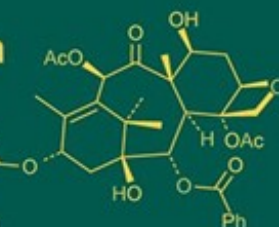
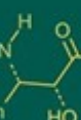
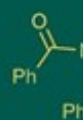


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Study on relationship between socio-economic profile and attitude of farmers towards FPOs

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture remains a major contributor to rural livelihoods and socio-economic development, particularly in developing economies where small and marginal farmers face challenges such as fragmented holdings, limited access to quality inputs, weak market linkages and low bargaining power. Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) have emerged as an important institutional mechanism for collectivizing farmers and addressing these constraints through collective input procurement, improved access to markets and technology, value addition, enhanced bargaining power and greater opportunities for increasing farm income. FPOs also facilitate linkages with government schemes, financial institutions, extension agencies and agricultural markets, thereby strengthening the economic position and competitiveness of smallholder farmers. In this context, the present study was conducted to assess farmers' attitude towards FPOs and its relationship with selected socio-economic, psychological and communication characteristics in the Central Plain Zone of Uttar Pradesh. An ex-post facto research design was employed for the study. Four districts, namely Kanpur Nagar, Etawah, Lakhimpur Kheri and Prayagraj, were selected randomly, and two blocks were selected from each district. A total of 240 respondents, comprising 120 FPO member farmers and 120 non-FPO member farmers, were selected randomly. Primary data were collected through personal interviews using a structured and pre-tested interview schedule. The data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, correlation coefficient, multiple regression analysis, rank order method and chi-square test. The findings revealed that 55.00 per cent of farmers had a moderately favourable attitude towards FPOs, followed by 24.58 per cent with a highly favourable attitude and 20.42 per cent with a less favourable attitude. The major positive aspects of FPOs were provision of information on improved agricultural practices, enhancement of farmers' confidence, empowerment and improved marketing opportunities. Attitude towards FPOs was positively and significantly associated with education, farming experience, landholding, extension contact, extension participation, cosmopolitanism, mass media exposure, achievement motivation, management orientation, scientific orientation, training received, economic motivation, risk orientation, innovative proneness, decision-making ability and social participation. Decision-making ability showed the strongest positive association with attitude ($r = 0.527$), followed by management orientation ($r = 0.514$) and scientific orientation ($r = 0.489$). The study concludes that strengthening FPOs through continuous training, timely information dissemination, transparent management, financial support, technical guidance and improved market linkages can contribute to more effective and sustainable farmer collectivization.

Keywords: Farmer Producer Organizations, Attitude, Awareness, Farmer Collectivization, Extension contact

Introduction

Agriculture has been the foundation of human civilization and economic development since ancient times and continues to remain one of the most important sectors of the global economy. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), agriculture remains the principal occupation of rural communities and an important driver of socio-economic development in many countries. The World Bank (2021) also reported that growth in the agricultural sector is more effective in reducing rural poverty compared to growth in many other sectors of the economy. Sen (1999) emphasized that development should focus on enhancing people's capabilities and access to economic opportunities, especially among vulnerable rural populations. According to Trebbin and Hassler (2012), FPOs represent an important institutional innovation for integrating small farmers into modern agricultural markets and improving their competitiveness. The Government of India launched a Central Sector Scheme for the formation and promotion of 10,000 Farmer Producer Organizations with a financial allocation of Rs. 6,865 crores up to the year 2027-28. The scheme aims to strengthen farmers' collective bargaining power, improve market access, promote value addition, and in

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crease farmer's income through cluster-based business organizations. The scheme follows the "One District One Product" approach for developing product specialization and strengthening agricultural value chains (Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, 2021). According to NABARD reports, FPOs have the potential to transform subsistence agriculture into market-oriented and profitable farming systems by improving economies of scale and institutional efficiency. Despite several advantages, FPOs also face numerous challenges related to inadequate managerial skills, weak financial resources, low member participation, poor governance, lack of infrastructure, limited market linkage, and insufficient awareness among farmers. Singh *et al.* (2021) observed that many FPOs struggle due to lack of professional management, inadequate coordination, low business planning capacity, and limited institutional sustainability.

