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Exploring socio-economic determinants and attitude of member farmers towards farmer producing company in Latur, Maharashtra

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Abstract
This study investigated the socio-economic characteristics, attitudes, and challenges of 100 Farmer Producer Company (FPC) members in the Latur district of Maharashtra, India, using a descriptive research design. A structured interview schedule was used to collect primary data, supplemented by secondary sources. The findings reveal that a majority of the FPC members are middle-aged, male, and marginal or small landholders with moderate educational backgrounds. They were primarily motivated to join by access to inputs, operational transparency, and market information, with strong influence from peer networks. However, the study uncovered significant member dissatisfaction with internal governance, including a perceived lack of equality among members and minimal participation in decision-making. The key challenges faced by farmers were inefficient monitoring, inadequate technical guidance, and a concentration of responsibilities among a few members. Furthermore, critical areas like training, infrastructure, and value addition were found to be low-ranked motivators, indicating a gap between members' expectations and the services provided. Based on these findings, the study suggests that to strengthen FPCs, there is a crucial need to improve governance by implementing transparent monitoring systems, empowering members through decentralized decision-making, and providing training for the Board of Directors. It also recommends prioritizing comprehensive training programs, investing in shared infrastructure, and improving financial access to enhance the overall value proposition and long-term sustainability of FPCs for their members.

Keywords: Farmer producer companies (FPCs), socio-economic profile, attitude, constraints

Introduction
In India's agrarian economy, small and marginal farmers often face significant challenges, including limited market access, lack of quality inputs, and inadequate financial resources. Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) have emerged as a promising institutional innovation designed to address these systemic issues by enabling collective action, enhancing bargaining power, and fostering a more business-oriented approach to farming. While FPCs are increasingly recognized for their potential to improve farmer livelihoods, a deeper understanding of the factors influencing their effectiveness from the farmers' perspective is crucial. This study, conducted in the Latur district of Maharashtra, aims to explore the socio-economic determinants of FPC membership, assess the attitudes and perceptions of member farmers towards their FPCs, and identify the key constraints they encounter in engaging with these organizations. By analyzing these aspects, this research seeks to provide valuable insights for strengthening FPCs and ensuring their sustainable impact on rural agricultural communities. The objectives of the study are.

1. To analyze the socio-economic characteristics of member farmers associated with Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs).
2. To assess the attitude and perception of member farmers towards the functioning and benefits of FPCs.
3. To identify the key constraints and challenges faced by member farmers in engaging with FPC activities and services.

Research Methodology

Participants

The study included a purposive sample of 100 member farmers associated with Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs). A non-probability sampling method was used to select participants who were actively engaged as FPC members. The participants were drawn from four selected villages within the Latur district of Maharashtra, which served as the study's geographical area. This approach was chosen to ensure that the sample was relevant to the research objectives of understanding the perspectives of FPC members.

Measures

The primary data was collected using a pre-tested, structured interview schedule. This instrument was designed to gather both quantitative and qualitative information related to the study's objectives. It contained sections to elicit detailed responses on the socio-economic characteristics of the farmers, their attitudes and perceptions regarding FPC functioning, and the constraints they faced. The collected data was analyzed using tabular analysis techniques, including frequency distribution, percentages, averages, mean scores, and rating scales to interpret the responses. Secondary data was also gathered from various credible sources, such as published literature, research journals, government reports, and company websites, to provide contextual and background information.

Procedure

A descriptive research design was adopted to accurately capture and interpret the current status and characteristics of the target population. The study was conducted using a survey method, where the structured interview schedule was administered to the selected farmers. The interviews were conducted to ensure uniformity in data collection and to facilitate a comprehensive analysis of the farmers' perspectives. The collected data was then compiled and subjected to statistical analysis to derive findings and conclusions based on the research objectives.

