

Role of MANAGE FPO Academy in the Formation and Implementation of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in India

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Abstract

Aggregation of farmers into Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) is found to be an effective tool and appropriate mechanism for addressing most of the problems faced by small and marginal farmers in India. There have been a number of interventions to aggregate smallholders by the government, by private and civil society organizations. These include self-help groups, commodity interest groups, contract farming, direct marketing, farmer producer organizations, etc. However, aggregation models have failed to achieve the desired results. Hence, Government of India has come up with the policy to promote new generation Farmer Producer Organizations under its flagship programme of promoting 10,000 such FPOs over the next five years. In implementing this huge task, capacity building is one of the major components wherein, MANAGE has been identified as one of the Institute for implementing this component. In order to achieve this target, MANAGE will support the Government of India. Hence, the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE) has set up "MANAGE FPO Academy. This paper focuses on the objectives of this Academy, its role in the formation and implementation of FPOs in India, activities and future strategy.

Keywords: Farmer Producer Organization, FPO, FPO academy.

Introduction

The focus of the government policies in the recent past has been on enhancing farmers' income through a flagship program of "Doubling of Farmers Income by 2022". One of the main strategies suggested in this document is the aggregation of farmers into Farmer

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Producer Organizations (FPOs) (GoI, 2018). This tool of aggregation is found to be an effective solution and appropriate mechanism for addressing most of the problems faced by small and marginal farmers, such as high cost of production, lack of access to technology, credit input and market. Aggregation of farmers into an FPO is not a new policy in India. Aggregation of farmers into cooperative groups is a century old intervention. These cooperative groups, no doubt, induced some good practices in the field of agriculture. By and large, the experiences of the performance of cooperatives have been poor with an exception of co-operative sugar factories and dairy cooperatives in Maharashtra and Gujarat (Paty and Gummagolmath, 2018). Apart from these cooperatives, Amalsad cooperative Society for sapota and farming co-operative (Gambhira) in Gujarat, MAHAGRAPES in Maharashtra, HOPCOMS and CAMPCO in Karnataka, Mulkanoor women cooperative groups in combined Andhra Pradesh etc., have performed well. There are also a few successful women's farming groups in Andhra Pradesh. These successful models could not be emulated in other regions of the country.

Various other institutional interventions, formal or informal, have tried to aggregate smallholders to link them to the input and/or output markets as a part of extension reforms. These interventions were started either by the government or by private corporate and civil society organizations. These include agricultural self-help groups, commodity interest groups, contract farming, direct marketing, farmer producer organizations, etc. However, all these aggregation models failed to achieve the desired results. These models were able to address one or two components of the supply chain in agriculture. Hence, the Government of India came up with a new tool of aggregation known as Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs).

These new generation of FPOs were designed and envisaged in such a manner that they are able to address all the issues in the supply chain of agriculture including marketing, processing and exports. As a result, farmer groups were allowed to register under the Companies Act by amending it during 2002 as recommended by Prof. Y.K. Alagh Committee. These new generation FPOs are a blend of cooperative principles and business professionalism provided in the Companies Act. They are managed by the BoDs and run by management professionals i.e. CEOs. They provide for the contribution of capital by the members and have provision for sharing of profits.

However, in the initial period, the growth of FPOs was slow. It attained momentum from the year 2013 when GoI declared the year as 'Year of FPOs'. Since 2002, around 9000

FPOs have been promoted by various agencies to date. Hence, based on the importance and success of this model in the country, the Govt. of India has decided to promote 10,000 FPOs over the next five years. It is estimated that the promotion and implementation of 10,000 farmer-organisations would require capacity building of nearly 46 lakh stakeholders covering Board of Directors, Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), Bankers and Community Based Business Organizations (CBBOs), officers from agriculture and line departments, resources from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), State Agricultural Universities (SAUs), Cooperative organizations, apex institutes dealing with agriculture and other institutes including stakeholders in the private sector. To address this huge challenge of aggregating farmers, the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), an organization under the aegis of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India has setup an academy namely "MANAGE FPO Academy" with effect from 01st January 2021.

