL suggests better outreach and linkages with extension agencies. This may be attributed to the farmers' interest in acquiring improved knowledge and technologies for enhancing their agricultural productivity and income.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents based on their extension agency contact, social participation and media ownership (n=120)

S. No.	Category	WGFPCL		TTFPCL		KFPCL		PFPCL		Total	
		F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
Extension agency contact											
1	Low (<18.6)	2	6.7	1	3.3	4	13.3	1	3.3	8	6.7
2	Medium (1.86- 4.84)	22	73.3	21	70	21	70	18	60	82	68.3
3	High (>4.84)	6	20	8	26.7	5	16.7	11	36.7	30	25
Social participation											
1	Low (<13.98)	3	10	7	23.3	5	16.7	4	13.3	19	15.8
2	Medium (13.98- 26.92)	22	73.3	19	63.3	14	46.7	16	53.3	71	59.2
3	High (> 26.92)	5	16.7	4	13.3	10	33.3	11	36.7	30	25
Media ownership											
1	Television	28	93.3	26	86.7	29	96.7	27	90	110	91.7
2	Mobile phone	25	83.3	24	80	29	96.7	25	83.3	103	85.8
3	News paper	9	30	5	16.7	13	43.3	5	16.7	32	26.7
4	Radio	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	Internet subscription	12	40	8	26.7	24	80	11	36.7	55	45.8
6	Computer	3	10	2	6.7	1	3.3	1	3.3	7	5.8
7	Extension publication	1	3.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.8

3.2.12 Social participation

It refers to the degree of involvement of an individual in formal and informal organisations, simply as a member or an office bearer. It could be observed from the table 4, that the majority of the respondents in WGFPCCL had medium level of social participation (73.3%), followed by high level (16.7%) and low level (10.0%). In TTFPCCL, most of the members also belonged to the medium category (63.3%), while 23.3 per cent had low participation and 13.3 per cent had high participation. In KFPCL, nearly half of the respondents had medium level of social participation (46.7%), whereas 33.3 per cent had high and 16.7 per cent had low level of participation. Similarly, in PFPCL, the majority of the respondents had medium (53.3%) and high (36.7%) level of social participation, with only 13.3 per

cent falling under the low category. From the above observation, it can be concluded that most of the FPO members across all the FPOs possessed medium to high level of social participation, indicating their involvement in community and developmental activities. The comparatively higher proportion of members with high participation in KFPCL and PFPCL reflects their better engagement in social and organizational activities promoted by the FPOs. This suggests that FPOs play an important role in strengthening farmers' social networks and collective participation for their socio-economic development. The results of the present study are in line with the findings of Darshan (2019) ^[2] who reported that majority of the members of FPOs had medium to high level of social participation.

3.2.13 Media ownership

It refers to number of media possessed by the respondent at the time of investigation. It could be observed from the table 4, that Television was the most commonly owned media in all the FPOs, with 93.3 per cent of the respondents in WGFPC, 86.7 per cent in TTFPC, 96.7 per cent in KFPCL and 90.0 per cent in PFPCL owning a television. Mobile phone ownership was also very high across the FPOs, accounting for 83.3 per cent in WGFPC, 80.0 per cent in TTFPC, 96.7 per cent in KFPCL and 83.3 per cent in PFPCL. Further, internet subscription was reported by 40.0 per cent of the respondents in WGFPC, 26.7 per cent in TTFPC, 80.0 per cent in KFPCL and 36.7 per cent in PFPCL, indicating an increasing trend towards digital media use, especially in KFPCL. Newspaper subscription was comparatively low, with 30.0 per cent in WGFPC, 16.7 per cent in TTFPC, 43.3 per cent in KFPCL and 16.7 per cent in PFPCL. Only a small proportion of respondents owned a computer, ranging from 3.3 to 10.0 per cent across the FPOs, and very few subscribed to extension publications (0.8%). None of the respondents reported ownership of radio in any of the FPOs. From the above observation, it can be concluded that television and mobile phones had the highest degree of penetration among the FPO members, serving as the major sources of information and communication in rural areas. The higher proportion of internet subscribers in KFPCL indicates better digital exposure and access to online agricultural information. The declining ownership of radio and low subscription to extension publications reflect the shift from

traditional to modern and digital media channels for information dissemination among farmers.

