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Perceptions of women farmers on participation in farmer-producer companies: Evidences from KAPU FPC, Udupi District, Karnataka

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Abstract

Farmer-Producer Companies (FPCs) have emerged as key institutional mechanisms to strengthen smallholder agriculture in India. However, gender inclusion within these organizations remains limited. This study examines women farmers' perceptions of participation in FPC activities through Kapu FPC in Udupi district of Karnataka. Primary data were collected from 60 women members using a multistage sampling technique and analysed through descriptive statistics and mean score analysis based on a five-point Likert scale. Perceptions were assessed across technical, organizational, marketing, economic, governance, participation, and commitment dimensions. The findings reveal that the FPC performs effectively in input-related services, including timely provision of quality inputs and operational support. Moderate perceptions were observed for extension services and capacity-building activities. However, institutional linkages, access to modern technologies, and market-oriented functions such as aggregation, value addition, and marketing remain weak. Economic benefits, including access to credit and insurance, were found to be minimal. Despite strong governance, transparency, and high levels of member commitment, participation in decision-making remains limited, indicating a gap between nominal and effective participation. The study highlights the need to strengthen market linkages, enhance institutional convergence, and promote gender-inclusive governance to improve women's meaningful participation and the overall effectiveness of FPCs.

Keywords: Farmer producer companies, women farmers, gender inclusion, participation, perception, Karnataka

1. Introduction

Small and marginal farmers constitute more than 85 per cent of the farming population in India and continue to face several challenges, including limited access to quality inputs, credit, technology, market information, storage and transportation facilities. These challenges are further exacerbated by climate variability, resulting in low and unstable farm incomes ^[1]. Owing to their fragmented and dispersed nature, smallholders are often unable to address these challenges individually, thereby necessitating collective institutional arrangements

In response, several institutional mechanisms—particularly cooperative organizations—were introduced across different sectors. However, the overall performance of cooperatives in India has been mixed. Issues such as political interference, elite capture, lack of professionalism and weak commercial orientation have undermined their effectiveness ^[3, 4]. With increasing market competition under liberalization, these traditional structures have struggled to remain viable.

Against this backdrop, Farmer-Producer Organizations

(FPOs) have emerged as an important institutional innovation aimed at enhancing the economic strength of smallholders. The introduction of the Producer Company (PC) model through the Companies Act, 1956 (amended in 2013) enabled farmers to organize into more flexible, business-oriented entities. FPOs and Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs), as a form of Producer Organization (PO), facilitate aggregation of produce, improve access to inputs and services, enhance bargaining power and enable better market linkages ^[5, 6]. These organizations are supported by institutions such as National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and Small Farmers Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC), which provide financial and technical assistance for their promotion and sustainability.

The FPO/FPC movement in India has gained significant momentum over the past two decades. Policy initiatives such as the Producers' Organization Development and Upliftment Corpus (PRODUCE) Fund and the central scheme to promote 10,000 FPOs have accelerated their expansion across the country ^[7]. These initiatives emphasize

cluster-based development, value chain integration and inclusion of small and marginal farmers, particularly women and other vulnerable groups.

Women play a critical role in Indian agriculture, contributing substantially to both farm and allied activities. Despite their significant involvement, their participation in institutional frameworks such as FPOs/FPCs remains limited and often passive^[8]. Socio-cultural constraints, lack of land ownership, limited mobility and restricted access to productive resources continue to hinder women's effective participation^[9]. Even when women are included as members, their role in decision-making and governance is frequently minimal.

Women-led FPOs/FPCs have the potential to enhance women's empowerment, improve access to markets and resources and contribute to inclusive agricultural development. However, their number remains limited, and empirical evidence on their functioning and effectiveness is still evolving. More importantly, existing studies have largely focused on the performance and impact of FPOs/FPCs, with relatively little attention paid to understanding women farmers' perceptions of participation in FPO/FPC activities.

Perception plays a crucial role in shaping participation behaviour, as it reflects individual experiences, expectations and perceived benefits and constraints within institutional arrangements. Understanding these perceptions is essential for designing effective policies and interventions aimed at strengthening women's engagement in FPOs/FPCs. However, there is a paucity of location-specific empirical studies examining women farmers' perceptions, particularly in the context of Karnataka.