The Central Plain Zone has witnessed increasing establishment of Farmer Producer Organizations in recent years due to the growing emphasis on farmer collectivization and market-oriented agriculture. However, the effectiveness and sustainability of these organizations largely depend upon farmers' awareness, participation, perception, and attitude towards FPOs. In many rural areas, farmers possess limited knowledge regarding the objectives, functioning, benefits, and management practices of Farmer Producer Organizations. Socio-economic constraints, inadequate communication, poor extension contact, lack of training, and low institutional linkage often affect farmers' participation in such collective institutions. Therefore, it becomes essential to study the level of awareness and attitude of farmers towards FPOs in order to understand their perception, participation behavior, and the factors influencing the functioning of these organizations.

Research methodology

The present study was conducted using an ex-post facto research design to assess farmer's awareness and attitude towards Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and their association with selected socio-economic, psychological and communication characteristics. The study was conducted in the Central Plain Zone of Uttar Pradesh, from which four districts, namely Kanpur Nagar, Etawah, Lakhimpur Kheri and Prayagraj, were selected randomly. Two blocks were selected from each district, viz., Shivrajpur and Kalyanpur from Kanpur Nagar, Basrehar and Mahewa from Etawah, Mohammadi and Behjam from Lakhimpur Kheri, and Chaka and Bahadurpur from Prayagraj. From each selected FPO, 15 FPO member farmers and 15 non-FPO member farmers from the same or nearby villages were selected randomly, resulting in a total sample of 240 respondents, comprising 120 FPO members and 120 non-FPO members. Primary data were collected through personal interviews using a structured and pre-tested interview schedule, which was prepared in English and translated into Hindi for better comprehension. The independent variables included socio-economic, psychological and communication characteristics, while awareness and attitude towards FPOs were considered dependent variables. The collected data were coded, classified and tabulated and analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, correlation coefficient, multiple regression analysis, rank order method and chi-square test to draw meaningful conclusions in accordance with the objectives of the study.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Aspect-wise attitude of farmers towards Farmers Producer Organizations (FPOs)

Sr. No.	Attitude Statements	SA		A		UD		DA		SDA		Mean	Rank
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1.	FPO help in increasing confidence among farmers	105	43.75	82	34.17	28	11.67	15	6.25	10	4.16	4.07	II
2.	FPO provide needful information on improved agricultural practices	112	46.67	86	35.83	20	8.33	14	5.83	08	3.34	4.14	I
3.	FPO is not a long-term solution to the problem of price inflation	35	14.58	50	20.83	45	18.75	65	27.09	45	18.75	2.85	XVI
4.	FPO is a boon for farmers	101	42.08	79	32.92	29	12.08	18	7.50	13	5.42	3.96	III
5.	FPO mismanages the local resources	22	9.17	36	15.00	48	20.00	79	32.92	55	22.91	2.55	XXI
6.	Much is talked about FPOs but little work is done	28	11.67	42	17.50	55	22.92	70	29.16	45	18.75	2.74	XIX
7.	Organization of farmers into groups is waste of money	18	7.50	31	12.92	46	19.17	82	34.16	63	26.25	2.40	XXII
8.	FPO have created more problems for members than solving	25	10.42	39	16.25	50	20.83	78	32.50	48	20.00	2.65	XX
9.	Attending FPO work is time consuming for the members	32	13.33	46	19.17	48	20.00	69	28.75	45	18.75	2.79	XVIII
10.	Activities of FPOs are not as per members' needs	34	14.17	48	20.00	44	18.33	68	28.33	46	19.17	2.82	XVII
11.	FPO is a prospective system to empower farmers	95	39.58	78	32.50	30	12.50	22	9.17	15	6.25	3.90	IV
12.	FPOs are not potential enough to bring about agricultural development	40	16.67	52	21.67	43	17.91	61	25.42	44	18.33	2.91	XV
13.	FPO is farmers friendly approach to sale farm products	90	37.50	75	31.25	36	15.00	25	10.42	14	5.83	3.84	V
14.	FPO induces cosmopolitanism among its members	86	35.83	72	30.00	40	16.67	27	11.25	15	6.25	3.75	VII

(continued on next page)