Objectives:

The FPO academy has been initiated with the following objectives

- i. To organize capacity building of different stakeholders covering the Board of Directors, CEOs, Bankers, CBBOs, officers from agriculture and line departments, resource persons from NGO, Universities and other institutes including the private sector.
- ii. To undertake research on different aspects of promotion, formulation and strengthening of farmer-organisations
- iii. To provide policy advocacy to the government based on the research findings and feedback received from the field.
- iv. Evolve different methodology/ models to facilitate FPOs linking with emerging marketing channels and export markets
- v. Documentation and dissemination of success stories to different stakeholders. The Academy will also imbibe good practices of FPOs in other countries and act as a repository of international knowledge
- vi. To provide consultancy in different areas of Farmer Producer Organisation

Organogram of FPO Academy

The Farmer Producer Organisations will have to work in an environment having participation of a wide range of players covering central and state governments, departments, universities,

NGOs and corporates. Accordingly, the MANAGE-FPO Academy is envisaged to be implemented in a Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode. The responsibility to execute different activities will be vested with the Centre for Monitoring and Evaluation of Programs and Plans (M&E), MANAGE. This centre will work in collaboration with nine other academic centres operating in MANAGE having expertise in different areas (Fig-1). The Academy will partner with different public and private institutes for execution of different activities of the Academy, mainly capacity building of different stakeholders. The Academy will also seek the association of different private institutes as Knowledge Partners covering agribusiness companies, corporates, NGOs, state-level federations, etc.

