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Perception of farmers towards the components of collective farming in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

Collective farming is one of the types of agricultural production system where large number of farmers run their holdings as a joint enterprise. The scheme was implemented by the Government of Tamil Nadu to empower the lives of small and marginal farmers. The present study deals with the perception of the components of collective farming by the farmers. The study was performed in the Alangulam block of Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu with the sample size of 120 farmers. The data were collected using a well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule. The recorded data were analyzed using percentage analysis and cumulative frequency and the results were interpreted. The perception of farmers about the various components of collective farming was at the medium level which was due to the office bearers and active members of the group.

Keywords: collective farming, components, farmers, group and perception

Introduction

India is the home of fragmented land. Similarly, Tamil Nadu is dominated with the fragmented land and surplus of small and marginal farmers. In order to overcome the issues faced by the small and marginal farmers of Tamil Nadu, 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.

In the schemes the farmers are grouped together into three tiers which includes FIG, FPG and FPC. FIG refers to the Farmers Interest Group (FIG) consisting 20 farmers from the same village followed by the FPG i.e., Farmers Producer Group which consists of 5 FIGs (100 farmers) which then involves the Farmers Producer Company (FPC), the result of federation of 10 FPGs (1000 farmers). These FPCs should be registered under the Companies Act, 2013.

Jyothi (2012) ^[2] found that the perception of the beneficiaries of Bhagyalakshmi scheme was that, this scheme helped in reduction of child labour among girl children (95.55%).

Mary (2019) ^[4] reported from his study on the Crop Insurance that the perception of the farmers regarding the payment of premium rate was high (53.33%) and the perception towards the premium rate that the farmers were willing to pay up to 2% was 78.33 per cent.

Kathiravan *et al.*, (2020) ^[3] expressed from his study on farmer perception on communication behaviour and usefulness of FPO that in the terms of communication, the component, extent of interaction among the members was perceived higher and in terms of usefulness the component of having bulk livelihood activities was perceived to a greater extent by the members.

Gokul *et al.*, (2019) ^[1] revealed that the farmer's perception of FPO was high on the services provided by the FPO with the Garettt's mean score of 88.07 and the services included information related to the prices, inputs, subsidy, technology, market and dealers and capacity building training to the farmers.

This study was carried out to know the perception level of the individual farmers practicing collective farming regarding various components of collective farming and their extent of perception.

Methodology

Ex-post facto research design was used in this study by considering the objective and type of information needed. The study was conducted in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. The district comprised of nineteen blocks. Alangulam block was selected purposively for the study,

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four villages from Alangulam block such as Vadiyoor, Melamaruthappapuram, Ayyanarkulam and Sivalarkulam were identified. About 30 farmers per village were selected randomly. Therefore, 120 farmers were selected randomly for the study. The study includes twelve independent variables and one dependent variable, the perception. Out of as much as available components, 20 measurable components were taken for the study with the expertise and experience of department officials and extension scientists. The data were collected by using a well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule. The analysis was carried out using percentage analysis and cumulative frequency.

Results and Discussion

Perception means apprehension (cognitive condition of someone who understands) with mind or senses, an immediate or initiative recognition as of moral or aesthetic quality. The core features of collective farming were split into different components for the better measurement of the perception of farmers about collective farming practice. The results of the twenty components determining the perception of collective farming were summarized in the Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents based on their perception (n=120)