Table 1: Socio-economic and personal characteristics of the member farmers of FPCs

Gender of Respondents		
Gender	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Male	77	77.00
Female	23	23.00
Total	100	100
Age of Respondents (years)		
Age Group (in Years)	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Below 30	10	10.00
31-40	30	30.00
41-50	42	42.00
51-60	13	13.00
Above 60	5	5.00
Total	100	100
Education of Respondents		
Education Level	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Illiterate	24	24.00
Primary	28	28.00
SSC	31	31.00
HSC	11	11.00
Graduation	6	6.00
Total	100	100
Landholding Size		
Land Holding Size	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Marginal (<1 ha)	56	56.00
Small (1-2 ha)	37	37.00
Large (>2 ha)	7	7.00
Total	100	100
Household size		
Household size	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Small (< 4)	19	19.00
Medium (5-6)	48	48.00
Large (> 6)	19	19.00
Total	100	100
Monthly Income		
Monthly Income	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
20,000-50,000	30	30.00
50,000-1,00,000	38	38.00
1,00,000-2,00,000	23	23.00
More than 2,00,000	9	9.00
Total	100	100
Occupation		
Occupation	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Only Agriculture	48	48.00
Agri+Animal husbandry	32	32.00
Agri+Service	11	11.00
Agri+business	9	9.00
Total	100	100

Family Type		
Types of Family	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Joint	72	72.00
Nuclear	28	28.00
Total	100	100
Motivation source for joining FPCs		
Motivation source	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
NGO's	12	12.00
Another member of FPCs	47	47.00
Relatives/Neighbors	41	41.00
Total	100	100
Duration of FPC Membership (Year)		
FPC Membership	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
< 1 Year	22	22.00
1-2 year	26	26.00
2-3 year	52	52.00
Total	100	100
Participation of members in FPC meetings		
Participation of members	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Always	21	21.00
Often	25	25.00
Sometime	30	30.00
Rarely	14	14.00
Never	10	10.00
Total	100	100

Table 1 depicts the analysis of the socio-economic and personal characteristics of the member farmers of Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) reveals several key demographic patterns. A majority of the respondents were male (77%), indicating the predominance of male participation in FPCs. This aligns with the findings of Singh *et al*. (2020) [21], who noted that male dominance in farming activities remains high in rural India due to traditional gender roles and land ownership patterns. In terms of age distribution, the largest proportion of farmers (42%) fell within the 41-50 years age bracket, followed by 30% in the 31-40 years range. This suggests that middle-aged individuals are more actively involved in FPC-related activities, possibly due to greater farming experience and decision-making authority within households (Sharma & Saini, 2021) [19]. Regarding educational background, the respondents were predominantly educated up to SSC level (31%) and primary education (28%), while 24% were illiterate. Limited access to higher education among rural farmers has been consistently reported in similar studies (Patil & Waghmare, 2018) [15], which emphasized the need for literacy-driven awareness programs to enhance FPC participation. The landholding data shows that a significant portion of farmers were marginal (56%) or smallholders (37%), which is consistent with national agricultural statistics. These groups often struggle with market access and economies of scale, making FPC membership particularly crucial for them (Narayanan, 2014) [13]. The household size was mostly medium (48%), with smaller and larger households comprising 19% each. Medium-sized families often provide the required labor for farming and may influence the collective nature of decision-making in joining FPCs (Meena *et al*., 2019) [11]. The monthly income profile indicated that most farmers earned between ₹50,000-1,00,000 (38%), followed by 30% earning ₹20,000-50,000. This suggests moderate income levels, which might reflect semi-commercial or diversified farming operations among the members. This income bracket supports earlier findings by Rathod *et al*. (2021) [17], who emphasized the role of FPCs in enhancing income security for smallholder farmers. In terms of occupational engagement, 48% of the respondents relied solely on agriculture, while others combined it with animal husbandry (32%), services (11%), or agribusiness (9%). This occupational diversity suggests that FPCs attract members with varying degrees of farm-based and non-farm income sources, increasing their resilience (Kumar *et al*., 2022) [8].