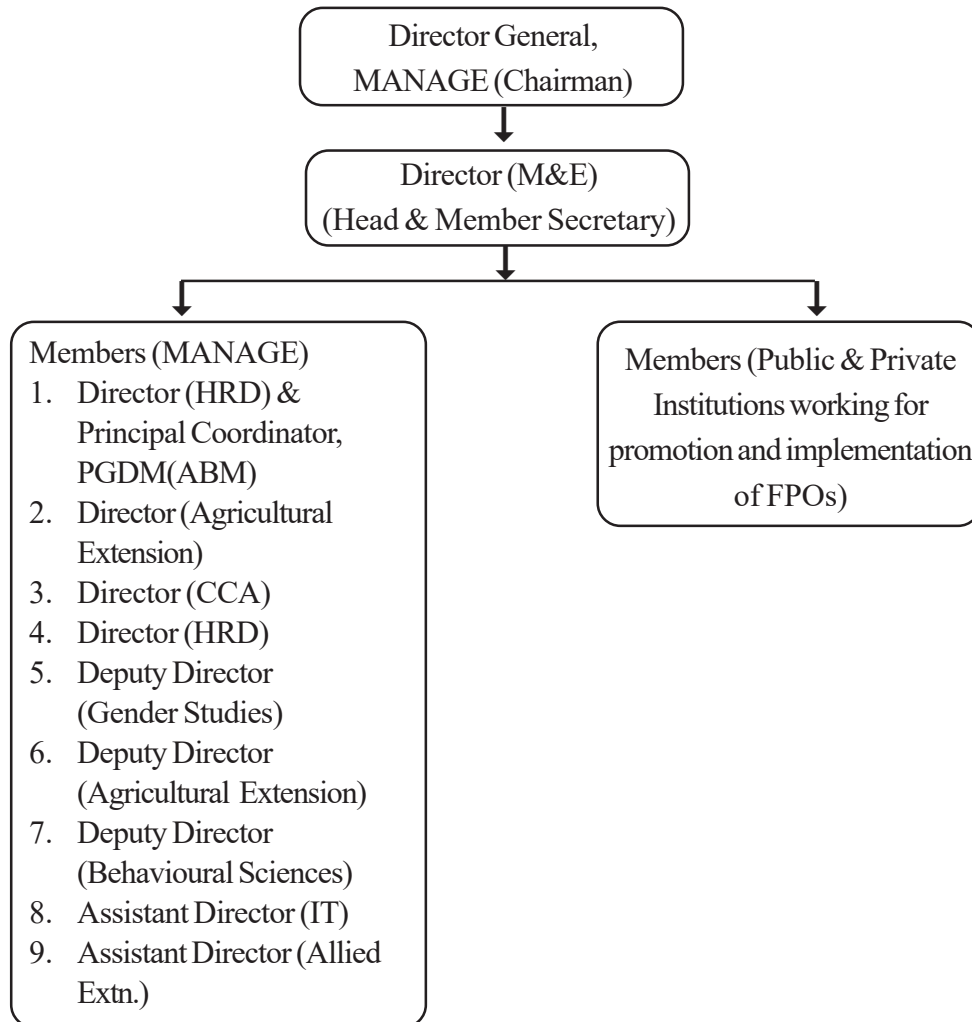


Figure-1: Organogram of MANAGE FPO Academy

i. Role of Academic Centres of MANAGE in FPO Academy

The National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), an apex institution of the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Govt. of India was established in 1987 with an aim to provide management focus to the agricultural extension system. With its nine (09) centres which are formed based on different thematic areas, MANAGE undertakes training, research, education and consultancy services. Each centre is being managed by competent professionals (Fig-1). The role played by different centres as members of the academy is as follows

- * M&E Centre- Lead centre responsible for overall coordination with different agencies and is responsible for implementation of various activities as envisaged under the fold of the academy
- * MANAGE Academic Centres- Different centres of MANAGE will participate as partners as per their expertise and support the lead centre to cater to the subject specific needs of different stakeholders

ii. Role of different Partner Institutes

Different institutes operating under public and private sectors coupled with centres established at MANAGE will work in partnership to implement different activities visualised for the academy.

- * Private players can participate in different activities of the academy as Knowledge Partners. There will not be any financial commitments and if funds are involved, case specific arrangements will be made by taking into consideration the mutual agreement of all the concerned partners. Private players can participate purely to share their knowledge and to facilitate the process of creation and development of farmer-organisations.

iii. FPO Academy Knowledge Partners: The details of the institutions /organizations/ federations/ banks/universities etc., who are enrolled as knowledge partners of FPO Academy are as mentioned below (Fig-2).

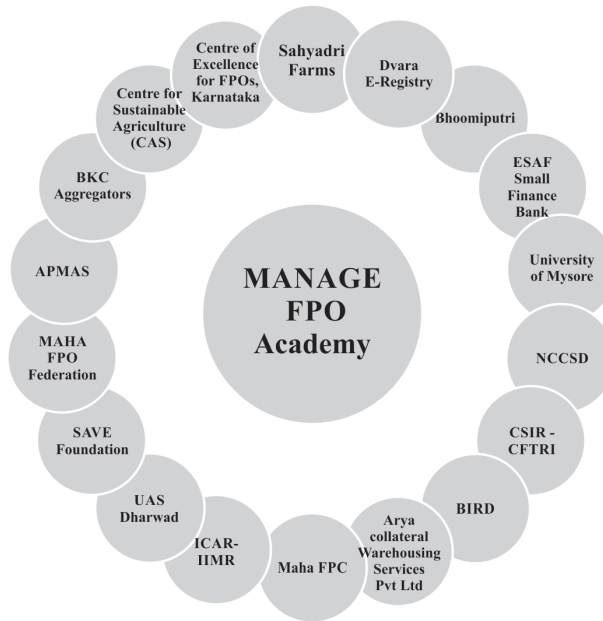


Figure-2: Knowledge Partners of MANAGE FPO Academy

1. Sahyadri Farmer Producer Company, Nashik, Maharashtra

Sahyadri Farms was registered in 2010 as a Farmer Producer Company, in order to solve the issue of scalability, farmer sustainability, and consumer benefit. It is 100 per cent owned by farmers alone who have equal voting rights regardless of their holding size. It is "India's largest Farmer Collective in Fruits & Vegetables Sector", which aims to ensure fair equity to everyone while providing value to the end consumer. Moreover, Sahyadri is India's largest exporter of grapes, largest tomato processor and procurer of tomato as well as the first producer company with Block Chain Technology.

