

## Services provided by the vegetable producers' organisations to their members

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### ABSTRACT

In the competitive and unstable environment it is necessary to facilitate small and marginal farmers by providing access to the markets, technical know- how, critical inputs, consultancy etc. One of the important objectives of Farmer producers' organization was to provide wide range of services to the member farmers and make them active partners of business activities. An attempt was made to study the services provided by the organization to their members. Three tahsils from Pune district and total eleven FPOs engaged in production and marketing of vegetables were purposively selected for the study. From selected VPOs, ten per cent respondents were randomly selected constituting sample of 200 members. The list of services was prepared and respondents were asked to tick mark against the availed items. Total number of tick marked items was the service score of an individual. The respondents were classified in three categories based on mean and standard deviation. Also service wise total number and frequency of respondents was worked out. The results of study revealed that majority (80.00 per cent) of the respondents received low to medium extent of services through the organization viz., participating in krishimela was, exposure visits, field trips 984.00 per cent), received timely payment after sale of produce (82.00 per cent), latest agricultural information (76.00 per cent), technical guidance (75.00 per cent), better profit margin (72.00 per cent). Only 18.00 per cent and 10.00 per cent members received credit and financial support through organization. There is a need to develop linkage with other stakeholders to provide wide range of services to the members.

**Key words:** Stakeholders, linkage

The future of sustainable agriculture growth and food security in India depends on the performance of small and marginal farmers. Limited investment capacity of these small farms is also an area of great concern. Limited access to critical inputs such as quality seeds, fertilizers, irrigation water, power and credit has created a hugely disabling ecosystem for the small farms. Taking into consideration these facts, Farmer producers' organizations were started with one of the important objectives to provide wide range of services viz., supply of seeds, fertilizers, plant

protection chemicals, farm machinery, technical guidance, consultancy, policy advocacy, insurance, credit etc. Need of agricultural information, technical guidance is the basic necessity of the farmers, as it plays a pivotal role in enlightening them, raising their level of knowledge. An attempt was made to study the various services provided by the farmer producers' organisations to their members.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

In present study, multistage sampling procedure was followed for selection of study area. Pune district from western Maharashtra was purposively selected based on maximum number of FPOs in first stage. Considering area

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FPO: Farmer Producers Organization; VPO: Vegetable Producers Organization

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under vegetable and number of FPOs working in vegetable production and marketing, three talukas viz., *Khed, Junner and Purander* of Pune district were selected in second stage. Based on maximum number of members and organizations which are engaged in vegetable production were selected in third stage and renamed as Vegetable Producers' Organisations (VPOs) under study. Thus total eleven VPOs were purposively selected and 10 per cent of sample was drawn from each selected VPO by proportionate sampling method comprising total 200 respondents.

The list of various services expected to be provided to the member was prepared and respondents were asked to tick mark the items which they availed. Total number of tick marked items was the service score of an individual. On the basis of service score, mean and standard deviation were worked out and respondents were classified in three categories viz., low, medium and high based on mean  $\pm$  standard deviation. Also service wise total number and frequency of respondents was worked out.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data presented in Table 1 regarding services provided by the organization to their members stated that overwhelming majority (84.00 %) of the respondents had facilitated for participating in krishimelawas, exposure visits, field trips organized by agriculture department. Similar findings were observed by Patil (2014).

Also majority (82.00 %) of the members received timely payment after sale of produce through organization. Three fourth of the members stated that they were getting latest agricultural information (76.00 %), guidance on crop planning, plant protection, grading, packaging (75.00 %) and received better profit margin through collective sale (72.00 %).

Two third opined that they had received timely and good quality inputs (66.00 %), acquired skills on processing, seed production (67.00 %), consultancy services viz., weather forecasting, pest disease outbreak (66.00 %), storage, grading, packaging services (64.00 %) through organization. Similar findings were reported by Chandrashekhara *et al.*, (2007), Prabhakar *et al.*, (2010<sup>b</sup>) and Patil (2014).

Table 1 Distribution of the members as per the services provided by the Vegetable Producers' Organisations (n=200)

| Sr. No. | Type and quality of services                                           | Frequency | Percent |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| A       | Input supply                                                           |           |         |
| i       | Timely supply of agricultural inputs                                   | 136       | 68.00   |
| ii      | Provide good quality inputs at reasonable price                        | 132       | 66.00   |
| iii     | Regular input supply as per farmers demand                             | 110       | 55.00   |
| B       | Marketing of produce                                                   |           |         |
| i       | Provides grading, transportation and storage facilities to the members | 128       | 64.00   |
| ii      | Provides better profit margin through collective sale                  | 142       | 72.00   |
| iii     | Timely payment to the members after sale of produce                    | 164       | 82.00   |
| C       | Credit supply                                                          |           |         |
| i       | Facilitate for preparing loan proposals                                | 108       | 54.00   |
| ii      | Provide timely subsidies                                               | 52        | 26.00   |
| iii     | Facilitate the members to get credit in time                           | 40        | 20.00   |
| D       | Consultancy services                                                   |           |         |
| i       | Provides latest agricultural and technical knowledge to the members    | 158       | 76.00   |

|     |                                                                                                                         |     |       |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| ii  | Provides information about weather forecasting, pest outbreak, market prices etc.                                       | 132 | 66.00 |
| iii | Provides guidance on crop planning, plant protection, grading, packaging, standardization and marketing of produce etc. | 150 | 75.00 |
| E   | HRD services                                                                                                            |     |       |
| i   | Imparts need based training to the members                                                                              | 96  | 48.00 |
| ii  | Imparts skills on processing of produce, quality seed production                                                        | 134 | 67.00 |
| iii | Facilitates the participation of members in krishimelawas, exposure visits ,field trips etc.                            | 168 | 84.00 |
| F   | Other welfare services                                                                                                  |     |       |
| i   | Financial support to the members for domestic reason (marriage, higher education etc.)                                  | 36  | 18.00 |

More than half reported that producer organisation was facilitating the members for taking loan (55.00 per cent) and providing inputs on regular basis (54.00 per cent) to the members.

Similar findings were reported by Prabhakar *et al.*, (2010<sup>b</sup>) and Patil (2014).

On the contrary only 18.00 per cent and 10.00 per cent members received credit through organization and financial support for domestic reason respectively. This could be due to that farmers organizations might not having enough share capital to provide loan to the members, also might not taking financial risk as they are in developing stage.

Table 2 Distribution of the members according to their extent of services provided by the Vegetable Producers' Organisations (n=200)

| Sr. No. | Extent of services provided | Frequency | Percent |
|---------|-----------------------------|-----------|---------|
| 1       | Low (Below 7 score)         | 48        | 24.00   |
| 2       | Medium (7 to 12 score)      | 112       | 56.00   |
| 3       | High (Above 12 score)       | 40        | 20.00   |
|         | Total                       | 200       | 100.00  |

$\bar{X}=9.41$

S.D. = 2.19

The data from Table 2 revealed that 56.00 per cent of the respondents received the medium extent of services, followed by one-fourth (24.00 %) and two fifth (20.00 %) of the respondents who received low and high extent of services by the farmers organization, respectively. It can be concluded that majority (80.00 %) of the respondents received low to medium extent of services through their organization.

## CONCLUSION

Study further can be concluded that organizations were providing services to the members in limited areas. There is lot of scope to diversify the activities and facilitate the members by linking with other stakeholders. Producers' organizations can expand the business so as to provide credit, subsidies and financial assistance to the members through developing linkage with banks, insurance company.

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