

Role of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in Enhancing Income and Livelihood Security of Mango Growers in Uttar Pradesh

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Abstract

Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) have emerged as one of the most important institutional mechanisms for improving the socio-economic condition of small and marginal farmers in India. In Uttar Pradesh, especially in mango-growing regions such as Malihabad in Lucknow district, FPOs play a significant role in strengthening collective marketing, improving bargaining power, enhancing adoption of improved agricultural technologies, and ensuring better market access. The present review paper synthesizes available literature and findings related to the functioning of FPOs and their impact on mango growers. The review highlights the contribution of FPOs in reducing input costs, improving productivity, increasing income, promoting value addition, and generating employment opportunities. The paper also discusses major constraints faced by FPOs, including poor infrastructure, weak financial support, inadequate managerial skills, and low awareness among farmers. Finally, suitable policy recommendations and strategies are proposed to strengthen FPOs for sustainable agricultural and rural development.

Keywords

Farmer Producer Organization, Mango Growers, Livelihood Security, Agricultural Extension, Collective Marketing, Uttar Pradesh, Rural Development.

1. Introduction

Agriculture has always occupied a central position in the Indian economy and continues to provide livelihood opportunities to a large proportion of the rural population. Even in the modern era of industrialization and technological advancement, agriculture remains one of the most important sectors contributing to food security, employment generation, poverty reduction, and rural development. The majority of Indian farmers belong to the small and marginal category and often face numerous socio-economic and institutional challenges such as fragmented landholdings, low productivity, inadequate irrigation facilities, rising cost of cultivation, fluctuating market prices, exploitation by middlemen, and poor

access to institutional credit. These challenges significantly affect the profitability and sustainability of farming systems and reduce the overall standard of living of farming communities.

In recent decades, the Government of India and various development agencies have recognized the need for collective institutional mechanisms that can strengthen the economic position of farmers and improve their participation in agricultural markets. Farmer Producer Organizations have emerged as one of the most effective institutional innovations in this regard. FPOs are farmer-owned organizations formed with the objective of enhancing production, improving marketing efficiency, reducing transaction costs, and increasing farmer

income through collective action. These organizations enable farmers to work together for procurement of inputs, adoption of improved technologies, value addition, storage, transportation, processing, and marketing of agricultural produce. The collective approach not only strengthens the bargaining power of farmers but also helps them access technical guidance, institutional finance, and market intelligence.

In the state of Uttar Pradesh, horticulture plays an important role in agricultural diversification and rural income generation. Among horticultural crops, mango occupies a prominent position due to its commercial importance, export potential, nutritional value, and employment-generating capacity. The Malihabad region of Lucknow district is internationally recognized for the cultivation of high-quality Dashehari mangoes and has earned a distinct identity in both domestic and international markets. Mango cultivation supports thousands of farming families and contributes significantly to the rural economy of the region. However, mango growers continue to face several challenges related to pest and disease management, post-harvest losses, inadequate cold storage facilities, poor transportation infrastructure, unstable market prices, and dependence on intermediaries.

Under such circumstances, Farmer Producer Organizations can play a transformative role in strengthening mango-based farming systems. Through collective marketing and value-chain development, FPOs can help mango growers receive better prices, reduce post-harvest losses, and improve access to modern technologies and export markets.

They also encourage capacity building, farmer training, entrepreneurship development, and rural employment generation. In addition, FPOs facilitate stronger coordination among farmers, government agencies, research institutions, banks, and private stakeholders.

The importance of FPOs has increased further due to government initiatives aimed at promoting farmer collectivization and strengthening agricultural marketing systems in India. Institutions such as the Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, and National Cooperative Development Corporation have been actively involved in supporting the formation and promotion of FPOs across the country. The Government of India has also launched a central sector scheme for the formation and promotion of ten thousand FPOs with the objective of enhancing farmer income and achieving sustainable agricultural development.

Therefore, the present review paper attempts to critically analyze the role of Farmer Producer Organizations in improving the socio-economic condition and livelihood security of mango growers. The paper also reviews the importance of extension education, technology dissemination, collective marketing, value addition, and institutional support in promoting sustainable horticultural development and strengthening rural livelihoods. Despite technological advancements, Indian farmers continue to face several challenges such as fragmented landholdings, low productivity, fluctuating market prices, inadequate access

to institutional credit, poor extension services, and weak market linkages. Small and marginal farmers are particularly vulnerable due to their limited resources and low bargaining power.

Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) have emerged as a promising institutional innovation to address these challenges. FPOs are farmer-owned and farmer-managed organizations that collectively undertake production, procurement, processing, marketing, and other agricultural activities for the benefit of member farmers. These organizations help farmers achieve economies of scale, improve access to inputs and technologies, and obtain better market prices.

In Uttar Pradesh, mango cultivation is an important horticultural enterprise. The Malihabad region of Lucknow district is internationally known for Dashehari mango production. Mango growers in the region often face issues related to market fluctuations, high input costs, lack of storage facilities, post-harvest losses, and exploitation by middlemen. FPOs can play a crucial role in overcoming these constraints by promoting collective action and market integration.