Karnataka is one of the leading states in the promotion of FPO/FPCs, with more than 1,181 organizations supported by various government schemes and institutions^[10]. Despite this progress, gender inclusion within FPOs/FPCs remains inadequate, with limited representation of women in membership as well as leadership roles. Recognizing and addressing the needs of women farmers is crucial for the long-term success and growth of these organizations^[11]. This highlights the need for a deeper understanding of the factors influencing women's participation and their perceptions of FPO/FPC activities.

As of 2024 there are about eight women led FPC's in Karnataka which are promoted under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), Central Sector Scheme (CSS) and NABARD schemes. Of the eight women-led FPCs in the state, prior information suggested that the KAPU Farmer Producer Company (FPC) in the Udupi district of Karnataka was performing better than the others. Hence, in this context, the present study focuses on KAPU Farmer Producer Company (FPC) in Udupi district of Karnataka, to analyze women farmers' perceptions of participation in FPC activities. The study also seeks to identify the factors influencing participation and examine how perceptions shape engagement outcomes and will provide micro-level evidence on gender participation in FPCs using perception analysis which is limited in the existing literature. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners to enhance gender inclusion and improve the effectiveness of FPCs as instruments of inclusive agricultural development.

2. Materials and Methods

Udupi district of Karnataka falls under the Coastal Agro-Climatic Zone and is characterized by a diverse agricultural system. As part of institutional efforts to strengthen smallholder agriculture in Karnataka, about 13 FPC's have been promoted by various development departments in the district. The presence of active FPOs, including the selected KAPU FPC, makes the district an appropriate setting to examine women farmers' perceptions and participation in FPO activities. A multistage sampling procedure was adopted for the study, with Udupi district selected in the first stage and Kapu taluk in the second stage. The only women-led FPC in the Kapu taluk was purposively selected and within the selected FPC, six Farmer Interest Groups (FIGs) and 10 respondents from each FIG with a total of 60 respondents, were randomly selected. In addition, key functionaries, such as the Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), were consulted to supplement the primary data.

Primary data were collected from member farmers using a pre-structured interview schedule through personal interviews. The schedule was designed to capture information on socio-economic characteristics, levels of participation, and perceptions of FPC activities.

Descriptive statistics such as percentages, means and frequencies were used to analyse respondents' participation in FPC activities. The results were presented using tables and graphical representations. Women farmers' perceptions regarding participation in FPO activities were assessed using a structured scale (Likert-type scale) consisting of multiple statements under technical, organizational, marketing, economic, governance, participation, and commitment dimensions. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with selected statements related to participation, benefits, constraints and institutional functioning of FPC on a five-point continuum ranging from 1 (very low extent) to 5 (very high extent). To quantify the perception levels, a mean score analysis was employed. Each response category was assigned a numerical weight (1 to 5), and the mean score for each statement was calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Mean Score} = \frac{(1Xf_1) + (2Xf_2) + (3Xf_3) + (4Xf_4) + (5Xf_5)}{N}$$

Where, f₁, f₂, f₃, f₄, f₅ are the frequencies of the respondents selecting each scale point &

N is the total number of respondents'

The computed mean scores were used to rank the statements in descending order, with higher mean scores indicating stronger agreement or higher perceived effectiveness of the respective factor. This ranking facilitated the identification of key strengths and weaknesses in FPC activities as perceived by women farmers. Further, based on the magnitude of mean scores, the factors were categorized into different levels of perception (e.g., low, moderate, and high) to enable meaningful interpretation.

3. Results and Discussion

The results presented in Table 1 depict respondents' perceptions of KAPU FPC regarding the technical, organizational, and marketing factors that influence their

participation. The responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very low extent) to 5 (very high extent), with percentages indicating the proportion of responses. The findings reveal significant variation in women sample members' perceptions of participation across technical, organizational and marketing dimensions of FPC activities.

3.1 Technical, organizational and marketing dimensions

The findings on technical and organizational dimensions indicate that members perceived moderate to high support in operational and input-related services, while institutional linkages and advanced technological access remained limited.

A majority of members reported that the FPC contributed to enhancing knowledge for productivity improvement, with 38.3 per cent rating it at "some extent" and 28.3 per cent at "high extent," suggesting a reasonably positive impact on capacity enhancement. Similarly, extension support was perceived to be moderately effective, with 76.7 per cent of members indicating it at "some extent."