3.2.14 Mass media exposure

It refers to extent of utilization of mass media by the respondent such as newspaper, radio, television, internet, printed material. It could be observed from the table 5, that the majority of the respondents in WGFPC had medium level of mass media exposure (63.3%), followed by high (20.0%) and low (16.7%) exposure. In TTFPC, most of the members also fell under the medium category (56.7%), while 23.3 per cent had high and 20.0 per cent had low level of exposure. Similarly, in KFPCL, the majority of the respondents possessed medium level of mass media exposure (63.3%), whereas 23.3 per cent had low and 13.3 per cent had high level of exposure. In PFPCL, most of the respondents had medium level of mass media exposure (66.7%), followed by high (20.0%) and low (13.3%) exposure. From the above observation, it can be concluded that most of the FPO members across all the FPOs had medium level of mass media exposure, indicating their regular access to information sources such as television, mobile phones, and internet. The comparatively higher proportion of members with high exposure in TTFPC and PFPCL reflects their better awareness and access to mass communication channels. These findings are in agreement with earlier studies, which also reported that members of FPOs generally possessed medium to high levels of mass media exposure. The results of the study are in agreement with findings of Singh *et al.* (2019) ^[4]

Table 5: Distribution of respondents based on their mass media exposure, cosmopolitaness, risk preference and economic motivation (n=120)

S. No.	Category	WGFPCL		TTFPCL		KFPCL		PFPCL		Total	
		F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
Mass media exposure											
1	Low (< 4.72)	5	16.7	6	20	7	23.3	4	13.3	22	18.3
2	Medium (4.72- 10.34)	19	63.3	17	56.7	19	63.3	20	66.7	75	62.5
3	High (> 10.34)	6	20	7	23.3	4	13.3	6	20	23	19.2
Cosmopolitaness											
1	Low (< 2.5)	8	26.7	7	23.3	7	23.3	4	13.3	26	21.7
2	Medium (2.5 - 5.3)	18	60	17	56.7	15	50	21	70	71	59.2
3	High (> 5.3)	4	13.3	6	20	8	26.7	5	16.7	23	19.2
Risk preference											
1	Low (< 12.5)	8	26.7	6	20	4	13.3	3	10	21	17.5
2	Medium (12.5 – 19.9)	18	60	17	56.7	18	70	21	70	74	61.7
3	High (> 19.9)	4	13.3	7	23.3	8	16.7	6	20	25	20.8
Economic motivation											
1	Low (< 13.68)	6	20	3	10	2	6.7	3	10	14	11.7
2	Medium (13.68- 20.52)	19	63.3	20	66.7	19	63.3	21	70	79	65.8
3	High (> 20.52)	5	16.7	7	23.3	9	30	6	20	27	22.5

3.2.15 Cosmopolitaness

It refers to the degree to which the respondents are oriented towards his/ her immediate outside social system. It could be observed from the table 5, that the majority of the respondents in WGFPC had medium level of cosmopolitaness (60.0%), followed by low (26.7%) and high (13.3%). In TTFPC, most of the members also belonged to the medium category (56.7%), while 23.3 per cent had low and 20.0 per cent had high level of cosmopolitaness. In KFPCL, half of the respondents possessed medium level of cosmopolitaness (50.0%), whereas 26.7 per cent had high and 23.3 per cent had low level. Similarly, in PFPCL, the majority of the respondents had medium level of cosmopolitaness (70.0%), followed by high (16.7%) and low (13.3%). From the above observation, it can be concluded that most of the FPO members across all the FPOs had medium level of cosmopolitaness, indicating their moderate exposure and

interaction with institutions and individuals outside their local environment. The comparatively higher proportion of respondents with high cosmopolitaness in KFPCL suggests better external linkages and information access among its members. These findings are in line with earlier studies, which also reported that the majority of FPO members had medium levels of cosmopolitaness.