The study also found that 72% of farmers belonged to joint families, which traditionally support collective decision-making and risk-sharing, possibly encouraging participation in community-based initiatives like FPCs (Deshmukh & Gaikwad, 2020). When examining the motivational sources for joining FPCs, 47% were influenced by existing members, and 41% by relatives or neighbors, highlighting the role of peer networks and social capital in member mobilization. Similar patterns have been observed by Banasode and Biradar (2020) [1], who stressed the influence of community-based trust and word-of-mouth in cooperative institutions. The duration of membership showed that more than half (52%) of the respondents had been members for 2-3 years, indicating that many farmers had adequate exposure to the functioning of FPCs and could provide informed responses. Lastly, regarding participation in FPC meetings, 30% attended sometimes, followed by 25% who participated often, and 21% who always attended. This indicates moderate engagement levels, which may affect the overall functioning and governance of the FPC. Studies like Joshi and Singh (2018) [7] emphasized that regular participation is crucial for improving transparency, trust, and collective action among FPC members.

Table 2: Reasons for joining as FPC member (n=100)

Reasons	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	C.S.	Mean	Rank
Better price realization	23 (115)	28 (112)	40 (120)	6 (12)	3 (3)	362	3.62	VI
Effective management	30 (150)	35 (180)	25 (60)	4 (8)	1 (1)	399	3.99	IV
Good services provided	10 (50)	36 (144)	48 (144)	4 (8)	2 (2)	348	3.48	VII
Market information	45 (225)	33 (132)	10 (30)	6 (12)	6 (6)	405	4.05	III
Transparency in operation	48 (240)	30 (120)	14 (42)	6 (12)	2 (2)	416	4.16	II
Access to inputs	34 (170)	46 (184)	15 (45)	5 (10)	1 (0)	439	4.39	I
Training provided	10 (50)	12 (48)	42 (126)	32 (64)	4 (4)	296	2.96	X
Market Access	38 (190)	23 (92)	20 (60)	11 (22)	8 (8)	372	3.72	V
Better infrastructure facilities	15 (75)	35 (140)	25 (75)	18 (36)	7 (7)	333	3.33	VIII
Providing value addition and processing facilities	16 (80)	38 (152)	19 (57)	15 (30)	12 (12)	331	3.31	IX

Table 2 presents insights into the motivating factors that influenced farmers to join Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs), based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" (5) to "Strongly Disagree" (1). The responses were analyzed using cumulative scores (C.S.), mean values, and ranks. The most compelling reason for membership, as reflected by the highest mean score of 4.39, was "Access to inputs." This indicates that farmers value the FPC's ability to ensure timely availability of agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides—often at reasonable prices. This finding is in line with studies by Rondhi *et al*. (2018) and Patil and Waghmare (2018) [15], which suggest that FPCs reduce input costs through collective procurement, thus addressing a critical constraint for small and marginal farmers. The second most important factor was "Transparency in operation" (mean = 4.16), highlighting farmers' appreciation for clear communication, accountability, and democratic decision-making processes within FPCs. Similar findings were reported by Narayanan (2014) [13], who emphasized that the participatory governance model of FPCs builds trust among members and enhances their engagement. The third-ranked factor, with a mean score of 4.05, was "Market information," suggesting that farmers value the information support FPCs offer regarding market prices, trends, and buyer demand. This is supported by Kumar *et al*. (2022) [9], who found that real-time market data enables better decision-making and improves bargaining power for FPC members. "Effective management" ranked fourth (mean = 3.99), indicating that efficient leadership, coordination, and administration within the FPC are recognized as key contributors to its success. Studies by Banasode and Biradar (2020) [1] have similarly underlined the importance of managerial competency in sustaining FPC operations and delivering member benefits. "Market access" was ranked fifth (mean = 3.72), reflecting the role of FPCs in creating direct linkages between farmers and markets, thereby reducing dependency on middlemen. This finding resonates with Sharma and Saini (2021) [19], who noted that improved market access through FPCs leads to higher income stability and better price realization. Interestingly, "Better price realization" was only ranked sixth (mean = 3.62), suggesting that while price benefits are important, they are not the sole or primary factor for membership. This contrasts with earlier assumptions that farmers primarily join FPCs to fetch better prices. This nuance reflects a broader understanding of FPCs as multi-functional institutions offering holistic benefits (Singh *et al*., 2020) [21]. "Good services provided" ranked seventh (mean = 3.48), pointing to moderate satisfaction with general support services such as credit facilitation, logistics, or training. It highlights a potential area for improvement. "Better infrastructure facilities" and "Value addition and processing facilities" were ranked eighth (3.33) and ninth (3.31) respectively. These relatively lower scores may indicate either limited availability of such services or low awareness among members. According to Meena *et al*. (2019) [11], inadequate physical infrastructure and underutilization of processing units are persistent challenges in rural FPCs. Lastly, "Training provided" received the lowest mean score of 2.96, suggesting dissatisfaction or lack of adequate capacity-building initiatives. This aligns with the observations of Rathod *et al*. (2021) [17], who emphasized the need for more structured training programs to enhance members' skills in agribusiness, value addition, and enterprise management. Overall, the results highlight that input access, transparency, and information support are the strongest drivers of FPC membership, whereas training and infrastructure remain under-addressed, presenting key areas for policy and operational improvement.