However, institutional collaboration with State Agricultural Universities and the Department of Agriculture for access to improved technologies was unanimously rated at "very low extent," clearly indicating the absence or ineffectiveness of such linkages.

The organizational strength of the FPC is reflected in the availability of skilled manpower, as 66.7 per cent of members rated it at "high extent" and 33.3 per cent at "very high extent." Exposure to new farm machinery was also viewed positively, with a majority of responses concentrated between "some extent" and "high extent," indicating moderate dissemination of mechanization practices.

Despite these strengths, access to modern technology and infrastructure was perceived to be inadequate, with a large proportion of respondents rating it at lower levels. In

contrast, input-related services emerged as a strong area of performance. The majority of members reported that agricultural inputs were provided at lower rates and on time, with 56.7 per cent rating this at "high extent" and 23.3 per cent at "very high extent." Additionally, the quality of inputs supplied was rated highly, with 51.7 per cent indicating "very high extent."

Fulfilment of input demand was another key strength, with 80 per cent of members rating it at "very high extent." Access to farming literature and participation in capacity-building programmes were also perceived positively, though responses were more dispersed, indicating variability in outreach.

On marketing dimensions, members acknowledged that the FPC enhanced bargaining power in input purchase, with 51.7 per cent rating it at "very high extent." However, this strength did not extend to output marketing. A majority of respondents rated key marketing functions—such as enhancement of bargaining power for output marketing, reduction of middlemen, provision of suitable markets, assured buy-back arrangements, transportation facilities, value addition, processing, aggregation, and remunerative pricing—at "very low extent." This indicates that the FPC's role in output market facilitation remains minimal.

Interestingly, assured market price showed relatively better perception, with 41.7 per cent of members rating it at "very high extent" and 38.3 per cent at "high extent," suggesting some level of price support or stability mechanisms.

Access to market intelligence was found to be limited, with 48.3 per cent of respondents rating it at "low extent" and 36.7 per cent at "some extent," indicating inadequate dissemination of timely and accurate market information. Furthermore, essential post-harvest and value addition services such as grading, packaging, and certification were unanimously rated at "very low extent," reflecting the absence of these critical facilities.

Table 1: Technical, organizational and marketing dimensions influencing the participation of women in FPC activities

Technical/Organizational Factors	Scale/Frequencies					Marketing factors	Scale/Frequencies				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Knowledge enhancement	-	12 (20.00)	23 (38.30)	17 (28.30)	8 (13.30)	Bargaining power (input purchase)	-		12 (20.00)	17 (28.30)	31 (51.70)
Extension support	-	-	46 (76.70)	14 (23.30)	-	Bargaining power (output marketing)	57 (95.00)	-	-	3 (5.00)	-
Linkages with SAU & Development Departments	60 (100.00)	-	-	-	-	Middlemen reduction	57 (95.00)	-	-	3 (5.00)	-
Skilled manpower	-	-	-	40 (66.70)	20 (33.30)	Suitable market for produce	57 (95.00)	-	-	3 (5.00)	-
Exposure to machinery	-	12 (20.00)	23 (38.30)	25 (41.70)	-	Assured market price	-	-	12 (20.00)	23 (38.30)	25 (41.70)
Access to modern technology	12 (20.00)	48 (80.00)	-	-	-	Gives assured buy-back	57 (95.00)	-	-	3 (5.00)	-
Timely supply of inputs at lower rates	-	-	12 (20.00)	34 (56.70)	14 (23.30)	Market intelligence	6 (10.00)	29 (48.30)	22 (36.70)	3 (5.00)	-
Quality of inputs	-	-	12 (20.00)	17 (28.30)	31 (51.70)	Arranges for transportation	60 (100.00)	-	-	-	-
Fulfil input demand	-	-	12 (20.00)	-	48 (80.00)	Grading and packaging	60 (100.00)	-	-	-	-
Provides literature on farming	-	-	18 (30.00)	17 (28.30)	25 (41.70)	Certification	60 (100.00)	-	-	-	-
Training programmes	-	12 (20.00)	23 (38.30)	-	25 (41.70)	Storage facility	-	-	35 (58.30)	25 (41.70)	-
						Value-added infrastructure	60 (100.00)	-	-	-	-

	facilities					
	Processing facilities	60 (100.00)	-	-	-	-
	Produce aggregation	57 (95.00)	-	-	3 (5.00)	-
	Remunerative price	57 (95.00)	-	-	3 (5.00)	-