S. No.	Perception level of individual about the following Collective Farming components	Perceived		Not Perceived	
		No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
1	Initial share by each farmer to the group	90	75.00	30	25.00
2	Selection procedure of office bearers of the group	74	61.70	46	38.30
3	Purpose of group formation	58	48.30	62	51.70
4	Priorities given for being a member of FIG with other government schemes	60	50.00	60	50.00
5	Pooling of resources of the members present in the group	84	70.00	36	30.00
6	Follow common cultivation practices by the members of the group	81	67.50	39	32.50
7	Drawing virtual boundaries by removing individual land holding bunds	0	0	120	100
8	Method of sorting out the problems arising in the group	56	46.70	64	53.30
9	Utilization of Corpus Fund provided to the group	114	95.00	6	5.00
10	The time period (waiting period) for availing corpus fund	67	55.80	53	44.20
11	Procedure to be followed by the office bearers for receiving corpus fund	55	45.80	65	54.20
12	Frequency of organizing meeting in the group	109	90.80	11	9.20
13	Maintenance of registers by the office bearers	105	87.50	15	12.50
14	Role of the block officials facilities for the collective farming group functioning	63	52.50	57	47.50
15	Decision making of FIGs for selection of common farm practices to be followed by the collective farming members	45	37.50	75	62.50
16	Procedure for procurement and lease of machinery within the collective farming group and other group	77	64.20	43	35.80
17	Procedure for meet out the excess amount required for purchase of machinery more than from allotted corpus fund	100	83.30	20	16.70
18	Ways and means of maintenance and servicing cost to be incurred by	95	79.20	25	20.80
19	Kind of machineries that can be purchased using the corpus fund	69	57.50	51	42.50
20	Purpose of utilization of the amount collected from the lease of machinery	72	60.00	48	40.00

It could be known from the table that 95.00 percent of the group members had perceived about the utilization of corpus fund provided by the government to the collective farming group. The reason for excellent perception about the group corpus fund was, the essentiality of machinery make them to perceive utmost and obviously it is known that the family size, good social networks, the extension agency contact and the training attended have contributed to this component. The frequency of organizing meeting in the group had been perceived by 90.00 per cent. The group meeting was conducted regularly and the members of the group should attend the meeting. Therefore the farmers had good perception on group meeting. The social participation and the information source utilization have tend to contribute for the perception on group meetings. The maintenance of the registers was perceived by majority of the people (87.50%) as they make a signature in the register as a note of attendance for the meeting. It is known that the education level and the social participation of the respondents had also contributed to the better level of perception about the maintenance of the register. Majority of the respondents (83.30%) perceived about the procedure for meet out the excess amount required for the purchase of machinery more than from allotted amount. This is because the farmers themselves bared the excess expense on their own while purchasing the machinery. Regarding the ways and means for maintenance and servicing

of the machinery, the perception of the farmers was 79.20 percent. The maintenance and servicing cost were incurred by the farmers or by the group that is why they perceived well. The social participation and information seeking behaviour had contributed for the perception about the core component of collective farming. Three fourth of the respondents (75.00%) had perception about the initial share provided by each farmer to the group. Some of the farmers have not perceived this component as they did not contribute any share to the group and it has been balanced by their farmer friends or by the other members.

The component pooling of resources was perceived by 70.00 percent and this was due to their level of social participation, the contact with the extension agencies, participation in the trainings as well as the innovativeness possessed by the farmers. Most of the respondents (67.50%) perceived about the common cultivation practices to be followed by the members of the collective farming group. This component was known to the farmers by means of regular group meetings conducted every month. The social participation had contributed this much perception of this component. The procedure for procurement and leasing of machinery was perceived by 64.20 per cent of the respondents. The farmers who were really in requirement of the machinery and who had frequently contacted or borrowed the machinery have very well known about the procedure. The selection procedure of

office bearers of the group was perceived by 61.70 per cent of the respondents. The low level of social participation and information seeking behaviour were responsible for the non perception of this component, followed by the purpose of utilization of the amount collected from the lease of machinery (60.00%).