Table 3: Mass Media Exposure of FPC member farmers (n=100)

Mass Media	High (5)	Medium (3)	Low (1)	CS
Radio	34 (170)	68 (204)	48 (48)	422
Television	96 (480)	35 (105)	19 (19)	604
Newspaper	54 (270)	75 (225)	21 (21)	516
Farm Magazine	48 (240)	78 (234)	24 (24)	498
University Publication	19 (95)	51 (153)	80 (80)	328
Internet	76 (380)	56 (168)	18 (18)	566
Agricultural Exhibition	16 (80)	48 (144)	86 (86)	310

Table 3 reveals the extent of mass media exposure among member farmers of Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs), measured across various channels such as radio, television, newspapers, farm magazines, university publications, the internet, and agricultural exhibitions. Each medium is categorized based on the level of exposure: high (5), medium (3), and low (1), with cumulative scores (CS) used to rank their effectiveness and reach. The most prominent source of information for FPC members was television, with the highest cumulative score of 604. A substantial number of respondents (96%) reported high exposure to television, indicating it remains a dominant and accessible medium for disseminating agricultural information. This finding is consistent with Kumar *et al*. (2018) [8] and Meena *et al*. (2019) [11], who observed that television is widely trusted among rural farmers for market updates, weather forecasts, and best practices in agriculture. The internet followed closely with a CS of 566, suggesting that digital media is becoming an increasingly influential tool among farmers. With 76 respondents reporting high internet usage, the data shows a significant shift towards digital platforms for accessing agricultural knowledge. This aligns with Jha and Gupta (2021) [6], who noted the rising use of smartphones and internet-based applications among progressive farmers, particularly younger ones, for services such as price tracking, input purchase, and government schemes. Newspapers and farm magazines also showed strong

reach, with CS values of 516 and 498 respectively. These traditional print media remain effective tools, especially in areas where electricity and internet penetration may be limited. The importance of newspapers in disseminating local agricultural news and government policies has been previously reported by Rathod *et al*. (2021) [17]. Radio, once a primary medium for rural outreach, recorded a relatively lower CS of 422. While 34 respondents reported high exposure, 68 were in the medium category. This may reflect the decreasing influence of radio in the face of more engaging and interactive forms of media. However, it still plays a role, especially among older or less literate farmers, as highlighted by Patil and Waghmare (2018) [15]. University publications, such as bulletins and circulars from agricultural institutions, received a low CS of 328, with only 19 farmers reporting high exposure. This may be due to limited circulation or accessibility of such documents among grassroots farmers. Singh *et al*. (2020) [21] also noted that academic materials often fail to reach the farming community unless distributed through extension activities. The lowest exposure was reported for agricultural exhibitions (CS = 310), despite their potential for hands-on learning and live demonstrations. High logistical requirements, infrequent scheduling, or lack of awareness may contribute to their limited reach, a trend observed in the study by Banasode and Biradar (2020) [1]. Overall, the findings suggest a diverse media consumption pattern, with a clear dominance of television and internet, while traditional formats like newspapers and farm magazines continue to play a supportive role. The data also highlights the need for strengthening institutional communication tools like university publications and exhibitions to ensure wider and more effective dissemination of scientific knowledge.

