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### Profile characteristics of members of women led FPOs in Telangana state

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#### Abstract

The present study was conducted in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district of Telangana state to study profile characteristics of members of women led FPOs in Telangana state. Sixty members from Ageewa Farmers Producer Company Limited (AFPCL) and sixty members from Dheeshali Rythu Mahila Producer Company Limited (DRMPCL) making a total of 120 respondents were selected randomly for the study. Ex-post-facto research design was used for the present study. It was found that majority of members in women led FPOs were middle-aged (54.16%), illiterates (28.33%), small farmers (45.83%), medium family size (53.33%), medium annual income (44.17%), high number of trainings (50.83%), medium level of extension contact (61.66%), medium mass media exposure (67.50%), medium extent of institutional support (58.33%), medium risk-taking (53.33%), high economic motivation (60.83%), high level of achievement motivation (51.66%), medium level of market orientation (52.50%) and medium level of innovativeness (53.34%).

**Keywords:** Profile characteristics, farmer Producer Company

#### 1. Introduction

Indian agriculture has made significant progress, transitioning from chronic food scarcity to achieving self-sufficiency in food grain production. The majority of farmers approximately 82 % fall into the small and marginal categories with an average land-holding size of 1.08 hectares (FAO, 2018) <sup>[1]</sup>, especially with women constituting 73 per cent of the agricultural labour force (NAFPO, 2021) <sup>[9]</sup>.

The women in rural areas are facing suppression in participating in producer organizations due to various internal and external environmental hurdles which calls for the promotion of gender inclusive FPOs. Women FPOs are a specialized form of producer organization where the majority of members and leaders are women. The primary objective of women FPOs is to enhance the socio-economic status of women farmers by improving their access to markets, credit and agricultural inputs as well as by promoting value addition and entrepreneurship. Under the process of adding new 10,000 FPOs through Central Sector Scheme (CSS) country witnessed 87 percent target achievement with the setup of 8,780 FPOs. Among which, 810 FPOs are women FPOs and 379 FPOs are working under One District and One Product (ODOP) initiative.

#### 2. Materials and Methods

The study followed an ex-post-facto research design. Since

the researcher hails from Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district of Telangana state and the two women led FPOs namely, Ageewa Farmers Producer Company Limited (AFPCL) of cholleru village, yadagirigutta mandal and Dheeshali Rythu Mahila Producer Company Limited (DRMPCL) of solipet village, bommalaramaram mandal were existing in the same district, the selection of district and mandals was made purposively. For the study purpose, three villages from each FPO were selected randomly making a total of 6 villages. Twenty women members (20) members from each village working under its respective FPO were selected randomly making a total of 120.

#### 3. Results and Discussion

**3.1 Age:** The level of maturity and capacity for critical thinking is the reflection of individual's age. The results in the Table 1 illustrated, nearly half (54.16%) of the members fell into the middle-aged category, representing the largest portion of the sample followed by (29.18%) of the members were in the old age group constituting a substantial portion and a smaller percentage (16.66%) of respondents were in the younger age group, making up just under one-fifth of the sample. The most probable reason might be middle-aged women may actively manage household responsibilities and agricultural activities. Women in this age group have high motivation to join FPOs to improve their economic situation and accessing resources. Younger women might be less

involved to pursue higher education, while older women were facing health-related challenges limiting their participation. The results were in agreement with the studies conducted by Chopade *et al.* (2019)<sup>[12]</sup>, Dechamma *et al.* (2020)<sup>[13]</sup>.

**3.2 Education:** It could be observed from Table 1 that, a significant portion (28.33%) of members were illiterate, a notable number (18.33%) of members have completed SSC, a moderate proportion (14.17%) of members can read and write. One-tenth (10.00%) of the members have completed primary education, a small portion of members (9.17%) can read, (8.34%), (5.83%), (5.83%) have completed under graduation, upper primary, intermediate respectively and none of the members have attained postgraduate education. It could be attributed from the findings, majority of members in women FPOs were illiterate due to lack of educational opportunities and traditional norms in their villages. As the FPOs provide a platform where women can learn, share knowledge and improve their farming practices irrespective of their literacy levels. Women were interested in joining FPOs. The results were in agreement with the studies conducted by Pandian and Ganeshan (2019)<sup>[14]</sup>.

**3.3 Farm size:** The results in the Table 1 illustrated that, almost half (45.83%) of the members were small farmers getting classified under largest category, (21.67%) of the members were medium farmers, (20.00%) of the members were marginal farmers and a smaller portion (12.50%) of the members were large farmers. The probable reason might be as the members realize the benefits of working together to address common challenges such as accessing credit, inputs and technology. FPOs allowed them to pool their resources to achieve economies of scale in purchasing inputs, accessing technology and utilizing shared infrastructure like storage facilities and transportation. The results were in agreement with the studies conducted by Babu *et al.* (2019)<sup>[11]</sup>.