Note: Rating scale of 1 = to a very low extent, 2 = to a low extent, 3 = to some extent, 4 = to a high extent, 5= to a very high extent
Figures in parenthesis are percentages to row total

Analysis on quantification of perception levels through mean scores indicates that the FPC performs relatively well in delivering input-related and operational services, as reflected in higher mean scores for variables such as fulfilment of input demand (4.60), quality of inputs (4.30), and availability of skilled manpower (4.33). These findings suggest that the FPC has established a functionally efficient internal system, particularly in addressing the immediate production needs of members of the FPC.

Moderate mean scores for knowledge enhancement (3.33), extension services (3.23), and training exposure (3.21) indicate that capacity-building efforts are present but not sufficiently intensive or uniformly accessed. The imparting of knowledge to the members of the FPC will further enhance in increasing productivity on farms. This aligns with earlier studies which note that while FPOs facilitate basic extension services, their effectiveness often depends on outreach and inclusiveness^[12, 13].

However, a critical gap is observed in institutional and technological integration. Variables such as linkages with State Agricultural Universities, Development Departments and access to modern technologies recorded very low mean scores (1.00 and 2.00, respectively), indicating weak convergence with formal agricultural knowledge systems. This suggests that women farmers remain peripherally connected to innovation ecosystems, limiting their ability to

adopt advanced practices.

The dimensions related to marketing factors reveal substantial deficiencies in contrast to technical aspects. Except for assured market price (4.22) and bargaining power in input purchase (4.31), most variables recorded extremely low mean scores, particularly those related to output marketing, aggregation, processing, and value addition (mean between 1.00–1.05).

This indicates that the FPC has not been able to effectively transition from an input-service model to a market-oriented collective enterprise, which is a key objective of FPOs^[13]. The absence of grading, packaging, certification, and processing facilities further reflects weak integration into value chains.

Market intelligence (2.37) and storage facilities (3.41) show some presence but remain inadequate to significantly influence market participation. The disconnect between relatively better price assurance and weak marketing infrastructure suggests that price benefits may be externally driven rather than institutionally enabled.

Overall, the results highlight a structural imbalance where the FPC is effective in supporting production through input-side advantages, but less effective in enabling market participation and value realization, for women farmers. This limits their ability to move up the value chain and achieve economic empowerment.

Table 2: Mean score of technical, organizational and marketing dimensions influencing participation of women members in FPC activities

Factor	Mean Score	Rank	Inference
Technical and Organizational factors			
Fulfilment of input demand	4.60	1	Very strong
Quality of inputs	4.30	2	Very strong
Skilled manpower	4.33	3	Strong
Timely supply of inputs at lower rates	4.03	4	Strong
Exposure to machinery	3.22	5	Moderate
Knowledge enhancement	3.33	6	Moderate
Training programmes	3.21	7	Moderate
Extension support	3.23	8	Moderate
Access to modern technology	2.00	9	Weak
Linkages with SAU & Departments	1.00	10	Very weak
Marketing factors			
Assured market price	4.22	1	Strong
Bargaining power (input purchase)	4.31	2	Strong
Storage facility	3.41	3	Moderate
Market intelligence	2.37	4	Weak
Output marketing	1.05	5	Very weak
Middlemen reduction	1.05	6	Very weak
Aggregation	1.05	7	Very weak
Processing facilities	1.00	8	Absent
Grading/packaging	1.00	9	Absent
Certification	1.00	10	Absent

3.2 Economic dimensions

The findings of economic factors indicate that economic

benefits derived from the FPC are largely limited (Table 3). Access to government departments and other agencies was

perceived to be moderate to low, with 58.3 per cent of respondents rating it at “low extent” and 41.7 per cent at “some extent,” suggesting partial but insufficient institutional linkage.

However, critical financial services such as patronage bonus, access to credit, and reduced crop insurance premiums were unanimously rated at “very low extent.” This clearly indicates the absence of financial incentives and risk mitigation mechanisms, which are essential for strengthening member participation and economic security. The mean score analysis of economic factors indicated that the FPC has limited effectiveness in delivering financial and economic benefits. Access to government departments and

agencies recorded a relatively low mean score (2.42), suggesting partial but insufficient institutional linkage. In contrast, key financial services such as patronage bonus, access to credit, and crop insurance benefits recorded the lowest possible mean score (1.00), indicating their complete absence.