Table 4: Statement-wise attitude of farmer producer organizations members towards the organization, (n=100)

Sr. No.	Statement	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	CS	Mean	Rank
1	FPCs help small and marginal farmers run their farms like a business. (+)	7 (35)	27 (108)	46 (138)	16 (32)	4 (4)	317	3.17	VI
2	In FPCs, bosses make decisions without asking farmers, which isn't fair. (-)	11 (11)	14 (28)	40 (120)	30 (120)	5 (35)	314	3.14	VIII
3	Farmers save time and money by working together in FPCs. (+)	10 (50)	30 (120)	48 (144)	10 (20)	2 (2)	356	3.56	V
4	FPCs give farmers useful information and support to grow more food. (+)	40 (200)	34 (136)	19 (57)	6 (12)	1 (1)	406	4.06	I
5	Lack of transparency in financial transactions of FPCs. (-)	12 (12)	7 (14)	12 (36)	38 (152)	369	3.69	III	369
6	Joining FPCs means farmers can sell their crops together and make better money. (+)	27 (135)	30 (120)	29 (87)	12 (24)	368	3.68	IV	368
7	The Board of Directors does not treat all the farmer members with equality. (-)	2 (2)	6 (12)	29 (87)	42 (168)	374	3.74	II	374
8	Very little or no role of members in decision making activities of FPCs. (-)	13 (13)	16 (32)	30 (90)	25 (100)	315	3.15	VII	315

Table 4 explores the attitude of member farmers towards various operational and structural aspects of Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs). The analysis is based on eight attitude statements rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The calculated cumulative scores (CS), mean scores, and ranks help in understanding members' perceptions both positively (+) and negatively (−) framed. The highest-ranked statement with a mean score of 4.06 was: *"FPCs give farmers useful information and support to grow more food."* This indicates that members recognize the advisory and informational role of FPCs in enhancing productivity. This finding is aligned with Rathod *et al*. (2021) [17] and Kumar *et al*. (2022) [9], who highlighted that well-functioning FPCs act as knowledge hubs by providing timely information on improved practices, weather forecasts, and schemes. The second-ranked attitude statement was negative: *"The Board of Directors does not treat all farmer members with equality,"* with a mean score of 3.74. This suggests that a significant proportion of members perceive inequality or favoritism in internal governance. Similar concerns were raised in studies by Narayanan (2014) [13] and Singh *et al*. (2020) [21], which noted that elite capture and lack of internal democracy can affect member trust and long-term sustainability of FPCs. Interestingly, the third-ranked statement was also negative: *"Lack of transparency in financial transactions of FPCs"*(mean = 3.69). This shows a critical perception gap, where members feel that financial dealings are not fully transparent. This is consistent with the findings of Meena *et al*. (2019) [11], who emphasized the importance of regular audits, open records, and participatory decision-making to build credibility. The fourth-ranked statement, *"Joining FPCs means farmers can sell their crops together and make better money,"* received a mean score of 3.68. This confirms a positive attitude towards collective marketing, which reduces middlemen dependence and enhances income. This aligns with Banasode and Biradar (2020) [1] and Sharma and Saini (2021) [19], who documented higher price realization through FPC-led aggregation. The fifth-ranked item was: *"Farmers save time and money by working together in FPCs"* (mean = 3.56), indicating that farmers see value in collective action and resource optimization. Collective input procurement, shared logistics, and joint marketing can significantly cut costs, as noted by Jha and Gupta (2021) [6]. The statement, *"FPCs help small and marginal farmers run their farms like a business,"* ranked sixth (mean = 3.17), suggesting a moderate belief in FPCs' role in agri-entrepreneurship promotion. While many FPCs aim to instill business orientation among smallholders, the lower score may indicate a gap between intent and implementation. Patil and Waghmare (2018) [15] also noted that many farmers still view FPCs as support systems rather than enterprise enablers. The seventh and eighth-ranked statements were both negatively framed, reflecting dissatisfaction with member participation in decision-making. The statements *"Very little or no role of members in decision making"* (mean = 3.15) and *"In FPCs, bosses make decisions without asking farmers"* (mean = 3.14) both show that participatory governance remains weak in the eyes of members. This reflects findings by Narayanan (2014) [13] and Singh *et al*. (2020) [21], who highlighted the need for capacity building of Board members and inclusion of ordinary members in policy and operational decisions.

