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Constraints faced by the Tirunelveli district farmers in practicing collective farming

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Abstract

Collective farming is an agricultural practice in which the farmers join together and carry out the farming activities in a collective manner. The scheme was brought up in the year 2017 in order to improve the lives of the small and marginal farmers. The present study deals with the constraints faced by the farmers in practicing collective farming. The study was performed in the Tirunelveli district with the sample size of 120 farmers. The data were collected using interview schedule. The recorded data were analyzed using percentage analysis. The foremost constraint faced by almost all the farmers of the collective farming group was the excess amount for the machinery purchase to be managed and met out by the member farmers on their own. Suitable measures can be developed to minimize the constraints faced by the farmers for the better adoption of collective farming.

Keywords: Collective farming, constraints, corpus fund, farmers and group

Introduction

Small and Marginal group of farmers form a greater part of the cultivators among the Indian Agriculture. They contribute significantly to the agriculture but their income is much lesser. A variety of approaches has emerged to overcome the problems faced by the small and marginal farmers. The Government of India and the Government of Tamil Nadu has initiated programmes for the better lives of farmers since independence. For bringing the agriculture and industry close together the Government of Tamil Nadu has initiated a new programme to encourage the main manufactures (i.e., small and marginal famers) and integrate their fragmented firm for the better agricultural output and marketing. The programme is called Collective Farming.

The scheme "Collective Farming" was implemented in the year 2017-2018 by the Government of Tamil Nadu so that the farmers can be empowered and can access the modern technologies. This scheme is to be promoted for the credit mobilization, effective forward and backward linkages and increased income for the farmers. The concept of collective farming is to run the small holdings of land or resources as a joint enterprise. This is achieved by grouping the farmers into Farmer's Interest Group (FIG) which consists of 20 farmers. The five FIGs are federated into Farmer's Producer Group (FPG) which the federated into Farmer's Producer Company (FPC). The ten FPGs constitute one FPC. The main motto of collective farming is to bring the "Economies of Scale". This can be achieved by Indicative Interventions (Tractor usage, Rotavator usage, Multi thresher usage, Transplanter usage, other machineries), Corpus Fund to FPG (Rs. 5,00,000) Support by the State Government. The implements are to be purchased with the corpus fund provided by the government. Some studies exhibit the constraints faced by the farmers in the organizations and cooperatives.

Malik and Malik (2001) ^[4] reported that constraints faced by the workers of dairy cooperatives as the lack of honesty, leadership and lack of freedom.

Arunkumar (2004) ^[1] depicted that the major obstacles faced by the SHGs in the development of livestock were the lack of support from the organizations.

Dewangan (2018) ^[3] revealed that the major constraints faced by the member of the FPO where lack of availability of literature and financial constraints.

This study particularly focuses on the constraints faced by the farmer's practicing collective farming and consideration of the farmers view for the change in system if required.

Methodology

The present study was conducted in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. On the basis of block possessing Collective Farming groups, Alangulam block was selected purposively for this study, four villages from Alangulam block such as Vadiyoor, Melamaruthappapuram, Ayyanarkulam and Sivalarkulam were selected.

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The villages those had registered Collective Farming groups were selected purposively for the study. A total number of 120 farmers were selected randomly for the study. The data were collected by using a well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule. Constraints associated with collective farming were collected as multiple responses from the respondents. The details of the constraints faced by the farmers in practicing collective farming were collected and analyzed using percentage analysis.

Results and Discussion

Constraints refers as situation or circumstances which is responsible to restrict or limit the activity or a performance of an individual (Deoba, 2015) ^[2]. It has been operationalized in the current research as items of difficulties experienced by the respondents in practicing collective farming. Identifying the constraints would project the field level problems faced by the respondents. The various constraints by and large encountered by the collective farming group members were collected and arranged in the Table 1.

Table 1: Constraints faced by the farmers (n=120)

S. No.	Constraints faced by the farmers	No.*	Per cent
1	Choice of participation in the group for small and marginal farmers only	81	67.50
2	Initial fund contributed by the farmers should not be used for any other purpose except opening of bank account	75	62.50
3	Presence of domination by some group members	79	65.80
4	Maintaining group cohesiveness	36	30.00
5	Conducting group meeting frequently	64	53.30
6	Maintenance of record by the office bearers	63	52.50
7	Lack of leadership skills and decision making in selection of crops, farm practices, purchase of input, etc.	104	86.70
8	Availing loan from the bank for agricultural purposes by the group members	101	84.20
9	Collective procurement of inputs for the group members	48	40.00
10	Procurement of machinery by the collective farming group	45	37.50
11	Waiting period (four months) for the sanction of corpus fund for machinery purchase	86	71.70
12	Procedure for the withdrawal of corpus fund for purchase of machinery	90	75.00
13	Inadequate share to individuals in the group	26	21.70
14	Utilization of corpus fund only for purchase of machinery	107	89.20
15	Corpus fund not to be used for purchase of processing machinery	83	69.20
16	Servicing cost for machineries to be incurred by the FIG members	98	81.70
17	No coordination among farmers regarding decision making	69	57.50
18	Follow uniform cultivation and farming practices by the members of the collective farming group	93	77.50
19	Discontinuance of the members from the group	30	25.00
20	Requirement of machinery at a time by the members of the group	109	90.80
21	Consolidation of land holdings of the group members	96	80.00
22	Agreement to remove the bunds by drawing virtual boundaries	95	79.20
23	Maintenance of machinery by the members	70	58.30
24	Contribution of excess amount for the purchase of machinery from the allotted fund to be incurred by members	114	95.00
25	Management cost of the FIGs for the first four months to be taken care by the members.	60	50.00