The results suggest that the FPC has not been able to function as a financially enabling institution, thereby limiting its role in enhancing the economic empowerment and enhancing the economic resilience of women farmers. Similar observations have been reported in earlier studies, where FPOs were found to be stronger in input delivery than in financial and economic functions^[13, 14].

Table 3: Economic dimensions influencing the participation of women in FPC activities

Economic factors	Scale/Frequencies					Mean Score	Rank	Inference
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)			
Access to Government Department and agencies	-	35 (58.30)	25 (41.70)	-	-	2.42	1	Low-moderate
Patronage bonus	60 (100.00)	-	-	-	-	1.0	2	Absent
Access to credit	60 (100.00)	-	-	-	-	1.0	2	Absent
Crop insurance benefits	60 (100.00)	-	-	-	-	1.0	2	Absent

3.3 Governance, managerial, participation and commitment dimensions

The results presented in table 4 reveal that the FPC demonstrates strong governance and leadership effectiveness. Communication between leaders and members, as well as trust in leadership, were unanimously rated as “excellent,” indicating a high level of institutional credibility. Similarly, clarity of policies and guidelines was rated highly, reflecting transparency and effective dissemination of organizational norms.

Financial transparency was also perceived to be strong, with 80 per cent of respondents rating it as “excellent.” The effectiveness of the strategic plan was viewed more moderately, with a majority of respondents (56.7%) rating it as “good,” indicating scope for improvement in long-term planning. The capability of the CEO and staff showed some variation, with most respondents rating it as “good,” followed by “fair,” suggesting a need to strengthen managerial capacity further.

Despite strong governance, the level of member participation presents a mixed pattern across different activities. Participation in annual general body meetings was high, with 80 per cent of respondents indicating that they “always” participated. Similarly, attendance in FPC meetings was relatively strong, with responses concentrated in “most of the time” and “always,” reflecting regular engagement in formal activities. Members’ involvement in group work was also notable, with a majority participating “most of the time,” indicating active collaboration in

collective tasks. However, a significant limitation was observed in decision-making participation, where nearly half of the respondents (48.3%) reported involvement only “rarely,” and a small proportion (13.3%) reported “always” participating. While participation in training programmes and involvement in governance activities were moderate, the supply of output to the FPC was extremely low, with 95 per cent of respondents indicating that they do not supply their produce through the FPC. This suggests that while members are physically present and engaged in routine activities, their economic and strategic participation remains limited, particularly in decision-making and market-linked functions.

The analysis of commitment factors indicated a high level of member attachment and institutional cohesion. A strong sense of ownership was reported by 80 per cent of respondents, while rule adherence was unanimously rated as high. Team spirit among members was also found to be strong, with the majority expressing positive perceptions. Similarly, cooperation and mutual trust among members were reported to be very high, indicating a cohesive organizational environment. A majority of respondents also reported actively availing services provided by the FPC, reflecting their dependence on the institution for certain functions.

Overall, the findings suggested that members exhibited strong commitment, trust, and loyalty towards the FPC, which is a critical factor for the sustainability of collective institutions.

Table 4: Governance, managerial, participation and commitment dimensions influencing the participation of women in FPC activities

Governance and managerial factors	Scale/Frequencies			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Strategic plan effectiveness	12 (20.00)	-	34 (56.70)	14 (23.30)
Communication effectiveness	-	-	-	60