2. Dvara E-Registry, Taramani, Chennai

It is a portfolio company of Dvara Holdings (formerly Dvara Trust) and part of the Dvara venture studio cohort that supports entrepreneurs working towards large-scale systemic change in financial inclusion. Dvara E-Registry ensures the sustainability and success of farmers and Farmer Producer Organizations through "Doordrishti", a platform that integrates FPOs and farmers through advisory services, digitization, market information, financial inclusion and insurance services.

3. Bhoomiputri, Bangalore

Bhoomiputri empowers women in agriculture through self-help networking structures across the country and helps agri entrepreneurs to gain a deeper understanding of the industry landscape thus helping them scale-up and sustain in the ecosystem. It also encourages agri-entrepreneurship among the youth in collaboration with educational institutes and universities.

4. ESAF Small Finance Bank, Trissur, Kerala

ESAF small finance bank was set up in 2015 and started the commencement of business in March 2017. It has been initiated with the objective of "Fighting the Partiality of Prosperity" through strengthening the people at the bottom of the pyramid. Its main focus is on expanding the banking horizon to new unbanked/underbanked areas with its presence in urban, semi-urban, rural and rural unbanked areas.

5. CSIR - Central Food Technological Research Institute

It is one of the constituent laboratories under the aegis of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) which came into existence during 1950. The institute pursues in-depth research and development in the areas of food science and technology and has developed over 300 products, processes, and equipment types with its resource centres at Hyderabad, Lucknow and Mumbai. It holds several patents and has published findings in reputed journals.

6. University of Mysore, Karnataka

The University of Mysore was established in 1916 and is the sixth oldest in the country and the first in the state of Karnataka. The university has a strategy to develop innovative programs in basic and emerging disciplines in a phased manner and with a commitment to involve the faculty and students in an interactive learning environment. Moreover, research activities in different fields of science and technology are also being conducted through various research centres.

7. Bankers Institute of Rural Development (BIRD), Lucknow

It has emerged as the premier institute offering training, research and consultancy services to its customers and undertaking other related activities in the field of agriculture and rural development banking. As an institute of excellence, BIRD is committed to impart quality education and practical knowledge on rural banking to young aspiring professionals. It also facilitates professional excellence in credit cooperatives and contributes to policy making process through research, propagation of best practices and other interventions.

8. Arya Collateral Warehousing Services Pvt. Ltd. Noida, Uttar Pradesh

It is an agribusiness value chain integrator from India which has a specific focus on catalyzing the ecosystem for smallholder farmers and FPOs through post-harvest interventions that include storage solutions, credit and risk guarantees, financial and market linkages and policy level changes. It is India's first agri commodity marketplace dealing with more than 20 commodities in 300 locations. Moreover, it has become India's first post-harvest solutions platform.

9. Maha Farmers Producer Company Ltd.(MAHAFPC), Pune, Maharashtra

MAHAFPC, a consortium of Farmer Producer Companies and an apex organization in the state of Maharashtra was incorporated in the year 2014 under the Companies Act 2013. The consortium is mainly involved in different marketing activities like establishment of forward and backward linkages, procurement of members produce through its registered FPCs, provides alternative marketing channels to the farmers by way of involving corporates and in all, it acts as a business facilitator to its FPCs.

10. University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad

Established in 1986, the university is involved in imparting education, research and extension activities. The university aims at imparting education towards the development of quality human resources in different branches of study as well as furthering the advancement of learning and conducting of research, particularly in agriculture and other allied sciences. Moreover, the University is promoting partnership and linkages with national and international educational institutions, Industries, research and other institutions.