*Multiple responses obtained

It could be inferred from the table that 95.00 per cent respondents found that excess amount for the purchase of machinery from the allotted fund to be incurred by members of the group as the major constraint followed by the requirement of machinery at a same time by the members of the group (90.80%), utilization of corpus fund only for purchase of machinery (89.20%) followed by lack of leadership skills and decision making in selection of crops, method of planting, purchase of input, etc (86.70%), 84.20 per cent of the respondents found difficulty in availing loan from the bank. 81.70 per cent reported that service and cost for machineries to be incurred by the FIG followed by consolidation of land holdings of the group members (80.00%), 79.20 per cent of the respondents stated that agreement to remove the bunds by drawing virtual boundaries as their difficulty followed by uniform cultivation of crop by the members of the group (77.50).

Three-fourth of the respondents reported that the procedure for withdrawal of fund as their constraint. Most of the respondents (71.70%) expressed that four months time period for the sanction of corpus fund for machinery purchase as their constraint, 69.20 per cent revealed that restriction of use of corpus fund only for purchase of farm machinery as a major issue followed by the choice of participation in the group only for small and marginal farmers (67.50%). 65.80 per cent of the respondents felt the presence of domination by some members in the group as a difficulty, 62.50 per cent of

the respondent found initial fund contributed by the farmers not to be used for any other purpose except opening of bank account as the restraint.

Majority of the respondents (58.30%), reported that maintenance of machinery by the members of the group itself as their difficulty followed by lack of coordination among farmers regarding decision making (57.50%), 53.30 per cent of the respondents considered the frequency of group meeting conducted as their constraint. More than half of the respondents considered maintenance of record by the office bearers as a problem (52.50%). Exact half of the respondents felt management cost of the FIGs for the first four months to be taken care by the members themselves as their problem.

Procurement of inputs for the group members (40.00%) was not comfortable for the respondents, 37.50 per cent of the respondents identified the procurement of machinery by the group as the difficulty. Maintaining group cohesiveness was expressed as a constraint by the group members (30.30%) followed by discontinuance of the members from the group (25.00%). Nearly one-fifth (21.70%) of the respondents reported that inadequate share to individual in the group as an issue.

Suggestions received from the farmers for better practice of Collective Farming

Suggestions received from the farmers practicing collective farming were recorded, analyzed and arranged in Table 2.

Table 2: Suggestions received from the farmers (n=120)

S. No	Suggestions	Number*	Percentage
1	Increase in Corpus Fund	110	91.66
2	Use of corpus fund for the purposes other than machinery purchase	102	85.00
3	Initial Fund to be used for purchase of inputs	86	71.66
4	Participation of big farmers be encouraged	77	64.16
5	Allocation of fund for the maintenance of machinery and FIG	71	59.16
6	Lineancy from the removal of bunds and farming virtual boundary	68	56.66

*-Multiple responses

It could be depicted from the table that majority of the respondents (91.66%) considered that the increase in the corpus fund would help to manage the excess amount for the purchase of machinery followed by the use of corpus fund for other purposes such as use of purchase of processing machinery, construction of storage structures, etc., (85.00%). The respondents felt that the initial fund raised by the members of the group could be used for the purchase of inputs for the group members (71.66%), participation of the large farmers in the group which could improve the group efficiency (64.16%), 59.16 per cent of the respondents felt that separate fund can be allotted for the maintenance of machinery and the group activities which would help to save the money in farmer's hand and 56.66 per cent stated for the lineancy from the removal of bunds and farming virtual boundary.

Conclusion

Collective Farming scheme has been brought to improve the farming practices and empower and ensure the lives of the small and marginal farmers of the state. The financial risk can be managed to a greater extent when farmers join hands with one another. This study particularly focuses on the constraints faced by the farmers in practicing collective farming and the suggestions received from them for the better practice of collective farming. The appraisal of the constraints faced by the small and marginal farmers help the policy makers in solving them and making required changes by means of administrative strategies for safe guard the interest of the farmers and achieving it. The excess amount for the machinery purchase has to be managed and meet out by the member farmers on their own. This was the foremost constraint faced by almost all the farmers of the collective farming group. Measures can be formulated to overcome the issues faced by the farmers of the FIGs or FPGs. Therefore the practice of collective farming gets improved and the farmers can enjoy the benefits of collective farming.

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