**3.4 Family size:** The result shown in Table 1 presented that, majority (53.33%) of the members belonged to medium family size with (4-6 members), a significant portion of (30.84%) belonged to large family size (6-8 members) and a relatively small portion of (15.83%) belonged to small family size (2-4 members). The members in medium-sized families completely depending on agriculture for income might have faced challenges related to marketing produce, accessing credit and adopting new technologies that were too significant to overcome alone but could be effectively managed with support from an FPO. The results were in agreement with the studies conducted by Dechamma *et al.* (2020)<sup>[13]</sup>, Pooja (2022)<sup>[15]</sup>

**3.5 Annual income:** The results in the Table 1 indicated that largest segment 44.17% of the members fell into the lower middle income (Rs.70,070-Rs.2,73,099) category followed by 25.00% had upper middle income (Rs.2,73,100-Rs.8,45,955), a significant portion of 20.00% had low income (<Rs.70,069) and a small portion of 10.83% had high income (>Rs.8,45,956). The results could be attributed to the fact that respondents were mostly dependent on agriculture and livestock as their main source of income and

also as they were members of women led FPOs, which had helped them achieve a stable income by reducing their costs and increasing their returns. The results were in agreement with the studies conducted by Babu *et al.* (2019)<sup>[11]</sup>, Amitha *et al.* (2021)<sup>[10]</sup>.

**3.6 Trainings received:** It could be indicated from the Table 1 that, the majority of women FPO members (50.83%) have attended a high number of training sessions, demonstrating strong engagement with the FPOs capacity building efforts. About one-third of the members (34.17%) have participated in a medium number of trainings and a smaller portion (15.00%) have attended low number of trainings. The findings revealed that nearly half of the members were highly engaged in the FPOs training programs benefiting significantly from these opportunities. This could be because FPOs were effectively engaging its members in capacity-building activities as the high level of participation in training programmes is likely to result in better adoption of improved agricultural practices, leading to increased productivity and income for its members. Few members due to their additional work or lack of interest and transportation facilities attended low number of trainings. The results were in agreement with the studies conducted by Vavilala (2023)<sup>[16]</sup>.

**3.7 Extension contact:** The results in the Table 1 revealed that, majority of women FPO members (61.66%) had a medium level of extension contact indicating regular interaction with agricultural extension services, a significant proportion of (22.51%) had a high level of extension contact and (15.83%) of members had low extension contact. The findings attributed that majority of women members in FPOs were in regular contact with the agriculture extension officers, NGO officials, NABARD officials to obtain the timely information regarding the market prices, input costs, latest and improved crop production practices. A small portion of members had limited extension contact, which could be due to obstacles like time constraints, accessibility issues and lack of awareness. The results were in agreement with the studies conducted by Chopade *et al.* (2019)<sup>[12]</sup>, Dhayal *et al.* (2023)<sup>[2]</sup>

**3.8 Mass media exposure:** The results in the Table 1 illustrated that, more than half of those surveyed (67.50%) had a medium degree of mass media exposure, compared to a lesser percentage (14.17%) who had a high level and (18.33%) a low level of mass media contact. The findings attributed that majority of the respondents routinely accessed information through media outlets like newspapers, television and mobile apps, which helped them stay up to date on news and innovations in agriculture. Some had low mass media contact, probably because of limited access. The results were in agreement with the studies conducted by Joshi and Bose (2023)<sup>[3]</sup>.

**3.9 Institutional support:** The result shown in Table 1 indicated that large proportion of members (58.33%) acquired a medium extent of institutional support followed by (21.67%) experienced high level of institutional support, while a smaller proportion (20.00%) of members perceived low institutional support. The probable reason could be that

FPO received moderate level of institutional support from various institutions like NABARD, NGOs, government and private institutions by getting access to inputs, training programmes and advisory services. The results suggest that additional efforts were necessary to enhance buyback support for agricultural produce and value addition services. The results were in agreement with the studies conducted by Mathuabirami et al. (2020)<sup>[4]</sup>, Asokhan and Srikar (2021)<sup>[5]</sup>

**3.10 Risk taking ability:** The results in Table 1 illustrated that among the selected respondents, majority (53.33%) of FPO members fell into medium risk-taking category, a significant portion (33.34%) of the members were willing to take higher risks and a small proportion (13.33%) of the FPO members had low risk taking ability. The probable reason might be that majority of women FPO members were taking a balanced approach to risk based on guidance and advices received from the FPOs which helped them to analyse the situation to take risk and better decisions. Most of the members were open to taking moderate risks, possibly by adopting new farming techniques or investing in improved inputs. But a small portion of members were likely to be cautious about adopting new practices or investing in innovative technologies as they prioritized stability and security over potential high returns. The results were in agreement with the studies conducted by Babu *et al.* (2019)<sup>[11]</sup> and Pooja (2022)<sup>[15]</sup>.

**3.11 Economic motivation:** Table 1 revealed that, majority (60.83%) of women members fell into the category of high economic motivation, a quarter (25.84%) of the women members had medium economic motivation and a smaller percentage (13.33%) of women members had a low economic motivation. The trend might be because the women members were motivated by the potential of FPO to improve the income which provides financial security and the opportunity to contribute to their household's economic well-being through their involvement in the FPO. Agriculture serves as a primary source of income for majority of members and the organizations like FPOs work to enhance farmers productivity to improve their economic stability. The results were in agreement with the studies conducted by Babu *et al.* (2019)<sup>[11]</sup>.