The Government of India has also emphasized the promotion of FPOs under various schemes and programs. Organizations such as Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC), NABARD, and National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) are actively supporting the formation and strengthening of FPOs across the country.

This review paper attempts to analyze the role of FPOs in improving the income and livelihood security of mango growers with special reference to Uttar Pradesh.

2. Concept and Meaning of Farmer Producer Organizations

FPO is a generic term used to describe an organization formed by farmers for the benefit of farmers. It is based on the principle of collectivization where farmers come together to address common problems related to production, processing, and marketing.

An FPO can be registered under different legal structures such as: Producer Company, Cooperative Society, Self Help Group Federation, Trust or Society

The primary objectives of FPOs include: Increasing farmers' bargaining power, Reducing cost of cultivation, Improving access to quality inputs, Facilitating access to institutional credit Strengthening market linkages, Promoting value addition and processing, Enhancing income and livelihood security

FPOs operate on the principle of mutual assistance and democratic participation. Farmers collectively purchase inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and machinery at lower prices and market their produce collectively to obtain better returns.

3. Importance of Mango Cultivation in Uttar Pradesh

Mango is one of the most important tropical fruits cultivated in India. Uttar Pradesh is the leading mango-producing state in the country. The Malihabad region of Lucknow district is popularly known as the “Land of Dashehari Mango.”

Major mango varieties cultivated in Uttar Pradesh include: Dashehari, Langra, Chausa Lucknow Safeda, Mallika, Amrapali

Mango cultivation contributes significantly to: Rural employment generation, Export earnings

Nutritional security, Agro-based industrial development

However, mango growers face several problems such as: High post-harvest losses, Price instability, Inadequate cold storage facilities, Dependence on middlemen, Lack of grading and packaging facilities, Poor transportation infrastructure. FPOs can help address these issues through collective marketing and value chain development.

4. Socio-Economic Profile of Mango Growers

Studies conducted in Lucknow district indicate that the majority of mango growers belong to the middle-age group and possess medium-sized families. Most farmers are literate and depend primarily on agriculture as their main occupation.

Important characteristics observed among mango growers include: Majority belong to Other Backward Classes (OBC), Small landholdings dominate the region, Medium annual income category is most common,

Joint family system is prevalent, Farmers possess moderate levels of scientific orientation and risk orientation. These socio-economic characteristics influence the adoption behavior and participation of farmers in FPO activities.

5. Role of FPOs in Improving Farmer Income

FPOs improve farmer income through multiple mechanisms:

5.1 Collective Procurement of Inputs

FPOs procure seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and farm equipment in bulk quantities at wholesale prices. This reduces the cost of cultivation.

5.2 Collective Marketing

By aggregating produce, FPOs increase bargaining power and enable farmers to sell directly to wholesalers, retailers, exporters, and processors.

5.3 Access to Market Information

FPOs provide timely information related to: Market prices, Demand trends, Export opportunities

Quality standards. This helps farmers make informed decisions.

5.4 Adoption of Improved Technologies

FPOs organize training programs and demonstrations to promote scientific cultivation practices.

5.5 Value Addition and Processing

FPOs facilitate cleaning, grading, packaging, storage, and processing of mangoes which increases product value and farmer income.

5.6 Employment Generation

FPOs create employment opportunities for rural youth as: FPO staff, Field coordinators, Extension workers, Processing unit workers

6. Impact of FPOs on Adoption of Improved Mango Production Technologies

Studies reveal that FPO members exhibit higher adoption levels of improved mango cultivation practices. Technologies adopted include: High yielding varieties, Scientific pruning and training Plant protection measures, Irrigation management, Intercropping and weed control

Post-harvest management, Storage technologies, Training and extension services provided through FPOs improve awareness and adoption behavior among farmers.

7. Extension Contact and Information Sources

Extension contact plays an important role in agricultural development. Farmers obtain information through:

Formal Sources like Gram Pradhan, Kisan Sahayak, Agricultural Officers, Agricultural Universities, Cooperative Societies

Informal Sources like Family members, Friends, Neighbors, Progressive farmers

Mass Media Sources like Television, Mobile phones, Newspapers, Radio, Internet

Mobile phones and television are the most commonly used communication media among mango growers.

8. Constraints Faced by FPOs

Although Farmer Producer Organizations have emerged as an effective institutional mechanism for improving the socio-economic condition of farmers, they continue to face several operational, managerial, financial, and infrastructural challenges. Many FPOs remain in the early stages of development and struggle to achieve long-term sustainability due to inadequate institutional support and limited managerial capacity. Financial constraints are among the most serious problems affecting FPOs, as many organizations lack working capital and face difficulties in obtaining institutional credit from banks and financial agencies. Inadequate infrastructure such as storage facilities, transportation systems, cold chains, and processing units further limits their operational efficiency. In addition, lack of awareness among farmers regarding the benefits and functioning of

FPOs reduces active participation and collective action.