Sr. No.	Attitude Statements	SA		A		UD		DA		SDA		Mean	Rank
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
15.	FPOs inculcate the decision-making ability among their members	88	36.67	73	30.42	38	15.83	26	10.83	15	6.25	3.79	VI
16.	FPOs work on the principle of democracy	82	34.17	70	29.17	42	17.50	30	12.50	16	6.66	3.68	IX
17.	FPOs provide need-based consultancy services to the members	84	35.00	71	29.58	39	16.25	30	12.50	16	6.67	3.71	VIII
18.	FPO is not rigid as co-operatives	76	31.67	68	28.33	45	18.75	33	13.75	18	7.50	3.58	X
19.	Administrative/management of FPOs involve too much autocracy	48	20.00	55	22.92	40	16.67	58	24.16	39	16.25	3.12	XIII
20.	FPOs increase overhead charges	46	19.17	52	21.67	42	17.50	60	25.00	40	16.66	3.05	XIV
21.	Benefits from government/other institutions could be availed by FPO members	72	30.00	70	29.17	48	20.00	31	12.92	19	7.91	3.49	XI
22.	Peer pressure affects the functioning of Farmer Producer Organization	54	22.50	58	24.17	43	17.91	50	20.83	35	14.59	3.25	XII

The data presented in Table 01 reveal that the statement “FPO provide needful information on improved agricultural practices” secured the first rank with a mean score of 4.14. It was observed that 112 respondents (46.67%) strongly agreed and 86 respondents (35.83%) agreed with the statement, indicating that a majority of the farmers perceived FPOs as an important source of agricultural information and technical guidance. The statement “FPO help in increasing confidence among farmers” ranked second with a mean score of 4.07. Among the respondents, 105 (43.75%) strongly agreed and 82 (34.17%) agreed that FPOs enhance the confidence level of farmers through collective participation and interaction. The statement “FPO is a boon for farmers” secured the third rank with a mean score of 3.96. It was found that 101 respondents (42.08%) strongly agreed and 79 respondents (32.92%) agreed with the statement, reflecting the positive perception of farmers towards the role of FPOs in agricultural development. The statement “FPO is a prospective system to empower farmers” obtained the fourth rank with a mean score of 3.90. About 39.58 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed and 32.50 per cent agreed that FPOs contribute significantly to the empowerment of farmers. Similarly, the statement “FPO is a farmers-friendly approach to sale farm products” ranked fifth with a mean score of 3.84. The results indicate that 37.50 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed and 31.25 per cent agreed that FPOs facilitate better marketing opportunities for agricultural produce. The statement “FPOs inculcate the decision-making ability among their members” secured the sixth rank with a mean score of 3.79, while “FPO induces cosmopolitanism among its members” ranked seventh with a mean score of 3.75. These findings suggest that FPO membership enhances farmers' exposure to external information sources and strengthens their decision-making capabilities. The statements “FPOs provide need-based consultancy services to the members” and “FPOs work on the principle of democracy” obtained the eighth and ninth ranks with mean scores of 3.71 and 3.68, respectively. This indicates that farmers appreciated both the advisory support and democratic functioning of FPOs. The statement “FPO is not rigid as co-operatives” ranked tenth with a mean score of 3.58, followed by “Benefits from government/other institutions could be availed by FPO members” which secured the eleventh rank with a mean score of 3.49. These findings highlight the flexibility of FPOs and their ability to facilitate access to institutional support

and government schemes. On the other hand, the statement “Peer pressure affects the functioning of Farmer Producer Organization” secured the twelfth rank with a mean score of 3.25, while “Administrative/management of FPOs involve too much autocracy” and “FPOs increase overhead charges” ranked thirteenth and fourteenth with mean scores of 3.12 and 3.05, respectively. Among the negatively framed statements, “FPOs are not potential enough to bring about agricultural development” secured the fifteenth rank with a mean score of 2.91, followed by “FPO is not a long-term solution to the problem of price inflation” which ranked sixteenth with a mean score of 2.85. The statements “Activities of FPOs are not as per members' needs”, “Attending FPO work is time consuming for the members”, “Much is talked about FPOs but little work is done”, “FPO have created more problems for members than solving”, “FPO mis-manages the local resources”, and “Organization of farmers into groups is waste of money” secured the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth, twenty-first, and twenty-second ranks with mean scores of 2.82, 2.79, 2.74, 2.65, 2.55, and 2.40, respectively. The lower mean scores indicate that the majority of respondents disagreed with these negative statements regarding FPOs. Overall, the findings clearly indicate that farmers possessed a favourable attitude towards Farmer Producer Organizations. The higher mean scores obtained by statements related to information dissemination, confidence building, farmer empowerment, marketing support, and decision-making ability demonstrate the positive role of FPOs in improving the socio-economic condition of farmers.

