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EFFECTIVENESS OF FARMER PRODUCERS ORGANIZATION IN DELIVERY OF SERVICES - A CASE OF KUREL KISAN PRODUCER COMPANY

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Article Info

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Abstract

The present study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of Kurel Kisan Producer Company Limited (KKPCL), a farmer producers organization (FPO) in Bundi district of Rajasthan, in delivering technology and advisory services to its member farmers. A sample of 150 farmers with more than two years of association with KKPCL was selected for data collection. An effectiveness index was developed to measure the efficiency of the FPO in providing technology and advisory services to the farmers. The results of the study indicated that KKPCL's extension services were highly effective, as perceived by the majority of the farmers. The FPO provided its members with better access to quality inputs and services, as well as timely delivery. Additionally, continuous advisory support from the organization led to improved technology adoption among the farmers. This, in turn, contributed to increased yields and income, ultimately leading to greater satisfaction among the farmers. This research highlights the potential of FPOs like KKPCL to enhance service delivery in the agricultural sector. By providing efficient technology and advisory services, these organizations can significantly contribute to the growth and development of the farming community. Moreover, the findings of this study can serve as a guide for policymakers and stakeholders in designing and implementing interventions that support FPOs in their efforts to improve service delivery and overall farmer satisfaction. In conclusion, the case of Kurel Kisan demonstrates the value of empowering farmer producers organizations for efficient service delivery. When provided with the necessary resources and support, FPOs can unlock their potential and play a critical role in promoting sustainable agriculture and improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. As such, it is crucial for governments and development organizations to invest in strengthening the capacity of FPOs to ensure their effectiveness in delivering high-quality services to the farming community.

Introduction

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Agriculture plays a pivotal role in the socio-economic development of many countries across the globe, significantly contributing to food security, poverty alleviation, employment generation, and overall economic growth (Tilman et al., 2002). However, smallholder farmers, who constitute a major segment of the agricultural sector, face numerous challenges that hinder their productivity, profitability, and sustainability (Feder et al., 2004). Among these challenges are the limited access to improved agricultural technologies, inputs, finance, and market-related information, which collectively contribute to low agricultural output and income for small-scale farmers (Hazell et al., 2010).

Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) have emerged as a potential solution to address these challenges by empowering smallholder farmers through collective action, improved access to resources, and enhanced bargaining power in the agricultural value chain (Narayanan, 2014). FPOs are formal institutions that bring together farmers, either as individuals or through their respective groups, to collectively engage in various activities such as input procurement, technology dissemination, marketing, and extension services (Mishra & Chauhan, 2018). By leveraging economies of scale and fostering collective bargaining power, FPOs have the potential to enhance smallholder farmers' access to improved technologies, advisory services, and markets, leading to increased productivity, profitability, and sustainable livelihoods (Bijman et al., 2016).

Several studies have documented the positive impact of FPOs on smallholder farmers' livelihoods, particularly in terms of improved access to inputs, credit, and market opportunities (Trebbin, 2014; Fischer & Qaim, 2012). However, much less attention has been given to understanding the role of FPOs in promoting the adoption of improved agricultural technologies and advisory services among smallholder farmers (Narayanan & Portale, 2017). The adoption of modern agricultural technologies and practices is critical for enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of smallholder farmers in the face of increasing global demand for food, climate change, and other emerging challenges (Spielman et al., 2011).

In this context, the present study aims to explore the role of FPOs in empowering smallholder farmers for improved access to, and adoption of, agricultural technologies and advisory services, using the case of Kurel Kisan, an FPO in India. India is a particularly relevant context for this study, given the prevalence of smallholder farmers in the country, who constitute over 85% of the farming community and contribute significantly to the nation's food security and agrarian economy (Chand et al., 2017). Moreover, the Government of India has been actively promoting FPOs as a key strategy for transforming the agricultural sector and enhancing smallholder farmers' income and livelihoods (GOI, 2013).

By drawing on primary data collected through a survey of smallholder farmers affiliated with Kurel Kisan, as well as in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, this study seeks to provide insights into the effectiveness of FPOs in enhancing farmers' access to, and adoption of, improved agricultural technologies and advisory services. Additionally, the study aims to identify the factors that influence the success of FPOs in promoting technology adoption and extension services, thereby contributing to the broader literature on FPOs and smallholder agriculture.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Bundi district of Rajasthan. Kurel Kisan Producer Company Limited (KKPCL) is an association of persons who are individually engaged in the agricultural production and other allied activities, who associate with each other for the common purpose of collective procurement of inputs, combined production, aggregation of their skills and produce, undertaking product processing, value addition and marketing activities. KKPCL is incorporated and registered as Producer Company under The Companies Act, 1965 and The Companies Act 2013, with membership to farmer producer.