Another major challenge is the shortage of professionally trained personnel capable of managing business operations, maintaining records, and developing market linkages. Many FPOs also face difficulties related to policy implementation, weak coordination among stakeholders, political interference, and market fluctuations. The absence of strong branding, grading, packaging, and export support further affects profitability. Despite these challenges, FPOs continue to demonstrate tremendous potential for transforming Indian agriculture if adequate institutional, technical, and financial support is provided. Despite their importance, FPOs face several operational and institutional challenges:

8.1 Financial Constraints

Limited access to institutional credit, Insufficient working capital, Delayed financial support

8.2 Managerial Constraints

Lack of professional management, Inadequate technical expertise, Poor leadership skills

8.3 Infrastructure Constraints

Inadequate storage facilities, Lack of transportation infrastructure, Poor processing facilities

8.4 Marketing Constraints

Price fluctuations, Dominance of middlemen, Weak market linkages

8.5 Awareness Constraints

Lack of awareness among farmers regarding FPO benefits, Poor communication between management and members

9. Suggestions for Strengthening FPOs

The following measures may strengthen the functioning of FPOs:

Extensive awareness campaigns among farmers, Capacity building and training programs, Financial assistance from government and banks, Development of storage and processing infrastructure, Digital marketing and e-commerce support, Promotion of export-oriented production, Strengthening extension services and Encouraging women and youth participation

10. Conclusion

Farmer Producer Organizations have emerged as one of the most important institutional mechanisms for empowering small and marginal farmers in India and promoting inclusive agricultural development. The review clearly indicates that FPOs play a highly significant role in strengthening the economic and social condition of farming communities by encouraging collective action and improving access to agricultural services, markets, technologies, and institutional support systems. In mango-growing regions such as Malihabad in Uttar Pradesh, FPOs have

contributed substantially towards improving production efficiency, reducing the cost of cultivation, increasing access to quality inputs, and strengthening marketing opportunities for farmers.

The collective functioning of FPOs has enabled farmers to overcome many of the traditional constraints associated with individual farming systems. Through collective procurement of seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and agricultural machinery, farmers are able to reduce input costs and improve production efficiency. Similarly, collective marketing has helped farmers increase their bargaining power and reduce their dependence on middlemen and commission agents. This has resulted in better price realization and increased profitability for mango growers. FPOs have also facilitated value addition through grading, packaging, processing, branding, and storage activities, thereby enhancing the market value of agricultural produce.

Another important contribution of FPOs lies in promoting the adoption of improved agricultural technologies and scientific cultivation practices. Through training programs, demonstrations, exposure visits, and extension services, FPOs help farmers acquire technical knowledge related to irrigation management, integrated pest management, nutrient management, post-harvest handling, and orchard management practices. Such interventions improve productivity, fruit quality, and sustainability of mango cultivation systems.

The review further highlights that socio-economic factors such as education,

extension contact, social participation, economic motivation, and scientific orientation significantly influence the participation and adoption behavior of farmers. Farmers who possess better access to information and institutional support are more likely to adopt improved technologies and actively participate in FPO activities. Therefore, strengthening extension education and communication systems is essential for improving the effectiveness of FPOs.

Despite their achievements, many FPOs continue to face challenges related to inadequate finance, weak infrastructure, poor managerial capacity, lack of professional leadership, limited market linkages, and insufficient awareness among farmers. These constraints often affect the long-term sustainability and operational efficiency of producer organizations. Therefore, there is a strong need for coordinated efforts involving government agencies, financial institutions, research organizations, extension systems, private stakeholders, and civil society organizations to strengthen the institutional capacity of FPOs.

Greater emphasis should be placed on capacity building, digital agriculture, infrastructure development, market intelligence systems, export promotion, and agro-processing industries. The promotion of women-led and youth-led FPOs can further enhance rural entrepreneurship and employment opportunities. In addition, policy support and institutional reforms are necessary to ensure better access to

institutional finance, market infrastructure, and technical services.

In conclusion, Farmer Producer Organizations possess enormous potential to transform Indian agriculture and improve the livelihoods of farming communities. If properly managed and adequately supported, FPOs can become powerful instruments for achieving agricultural sustainability, food security, rural employment generation, and socio-economic development in India. Their role will become increasingly important in the future as Indian agriculture moves towards commercialization, value-chain integration, and market-oriented production systems. In mango-growing regions of Uttar Pradesh, FPOs have contributed significantly to improved income, better adoption of technologies, enhanced bargaining power, and increased market participation.

However, the sustainability and effectiveness of FPOs depend on continuous institutional support, professional management, financial strengthening, and strong market integration. Greater emphasis should be placed on capacity building, infrastructure development, digital extension, and policy support to ensure the long-term success of FPOs.

FPOs can become a powerful instrument for achieving inclusive agricultural growth, rural employment generation, and livelihood security in India.

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