The perception of the components which possessed low perception were age of the respondents included, purpose of group formation (48.30%), problem sorting method of the group (46.70%), procedure to be followed for obtaining corpus fund (45.80%) and decision of FIGs for selection of practice to be followed by members (37.50%). The people did not perceive about these components to a greater extent because most of them perceived that the purpose of group formation was for obtaining corpus fund only, there were no problems arising among the group members, obtaining corpus fund was the responsibility of the office bearers and working with common cultivation practices was not followed. All the respondents had no idea about the component, drawing virtual boundaries for their field by removing the bunds since the leaders as well as the office bearers of the group were not

known about the component and therefore the members were also not educated regarding this component.

Table 2: Extent of perception about the Collective Farming by the group members (n=120)

S. No	Categories	Numbers	Percentage
1.	Low	33	27.50
2.	Medium	55	45.80
3.	High	32	26.70

The above table depicts that the extent of perception of the collective farming group members above the components of the collective farming was medium (45.80%) followed by low level (27.50%). It may be due to the farmers many components were not perceived by the members of the group. The following result was obtained due to the low level of social contact and the innovativeness. The high level (26.70%) of perception was due to the office bearers and the members possessing higher social participation, extension agency contact and innovativeness.

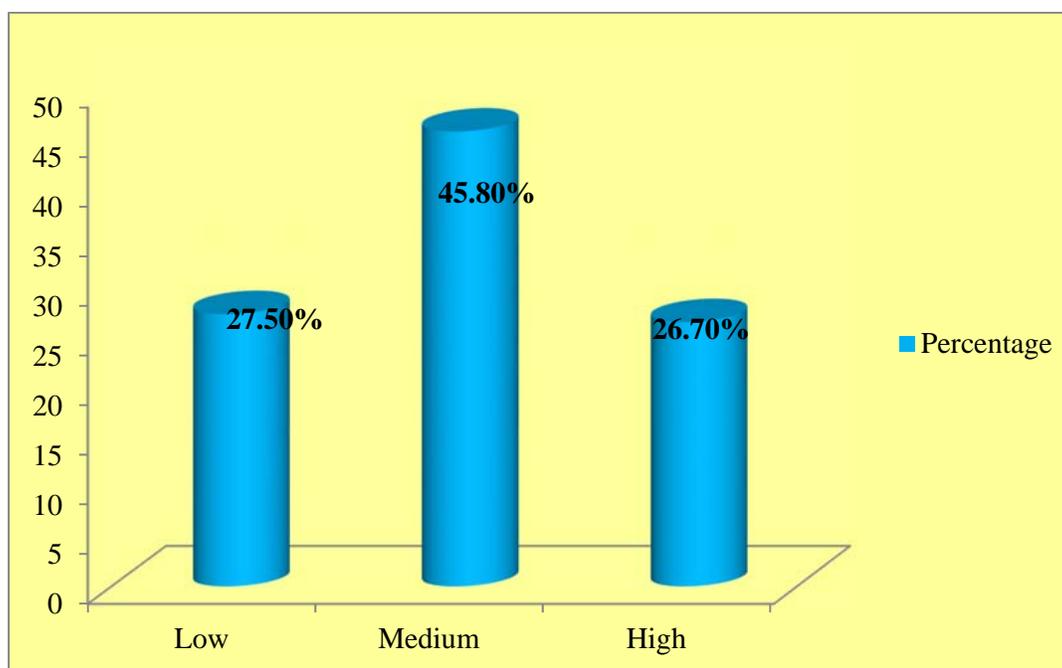


Fig 1: Extent of perception of the farmers involved in collective farming

Conclusion

Collective farming scheme had been brought to empower the lives of the small and marginal farmers in the state. In this study, the components of the collective farming were considered and the perception of the farmers practicing collective farming were recorded and interpreted. The overall perception of the farmers was medium which was due to some active member farmers of the group. When farmers have greater perception level, the practice of collective farming would be higher. The characteristics social participation, training and innovativeness had contributed to the perception on collective farming. Therefore meetings, trainings and lectures can be conducted by the State Department of Agriculture, extension officials to make the farmers realize the importance of each component of collective farming and their benefits so that the livelihood of the farmers gets improved.

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