**3.12 Achievement motivation:** The data in Table 1 illustrated that, majority (51.66%) of the women members had a high level of achievement motivation, a significant portion (41.66%) of the women members had medium achievement motivation and only a small percentage (6.68%) of women members had low achievement motivation. This might be attributed to the findings where majority of women FPO members were middle aged and small farmers exhibiting high economic motivation, indicating that most of them were focused on achieving their goals and improving their farming practices. For its members, the women led FPOs opened new possibilities for making farming as a business enterprise inspiring them to take on new challenges and raise their standard of living. The results were in agreement with the studies conducted by Babu *et al.* (2019)<sup>[11]</sup>.

their profile characteristics.

n=120

S. No.	Profile characteristics	Respondents (n=120)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1	<b>Age (Years)</b>		
	Young age (Up to 35 years)	20	16.66
	Middle age (35-50 years)	65	54.16
	Old age (Above 50 years)	35	29.18
2	<b>Education</b>		
	Illiterate	34	28.33
	Can read	11	9.17
	Can read and write	17	14.17
	Primary school	12	10
	Upper primary	7	5.83
	SSC	22	18.33
	Inter	7	5.83
	Under graduation	10	8.34
	Post graduation	0	0
3	<b>Farm size</b>		
	Landless	0	0.00
	Marginal (up to 2.5 acres)	24	20.00
	Small (2.5-5 acres)	55	45.83
	Medium (5-10acres)	26	21.67
	Large (more than 10 acres)	15	12.50
4	<b>Family size</b>		
	Small (2-4 members)	19	15.83
	Medium (4-6 members)	64	53.33
	Large (6-8 members)	37	30.84
5	<b>Annual income</b>		
	Low income (<Rs.70,069)	24	20.00
	Lower Middle income (Rs.70,070-Rs.2,73,099)	53	44.17
	Upper Middle income (Rs.2,73,100-Rs.8,45,955)	30	25.00
	High income (>Rs.8,45,96)	13	10.83
6	<b>Trainings received</b>		
	Low	18	15.00
	Medium	41	34.17
	High	61	50.83
7	<b>Extension contact</b>		
	Low	19	15.83
	Medium	74	61.66
	High	27	22.51
8	<b>Mass media exposure</b>		
	Low	22	18.33
	Medium	81	67.50
	High	17	14.17
9	<b>Institutional support</b>		
	Low	24	20.00
	Medium	70	58.33
	High	26	21.67
10	<b>Risk taking ability</b>		
	Low	16	13.33
	Medium	64	53.33
	High	40	33.34
11	<b>Economic motivation</b>		
	Low	16	13.33
	Medium	31	25.84
	High	73	60.83
12	<b>Achievement motivation</b>		
	Low	8	6.68
	Medium	50	41.66
	High	62	51.66
13	<b>Market orientation</b>		
	Low	20	16.67
	Medium	63	52.50
	High	37	30.83
14	<b>Innovativeness</b>		
	Low	18	15.00
	Medium	64	53.34
	High	38	31.66

**Table 1:** Distribution of members of women led FPOs based on

**3.13 Market orientation:** It could be observed from the

Table 1 that majority of members (52.50%) displayed a medium level of market orientation, a notable proportion (30.83%) had a high market orientation, while a smaller segment (16.67%) demonstrated low market orientation. The reason might be due to the market information provided by the FPO individuals were aligned to market demands and trends for some extent. They balanced traditional farming with a moderate focus on market strategies, aiming to align their production with market opportunities. The results were in agreement with the studies conducted by Sangappa *et al.* (2023)<sup>[6]</sup>, Priyanka and Jayashankar (2024)<sup>[7]</sup>.

**3.14 Innovativeness:** The data in Table 1 indicated that majority of members in women led FPOs (53.34%) had a medium level of innovativeness, a considerable portion (31.66%) demonstrated high innovativeness and a small percentage (15.00%) showed low innovativeness. The probable reason might be because most of the women members who attended trainings regularly with high extension contact were open to new ideas and were likely to experiment with new practices or technologies to some extent, though they may do so cautiously. Some of the women members with low education and low extension contact were less inclined to adopt new ideas, technologies or farming methods and preferred to stick with traditional practices. The results were in agreement with the studies conducted by Pooja (2022)<sup>[15]</sup>.

#### 4. Conclusion

The study concluded that majority of members in women-led FPOs were middle-aged, small farmers, with medium family sizes and medium family income balancing their farming experience with moderate economic resources. Their high participation in trainings suggests a willingness to learn though they had medium levels of extension contact, mass media exposure, institutional support and market orientation indicating their need for support from external linkages and resource access. With high economic and achievement motivation but medium risk-taking and innovativeness these women showed potential for growth when provided more institutional support, enhanced market access and capacity-building programs. Strengthening extension services, expanding media outreach and fostering innovation through targeted interventions can further empower these women members to achieve greater economic and social success.

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