Table 5: Constraints faced by the Member Farmers of FPC

Sr. No.	Statements	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Moderate (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	C.S.	Mean	Rank
1	Inefficient monitoring	40 (200)	31 (124)	19 (57)	3 (6)	7 (7)	394	3.94	I
2	Inadequate technical guidance	37 (185)	29 (116)	24 (72)	8 (16)	2 (2)	391	3.91	II
3	Few members handle all responsibilities	34 (170)	33 (132)	25 (75)	5 (10)	3 (3)	390	3.90	III
4	Lack of computer knowledge which makes them unable to drive benefits of available ICT tools	38 (190)	31 (124)	19 (57)	6 (12)	6 (6)	389	3.89	IV
5	Difficulty in external loans	37 (185)	24 (96)	19 (57)	12 (24)	8 (8)	374	3.74	V
6	Delayed payments	33 (165)	29 (116)	21 (63)	12 (24)	5 (5)	373	3.73	VI
7	High transportation cost	35 (175)	27 (108)	21 (63)	10 (20)	7 (7)	373	3.73	VI
8	Lack of latest market information	31 (155)	22 (88)	22 (66)	16 (32)	9 (9)	350	3.50	VII
9	Lack of sufficient finance	32 (160)	23 (92)	13 (39)	19 (38)	13 (13)	342	3.42	VIII
10	Unaware of credit facilities	24 (120)	25 (100)	20 (60)	18 (36)	13 (13)	329	3.29	IX
11	Lack of awareness on importance of grading and packing	29 (145)	13 (52)	15 (45)	28 (56)	15 (15)	313	3.13	X
12	Lack of timely, cheap and good quality inputs	37 (185)	7 (24)	7 (21)	19 (38)	30 (30)	298	2.98	XI

The data in Table 4 clearly identifies the key challenges faced by member farmers in relation to the functioning of Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs). The foremost constraint highlighted was inefficient monitoring (Mean = 3.94), indicating concerns about the lack of effective oversight and accountability within FPC operations. This finding is consistent with Dev *et al.* (2020) [5], who emphasized that without robust monitoring frameworks, FPCs struggle to maintain transparency and trust among their members. The second major constraint was inadequate technical guidance (Mean = 3.91), suggesting that member farmers are not receiving sufficient support in adopting improved production or marketing practices. Singh and Singh (2016) [20] similarly noted that the absence of technical handholding limits the effectiveness of FPCs in enhancing productivity and competitiveness. Another key issue was that few members were managing all responsibilities (Mean = 3.90), pointing to a lack of participatory management and leadership decentralization. This aligns with Trebbin and Hassler (2012) [25], who observed that the concentration of power within FPCs can demotivate members and hinder collective functioning. A notable challenge was the lack of computer knowledge (Mean = 3.89), which prevents members from leveraging ICT tools for agricultural decision-making and market access. Similar findings were reported by Patel *et al.* (2021) [14], who argued that digital illiteracy among farmers significantly restricts the adoption of e-extension services and digital marketplaces. Difficulty in obtaining external loans (Mean = 3.74), delayed payments (Mean = 3.73), and high transportation costs (Mean = 3.73) further illustrate the financial and logistical challenges faced by members. These issues have also been noted by Sulaiman and Murthy (2020), who emphasized the critical role of timely finance and efficient logistics in sustaining producer collectives. Constraints such as lack of market information (Mean = 3.50) and insufficient finance (Mean = 3.42) highlight the need for better linkages and funding mechanisms. Bikkina *et al.* (2018) [2] found that these factors often limit the bargaining power and growth of smallholder-led FPCs. Moreover, the issues of credit unawareness (Mean = 3.29) and lack of knowledge on grading and packing (Mean = 3.13) point towards inadequate capacity building. As per Raju and Chandrasekhar (2019) [16], training and awareness programs are essential to help farmers maximize the benefits of aggregation and standardization practices. Finally, the lack of timely, affordable, and quality inputs was the least rated constraint (Mean = 2.98), yet it remains a critical area that could affect production efficiency. According to Birthal *et al.* (2017) [3], the success of FPCs partly depends on how well they can provide timely and cost-effective input services.