Company adopted 'Mutual Assistance Principles' with the operational and business flexibility available under The Companies Act. For the present study an *ex-post facto*
research design was used. The data was collected from 150 farmers, who had taken the membership of *KKPCL*. A structured interview schedule was developed to collect the data from respondents. The effectiveness of KKPCL was measured in term of i) Input delivery system, ii) Types of service provided by the organization and iii) Farmers perception about the organization's performances which reflects their satisfaction.

Input delivery system, availability of inputs, accessibility, quality, cost of inputs etc. were studied on three point continuum scale. The highest was scored 3 and lowest 1. Timeliness of service was scaled in two point continuum i.e. Yes-2 and No-1.

Types of service provided, three sub category of service viz. Advisory services, Diagnostic services and Extension services were analyzed. Here also availability of service, timeliness and nature of problem solving were studied. Among this, availability was measured on three point continuum and rest two on two points.

The satisfaction level of participating farmers' for the services provided was also assessed.

The farmer's satisfaction measured through index prepared by Kumaran and Vijayaragavan (2005) after necessary modification. There were total 5 statements which had been scored on five point continuum *viz*., strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). The possible highest score could be obtain on this was 25 and lowest 5. The responses were summed up to get satisfaction score. The satisfaction index was calculated with the help of following formula.

$$\text{Farmers satisfaction index} = \frac{\text{Individual score obtained}}{\text{Maximum score}} \times 100$$

Based on satisfaction index, the respondents were classified into three categories namely low, medium and high level by dividing the score into three classes of equal interval.

Results and Discussion

The effectiveness of input delivery system evaluated in term of availability of inputs, accessibility of inputs, quality, timeliness of inputs supply, and cost of inputs. The responses of 150 member farmers of Kurel Kisan Producer Company Limited (KKPCL) were analyzed and presented in Table 1. It was observed from the results that majority of respondents reported that KKPCL ensured high availability of inputs to its member farmers. The inputs were found to be high in accessibility by 77.33 % of farmers. In case of quality of inputs, it was found to be high by 76.00 % of farmers. As per farmers response about timeliness of input delivery was found to be high to nearly 50 % of farmers. The cost of inputs was perceived as low to majority of farmers as compared to the local market of the same inputs. In inputs delivery, the availability and accessibility of inputs were high in Kurel Kisan Producer Company Limited (KKPCL) denoting the effectiveness in delivery mechanism especially supply of inputs of all crops growing seasons and delivering through the different spokes. Similar finding were also reported in earlier studies by Venkattakumar and Sontakki (2012), Singh and Singh (2014), NABARD (2015) and Venkattakumar *et al*. (2017).

Table 1. Effectiveness of Inputs Delivery (N=150)

Response category	Availability		Accessibility		Quality		Timeliness		Low Cost	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Low	17	11.33	4	2.67	2	1.33	24	16.00	39	26.00
Medium	50	33.33	30	20.00	34	22.67	52	34.67	51	34.00
High	83	55.33	116	77.33	114	76.00	74	49.33	60	40.00

The delivery of different services like crop advisory services, services to farm machinery, entrepreneurial services, communication services, diagnostic services etc. of Kurel Kisan Producer Company Limited (KKPCL) was further examined under availability, accessibility and problem solving in nature. The results are depicted in Table 2.

Table 2. Effectiveness of Delivery of Services (N=150)

Response category	Availability		Accessibility		Problem solving	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Low	30	20.00	14	9.33	35	23.33
Medium	73	48.67	53	35.33	53	35.33
High	47	31.33	83	55.33	62	41.33

Table 2 presented the services rendered by Kurel Kisan Producer Company Limited (KKPCL) were found to be high (31.33 %) to medium (48.67 %) in availability. Accessibility of services was found to be high by majority of farmers (55.33 %). In case of problem solving nature of services were found to be high by maximum number of farmers. Provision of different services to the farmers is one of the mandates of KKPCL. These shows the organization is efficient in delivering the services to farmers. Findings are inline with that of Murray (2009), Singh (2012) and Venkattakumar *et al*. (2017).

The extent of satisfaction level of respondent farmers over services provided by KKPCL was measured by Client Satisfaction Index (CSI) and results presented in Table 3. It was observed from Table 3 that majority of the respondent farmers expressed high (44.66 %) to the medium (36.00 %) level of satisfaction regarding the services provided by KKPCL. Whereas, very few (19.33) percent of respondents expressed lower level of satisfaction. The high to medium level of satisfaction with respect to performance of variety indicate stronger conviction that in turn it would lead to higher adoption.

Table 3. Extent of farmers satisfaction **(**N=150**)**

Satisfaction level	**Satisfaction index class**	**Number**	**Per cent**
High	5.00 -11.67	67	44.66
Medium	11.68-18.33	54	36.00
Low	18.34-25.00	29	19.33

Conclusion

The *KKPCL* initiative provide inputs, services, which is better in accessibility, quality and timeliness to the farmers. The constant advisory support in addition leads to better adoption of technologies which further leads to increase in yield and income and ultimately satisfaction of the farmers. The study has inquired each and every level, denoting the effectiveness of the farmer producers organization.

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