Table 2. Overall Attitude of Farmers towards Farmers Producer Organizations (FPOs)

Sr. No.	Attitude Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Less Favourable	49	20.42
2.	Moderately Favourable	132	55.00
3.	Highly Favourable	59	24.58
	Total	240	100.00

Mean = 68.54, Standard Deviation = 11.42

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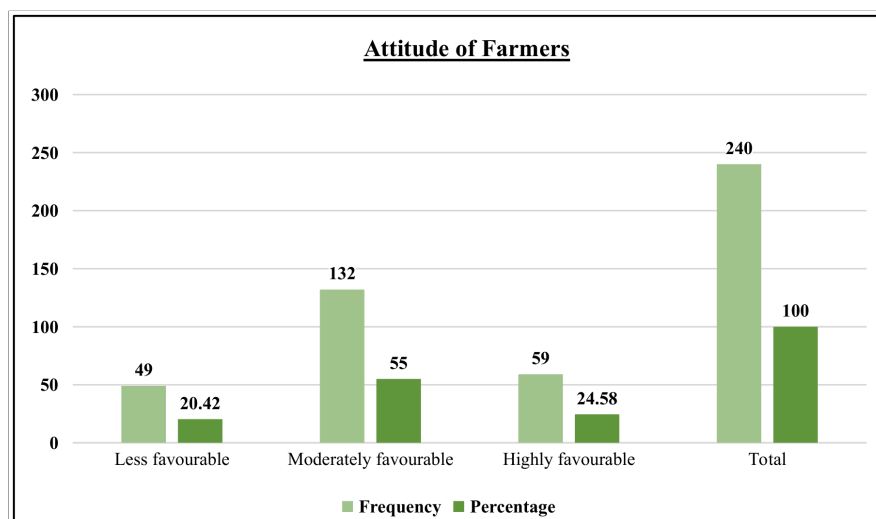


Figure 01. Overall Attitude of Farmers towards Farmers Producer Organizations (FPOs)

The data presented in Table 4.2 reveal that a majority of the respondents (55.00%) belonged to the moderately favourable attitude category towards Farmer Producer Organizations. This was followed by 24.58 per cent of respondents who exhibited a highly favourable attitude, whereas 20.42 per cent were found in the less favourable attitude category. The findings indicate that most of the farmers possessed a positive perception of Farmer Producer Organizations and recognized their role in providing agricultural information, improving access to quality inputs, strengthening marketing opportunities, and enhancing farmers' bargaining power. The predominance of respondents in the moderately favourable category may be attributed to their experience with FPO activities, extension support, training programmes, and exposure to organizational benefits. The presence of a considerable proportion of respondents in the highly favourable category suggests that many farmers have developed confidence in the functioning of FPOs and appreciate their contribution towards socio-economic development and collective empowerment. On the other hand, the respondents falling under the less favourable category may have limited awareness, lower participation in organizational activities, or inadequate exposure to the benefits provided by FPOs. The mean attitude score of the respondents was found to be 68.54 with a standard deviation of 11.42, indicating moderate variation in attitude among the farmers. Overall, the results clearly suggest that farmers held a favourable attitude towards Farmer Producer Organizations, highlighting their growing importance as an effective institutional mechanism for improving agricultural productivity, income generation, and rural development.

Table 3. Relationship between independent variables and attitude of farmers towards FPOs

Sr. No.	Independent Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)
1.	Age	0.128*
2.	Education	0.342**
3.	Family Size	0.086NS
4.	Farming Experience	0.215**
5.	Landholding	0.187*
6.	Extension Contact	0.468**
7.	Extension Participation	0.421**
8.	Cosmopolitaness	0.394**
9.	Mass Media Exposure	0.382**
10.	Achievement Motivation	0.447**
11.	Management Orientation	0.514**
12.	Scientific Orientation	0.489**
13.	Training Received	0.365**
14.	Economic Motivation	0.456**
15.	Risk Orientation	0.318**
16.	Innovative Proneness	0.473**
17.	Decision-Making Ability	0.527**
18.	Social Participation	0.296**

NS = Non-significant, Significant at 5 per cent level of probability, ** Significant at 1 per cent level of probability

