

Research Note

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DOI:<https://doi.org/10.26725/JEE.2016.4.28.5775-5779>**Performance of a Farmer Interest Group in Tamil Nadu****M.R.Naveen kumar¹ and T. Rathakrishnan²****ABSTRACT**

The present study was undertaken with an objective to find out the performance of Old Ayakudi guava Farmers' Interest Group (FIG), Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu. The overall performance of the FIG were analysed using six variables viz., mobilizing support, exploitation resistance, identifying market opportunities, business orientation, marketing network and responsibility sharing. The study revealed that majority of the FIG members perceive the performance of FIG at moderate level performance followed by high and low level performances.

Keywords : *Farmer interest group, exploitation resistance, market opportunities, business orientation, marketing network, responsibility sharing, Tamil Nadu.*

Around the globe it is evidenced that the profitability in farming would be possible in groups rather than practicing it individually. Patil et al. (2014) had analyzed the impact of collective action of farmers through FIG (Farmer Interest Group) and found that, there was reduction in cost of cultivation by sharing inputs and gained additional returns. In India, most of the farmers had only small marketable surpluses and therefore, a strategy is needed to increase their bargaining power in purchase of inputs and sale of produce. Assessing the performance of existing FIGs could lead us to frame a comprehensive strategy to inculcate the livelihood promotion among the rural agrarian masses. The Performance of

FIG was calculated by assessing several variables such as, mobilizing support, exploitation resistance, identifying market opportunities, business orientation, marketing network and responsibility sharing. The present study was undertaken with an objective to find out the performance of an FIG in the view of its members with the help of primary data on above-mentioned six variables.

METHODOLOGY

For this study, Dindigul district of Tamil Nadu state was selected for reasons such as, unique climatic condition facilitating diversified crop cultivation, effective functioning of the Farmers' Interest Group on Guava in Old Ayakudi of Palani block, presence of Old Ayakudi

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Guava market and also familiarity of the student researcher with the study area. An *Ex-post facto* research design was used. Five villages namely Old Ayakudi, Vaeppan valasu, Erama nayackanpatty, TKN Pudhur and Rookvarpatty of Palani block were selected purposively for this study due to the effective functioning of FIGs. A total of ten groups were selected at random. One hundred respondents were selected at the rate of ten members from each group using simple random sampling technique and data were collected from the respondents through a well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule. The statistical tools used were percentage analysis and cumulative frequency.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The overall outcome of the FIG is calculated by its performance. Hence, an attempt was made to study the "Performance" of FIG by carefully investigating the previous activities of Old Ayakudi guava FIG. Hence, six variables namely mobilizing support, exploitation resistance, identifying market opportunities, business orientation, marketing network and responsibility sharing were assumed to fulfil the purpose and were selected for the study.

Mobilizing support is referred as the ability of the FIG officials to extend their support to the members of FIG. The responses were recorded and tabulated.

Table 1.
Mobilizing Support

(n = 100)

Sl.No.	Category	Number	Percentage
1.	Less mobilizing	7	7.00
2.	Moderately mobilizing	88	88.00
3.	Highly mobilizing	5	5.00

Types of support rendered by the FIG officials were technical support for cultivation, marketing of produce, input supply to farmers, preservation of produce, post-harvest practices / processing. In general most of the farmers were inclined towards adopting innovative ideas needing more skill and technical support.

Exploitation resistance has been referred as the extent of avoidance of threats to members and officials of FIG, kinds of threats posed by various sources viz., intermediaries in the market, wholesale agents, retail agents, in-group impediments and local pressure groups.

Table 2.
Exploitation Resistance

(n = 100)

Sl.No.	Category	Number	Percentage
1.	Low level resistance	19	19.0
2.	Moderate level resistance	55	55.0
3.	High level resistance	26	26.0

Table 3.
Identification of Market Opportunities

(n = 100)

Sl.No.	Category	Number*	Percentage
1.	Soon after harvest	92	92.00
2.	When price is attractive	25	25.00
3.	When in need of cash	23	23.00
4.	On contract	47	47.00
5.	When it is convenient	25	25.00

*Multiple responses

Table 4.
Business Orientation

(n = 100)

Sl.No.	Category	Number	Percentage
1.	Low orientation	7	7.0
2.	Medium orientation	75	75.0
3.	High orientation	18	18.0

Majority of the FIG members (81.00 %) expressed that exploitation from agents such as Intermediaries in the FIG, whole sale agent, retail agents and in-group impediments were managed by the FIG officials. (Table 2)

Identifying market opportunities

is referred as the appropriate time of marketing the produce in order to obtain maximum profit by the members of FIG.

Majority (92.00 per cent) of the FIG members were selling their product soon after harvest. As guava gets more demand, it gets disposed through

farmers’ market, mobile market, road side mandies, head loads etc., (Table3)

Business orientation is referred as the existence of capacity and interest among the members’ of FIG towards establishing their own enterprise. The findings are presented in Table 4.

From the interaction with farmers, it was observed that training and creation of new avenues for knowledge

gain and exposure visits enhance the FIG members’ interest to start a new venture and improve their risk taking ability. Another notable point is some of the guava growers were getting converted as first generation entrepreneurs through group training (Such as guava juice making enterprise).

Marketing network is referred as a profitable results are been collected, analyzed and presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.
Marketing network**

(n = 100)

Sl.No.	Category	Number*	Percentage
1.	Nearby <i>shandies</i>	99	99
2.	Village merchant / Local traders	90	90
3.	Retailers	51	51
4.	Wholesalers	50	50
5.	Commission agents	43	43
6.	Export	34	34

*Multiple responses

**Table 6.
Responsibility Sharing**

(n = 100)

Sl.No.	Category	Number	Percentage
1.	Low level sharing	14	14.0
2.	Moderate level sharing	74	74.0
3.	High level sharing	12	12.0

**Table 7.
Overall Performance of FIG**

(n = 100)

Sl.No.	Category	Number	Percentage
1.	Low performance	14	14.00
2.	Moderate performance	68	68.00
3.	High performance	18	18.00

It was found that 99 per cent of the respondents sold guava in the nearby shandies. The reason might be due to the demand and sufficient income generation in the locality itself. Another major reason might be obtaining prior advance from the commission agent forcing the farmers to sell their produce only to the local commission agents.

Responsibility sharing is referred as the mirror image of cohesiveness of the group that is how well the members of FIG and officials of FIG are coordinating and sharing their roles with less conflict. The findings are presented in Table 6.

In general, every member in FIG possessed equal responsibility to work hard for the achievement of FIGs' goal and hence, 86.00 per cent had moderate to high level of responsibility sharing nature.

The primary data obtained on the above mentioned six variables have been compiled and percentage analysis was worked out and by using cumulative frequency the overall performance was ascertained.

It could be concluded from Table 7 that majority (68.00 per cent) of the FIG members observed that FIG is performing at moderate level, followed by high (18.00 per cent) and low (14.00 per cent) level performance.

From the above results, it could be understood that the variables namely mobilizing support, exploitation resistance, business orientation and responsibility sharing of this FIG had fallen under medium category. Their identification of market opportunities and marketing network has also been satisfactory. Hence, it shall be concluded that Old Ayakudi guava FIG is performing at moderate to high level in the perspective of its members. From the field interaction with FIG members it was implicit that majority of the growers who participated in every extension oriented programmes had gained knowledge and adopted new technologies which might have influenced the responses.

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