Suggestions

1. **Implement Robust Monitoring and Accountability Systems:** Establish clear, transparent monitoring through public financial displays, regular audits, and member-led oversight committees. This addresses inefficient monitoring and builds member trust.
2. **Empower Members in Decision-Making:** Decentralize decision-making by creating smaller, crop-specific or village-level sub-committees. This gives members a real voice and fosters a sense of ownership.
3. **Strengthen the Board of Directors:** Provide training for the BoD on democratic leadership to combat the perception of inequality. They must demonstrate impartiality and treat all members equally to build confidence.
4. **Prioritize Comprehensive Training Programs:** Address the lack of training by offering structured programs on modern farming, agri-business skills, and digital literacy. This empowers members to utilize ICT tools and run their farms more professionally.
5. **Invest in Infrastructure and Value Addition:** Focus on creating shared resources like processing units, cold storage, and grading centers. This enhances the FPC's value, increases farmers' income, and addresses low-ranked infrastructure motivators.
6. **Improve Financial Access and Timeliness:** Build strong ties with banks to help members secure external loans and streamline internal payment processes. This resolves the key constraints of delayed payments and difficulty accessing credit.
7. **Develop a Multi-channel Communication Strategy:** Leverage popular media like TV and the internet (WhatsApp, apps) to share real-time market prices and agricultural information. This ensures effective dissemination of vital information to all members.
8. **Strengthen Peer Networks and Social Capital:** Formalize the strong influence of peer networks by creating a "member-ambassador" program. Experienced members can mentor new farmers and support outreach efforts.
9. **Enhance External Linkages:** Partner with agricultural universities and research institutions to improve access to scientific knowledge. This can be achieved through organized field visits, workshops, and expert sessions to address low exposure to such resources.

Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic dynamics, member perceptions, and key constraints

within Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) in the Latur district. The findings underscore that FPCs primarily serve a demographic of male, middle-aged, and small-to-marginal landholders who are motivated by the promise of collective bargaining for inputs, market access, and operational transparency. However, the research reveals a significant disconnect between members' expectations and the FPC's actual functioning, particularly concerning governance and member empowerment. The core challenges identified include inefficient monitoring, a lack of transparency in financial dealings, and a strong perception of inequality and non-participatory decision-making by the Board of Directors. These findings suggest that while FPCs are successful in attracting members with the promise of tangible benefits, their ability to sustain trust and engagement is hampered by internal governance weaknesses. To bridge this gap and foster long-term sustainability, this study strongly recommends that FPCs move beyond basic service provision and invest in strengthening their institutional foundation. This involves implementing robust monitoring and accountability systems to build trust, decentralizing decision-making to empower members, and providing targeted training programs in agri-business, modern farming techniques, and digital literacy. By focusing on these key areas, FPCs can evolve from mere aggregators of produce into genuine, member-driven enterprises that not only improve farmers' income but also build social capital and entrepreneurial capacity from the ground up.

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