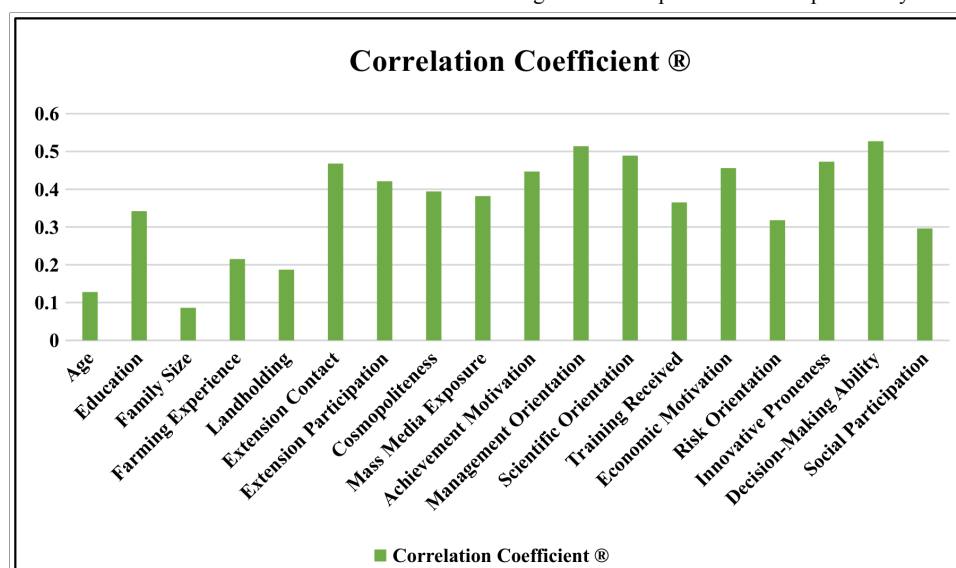


Figure 2. Relationship between independent variables and attitude of farmers towards FPOs

The data presented in Table 03 indicate that education, farming experience, landholding, extension contact, extension participation, cosmopolitanism, mass media exposure, achievement motivation, management orientation, scientific orientation, training received, economic motivation, risk orientation, innovative proneness, decision-making ability, and social participation exhibited a positive and significant relationship with the attitude of farmers towards Farmer Producer Organizations. Among all the variables, decision-making ability ($r = 0.527$) showed the highest positive and significant relationship with farmers' attitude towards FPOs, followed by management orientation ($r = 0.514$), scientific orientation ($r = 0.489$), innovative proneness ($r = 0.473$), and extension contact ($r = 0.468$). This indicates that farmers possessing better managerial skills, scientific outlook, innovative behaviour, and frequent contact with extension agencies tend to develop a more favourable attitude towards Farmer Producer Organizations. The variables economic motivation ($r = 0.456$), achievement motivation ($r = 0.447$), extension participation ($r = 0.421$), cosmopolitanism ($r = 0.394$), mass media exposure ($r = 0.382$), and training received ($r = 0.365$) also showed significant positive relationships with attitude. These findings suggest that farmers who are motivated to improve their economic status, actively participate in extension programmes, and have greater exposure to information sources are more likely to appreciate the benefits of FPOs. Further, education, farming experience, landholding, risk orientation, and social participation were also found to have positive and significant relationships with attitude, indicating that better educated and experienced farmers generally possess a more favourable perception towards collective farming institutions. Age exhibited a positive and significant relationship with attitude at the 5 per cent level of significance, suggesting that older farmers may have developed greater trust in collective organizations due to their farming experience and exposure. However, family size ($r = 0.086$) showed a positive but non-significant relationship with attitude towards FPOs. This indicates that the number of family members had little influence on farmers' perceptions regarding Farmer Producer Organizations. Overall, the findings indicate that communication, psychological, and managerial characteristics play a more important role than personal characteristics in shaping farmers' attitudes towards Farmer Producer Organizations. Strengthening extension services, training programmes, leadership development, and information dissemination activities may therefore contribute significantly to the development of favourable attitudes among farmers towards FPOs.

Conclusion

The study revealed that farmers generally had a favourable attitude towards Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and recognized their role in collective input procurement, production, marketing, improved market access and enhanced bargaining power. The findings further indicated that farmers' attitudes were significantly associated with their socio-economic, psychological and communication characteristics, particularly education, extension contact and participation, management and scientific orientation, decision-making ability, innovative proneness, economic motivation and training. Among these, decision-making ability showed the strongest positive association with attitude towards FPOs. The study also highlighted the important role of

officials and extension agencies in strengthening FPOs through technical guidance, capacity building, awareness programmes, facilitation of government schemes, market linkages and regular monitoring. Therefore, continuous training, timely information dissemination, transparent management, adequate financial support and stronger market linkages should be emphasized to improve the effectiveness, sustainability and farmer-oriented functioning of FPOs.

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