				(100.00)
Trust in leadership	-	-	-	60 (100.00)
Policy clarity	-	12 (20.00)	-	48 (80.00)
CEO & staff capability	-	17 (28.30)	35 (58.30)	8 (13.30)
Financial transparency	-	6 (10.00)	6 (10.00)	48 (80.00)
<i>Note: Rating scale of 1= Poor, 2= Fair, 3= Good, 4= Excellent</i>				
Participation factors				
AGM participation	-	12 (20.00)	-	48 (80.00)
Attending meetings	-	12 (20.00)	23 (38.30)	25 (41.70)
Members involvement in group work	6 (10.00)	6 (10.00)	34 (56.70)	14 (23.30)
Involvement in decision-making	6 (10.00)	29 (48.30)	17 (28.30)	8 (13.30)
<i>Note: Rating scale of 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Most of the times, 4 = Always</i>				
Commitment factors				
Members sense of ownership	-	-	12 (20.00)	48 (80.00)
Rule adherence	-	-	-	60 (100.00)
Members' team spirit	-	-	12 (20.00)	48 (80.00)
Services utilization	-	12 (20.00)	-	48 (80.00)
Output supply to FPC	-	57 (95.00)	-	3 (5.00)
Cooperation & mutual trust	-	-	-	60 (100.00)
<i>Note: Rating scale of 1 = Doesn't matter, 2 = No, 3 = Not sure, 4 = Yes</i>				

Analysis on quantification of perception levels through mean scores indicated that the FPCs governance-related factors recorded consistently high mean scores, reflecting a strong institutional framework. Communication effectiveness and trust in leadership achieved the maximum mean score (4.00), indicating excellent governance practices (table 5). Policy clarity (3.80) and financial transparency (3.70) further reinforced the perception of a well-managed and accountable organization. However, relatively lower scores for strategic planning (3.03) and staff capability (2.85) indicated scope for strengthening managerial and long-term planning capacities. The findings suggested that while the FPC was administratively sound, it required further development on strategic and professional management functions

The participation analysis revealed a dual pattern of engagement. Members actively participated in routine and formal activities such as annual general body meetings (mean = 3.80) and regular meetings (3.22), indicating strong institutional involvement at the operational level. However, participation declined significantly in decision-making processes, with a lower mean score (2.45). This suggested that women farmers, although physically present in organizational activities, have limited influence over strategic decisions. This gap between participation and decision-making has been widely documented in collective institutions, particularly in the context of gender dynamics [15].

The commitment indicators reflected a high level of institutional attachment and cohesion among members. Rule adherence and mutual trust recorded the highest mean scores (4.00), while ownership, team spirit, and service

utilization also showed strong values (3.80). Despite this strong commitment, a critical limitation was observed in the low level of output supply to the FPC (2.00). This indicated that members, although committed to the organization, were not fully integrating their economic activities with the FPC, thereby limiting its effectiveness as a collective marketing platform.

Table 5: Mean score of governance, managerial, participation and commitment dimensions influencing participation of women members in FPC activities

Factor	Mean Score	Rank	Inference
Governance & managerial factors			
Communication effectiveness	4.00	1	Excellent
Trust in leadership	4.00	2	Excellent
Financial transparency	3.70	3	Very strong
Policy clarity	3.80	4	Very strong
Strategic plan effectiveness	3.03	5	Moderate
CEO & staff capability	2.85	6	Moderate
Participation factors			
AGM participation	3.80	1	Very high
Attending meetings	3.22	2	High
Members involvement in group work	2.93	3	Moderate
Involvement in decision-making	2.45	4	Low
Commitment factors			
Rule adherence	4.00	1	Excellent
Members' sense of ownership	3.80	2	Very strong
Members team spirit	3.80	2	Very strong
Service utilization	3.80	2	Very strong
Cooperation & trust	4.00	1	Excellent
Output supply to FPC	2.00	3	Weak

4. Conclusion

The study's findings suggest several policy implications for strengthening women farmers' participation in FPCs. First, there is a critical need to strengthen the economic functions of FPCs, particularly access to institutional credit, insurance services, and patronage-based incentives. Without these, the economic viability of membership remains limited. Second, although input service delivery is strong, policy efforts should focus on transforming FPCs from input-oriented institutions into market-driven enterprises. This requires investments in post-harvest infrastructure, including aggregation, processing, value addition, grading, storage, certification, and market linkages, to enhance members' income realization. Third, despite strong governance, targeted interventions are needed to enhance women's participation in decision-making processes, such as price negotiations and value chain engagement. Capacity-building programs should focus on leadership development, negotiation skills, entrepreneurship, agribusiness skills, and governance participation. Fourth, improving professional management and strategic planning capacity within FPCs is essential to ensure long-term sustainability and competitiveness. Finally, there is a need for gender-sensitive institutional design that ensures women farmers are not only members but also active stakeholders in the economic and managerial functions of FPCs.

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