3.2.16 Risk preference

It refers to the degree to which a respondent is oriented towards risk and uncertainty in using new technology and starting new agriculture enterprise. It could be observed from the table 5, that the majority of the respondents in WGFPC had medium level of risk preference (60.0%), followed by low (26.7%) and high (13.3%). In TTFPC, most of the members also fell under the medium category (56.7%), while 23.3 per cent had high and

20.0 per cent had low risk preference. In KFPCL, the highest proportion of respondents possessed medium level of risk preference (70.0%), whereas 16.7 per cent had high and 13.3 per cent had low level. Similarly, in PFPCL, the majority of the respondents belonged to medium risk preference category (70.0%), followed by high (20.0%) and low (10.0%). From the above observation, it can be concluded that most of the FPO members across all the FPOs had medium to high level of risk preference, indicating their willingness to adopt improved agricultural practices and innovations. The higher percentage of respondents with medium and high risk preference suggests that the farmers were motivated to take calculated risks in their farming activities. This may be due to the technical guidance, input support, and market assurance provided by the FPOs, which encouraged them to view agriculture as a profitable enterprise rather than merely a traditional occupation. These findings are in line with earlier studies, which reported that most farmer members of FPOs possessed medium levels of risk preference. The results of the study were in agreement with the findings of Sriram (2008) [5].

3.2.17 Economic motivation

It refers to the occupational success in terms of profit maximization and relative value an individual places on economic ends. It could be observed from the table 5, that the majority of the respondents in WGFPC had medium level of economic motivation (63.3%), followed by low (20.0%) and high (16.7%). In TTFPC, most of the members also belonged to the medium category (66.7%), while 23.3 per cent had high and only 10.0 per cent had low economic motivation. Similarly, in KFPCL, the majority of the respondents possessed medium level of economic motivation (63.3%), followed by high (30.0%) and only 6.7 per cent under low category. In PFPCL, most of the respondents had medium economic motivation (70.0%), while 20.0 per cent had high and 10.0 per cent had low level of economic motivation. From the above observation, it can be concluded that most of the FPO members across all the FPOs possessed medium to high level of economic motivation, indicating their strong desire to improve their income and living standards through farming. The relatively higher proportion of members with high economic motivation in KFPCL suggests that these farmers were more commercially oriented and keen on adopting profitable agricultural practices. This trend may be attributed to the role of FPOs in promoting farming as a viable business activity and encouraging farmers to take up new opportunities for socio-economic advancement.

4. Conclusion

The present study highlights that Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) play a vital role in enhancing the socio-economic and communication profile of small and marginal farmers in Telangana state. The results revealed that a majority of the FPO members were middle-aged male farmers belonging to nuclear families with medium family size. Most of the respondents possessed small and marginal landholdings and had medium level of farming experience, reflecting the typical structure of Indian smallholder agriculture. The educational profile showed that the members had basic schooling up to primary and middle school levels, while agriculture remained the predominant occupation among them. A large proportion of the respondents fell under the medium annual income category, indicating a moderate but stable economic status. The communication characteristics further indicated that the members had medium to high levels of extension agency contact, social participation, and

mass media exposure. Ownership of modern media such as television, mobile phones, and internet was high, suggesting a shift towards digital sources of agricultural information. Similarly, the majority of the respondents exhibited medium levels of cosmopolitanism, risk preference, and economic motivation, which implies their readiness to adopt improved farming practices and innovations. Overall, the findings suggest that FPO membership has positively influenced farmers' access to information, social networks, and economic aspirations, thereby strengthening their capacity to participate effectively in agricultural and market-oriented activities. Strengthening the institutional and extension support to FPOs can further improve farmers' socio-economic empowerment and sustainability of these organisations in the long run.

5. Disclaimer

The products used for this research are commonly and predominantly use products in our area of research and country. There is absolutely no conflict of interest between the authors and producers of the products because we do not intend to use these products as an avenue for any litigation but for the advancement of knowledge. Also, the research was not funded by the producing company rather it was funded by personal efforts of the authors.

Competing interests

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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