11. ICAR-Indian Institute of Millets Research

It is a premier agricultural research institute engaged in basic and strategic research on sorghum and other millets under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). IIMR coordinates and facilitates millets research at the national level through All India Coordinated Research Projects (AICRP) on sorghum, pearl millet and small millets and provides linkages with various national and international agencies.

12. Andhra Pradesh Mahila Abhivruddhi Society (APMAS)

APMAS started its journey on 01st July 2001 in combined Andhra Pradesh with the purpose of strengthening the Self-Help Group (SHG) movement and livelihoods promotion. It has emerged as a trustworthy and credible resource organization at the state, national and international levels. It mainly works with SHGs and their federations, farmers organizations, cooperatives and other forms of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) as well as Self-Help Promoting Institutions (SHPI) who believe in and respect the spirit of self-help, and consider as a guiding principle for its work. APMAS works in three states, i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Bihar.

13. BKC Aggregators

BKC aggregators is an agriculture technology company focused on using precision agriculture as a pivot to increase farming productivity and predict crop yields in advance of harvest. It has developed an App namely "Fasal Salah: A Farmer's Lifeline," which is India's only farmer level precision agriculture app. Met GIS Agro is the core platform technology developed by BKC which integrates crop data, weather forecasts, analytics and clients.

14. Centre of Excellence for FPOs, Karnataka

Centre of Excellence for Farmer Producer Organizations (CoE-FPO) was established for the overall development of FPOs in Karnataka and is promoted by the Karnataka State Department of Horticulture. CoE-FPO provides handholding and guides the FPOs to grow into effective business enterprises working for the socio-economic advancement of their member-farmers. It functions as an expert knowledge partner for FPOs and coordinates policies and programmes for sustainable FPO management, enhances

professional capabilities of FPO stakeholders through training, consultancy and research. Besides, it coordinates with development departments, farm universities, public and private institutes in strengthening activities pertaining to FPOs and promotes partnerships between the Government and civil society inclusive of various stakeholders of horticulture and allied sectors.

15. Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, Hyderabad

The Centre for Sustainable Agriculture works with small and marginal farmers to make agriculture economically and ecologically sustainable, build community institutions that can manage their livelihoods and improve governance of public policy in agriculture. CSA also conducts research on agro ecological farming methods and their impact, assists the farmers and consumers in successfully transforming to organic agriculture. CSA partners with different organizations and networks for a policy change to enable the promotion of sustainable models of food production and sustaining livelihoods engaged in the process.

16. Social Advancement Ventures (SAVe) Foundation

SAVe Foundation is a new generation social enterprise established in 2013 as a non-profit organization operating from Hyderabad, India. It works on various pressing issues of the society by establishing credible collaborations with People-Planet-Prosperty approach. Its approach is fully aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). SAvE foundation is actively involved in areas like smart agribusiness, smart farmer enterprises (FPOs/FPCs), youth empowerment, agritech startups, women empowerment, village entrepreneurship, etc.

17. National Council for Climate Change Sustainable Development and Public Leadership (NCCSD)

It is an apex organization at the national level disseminating information and technology that will enable appropriate action and suggest policy frameworks to tackle impacts of global warming and climate change. NCCSD consolidates existing learning into a well-structured body of knowledge that can communicate suitable adaptation practices to strengthen locally relevant action for sustainable development.

Methodology

To achieve the set objectives, the academy organizes capacity building programs, collects primary and secondary information on successful FPOs in India, documents success stories, provides policy advocacy to the Government of India and other stakeholders on various aspects.

i. Capacity Building Programs:

The academy organizes need-based training programs / workshops for various stakeholders which include:

- Training of Trainers (TOT) programs to sensitize the extension officials in agriculture and allied sectors
- Training programs especially for Board of Directors (BODs) and members regarding the process of incorporation of FPO, registration process, share holding pattern, authorised & paid up capital, general body meetings, sanctions of loans, business plans, etc.
- Training CEOs on areas like management aspects, record maintenance, bank accounts, auditing, legal & regulatory aspects, etc.
- Training program for employees of FPOs on human resource management, accounting, marketing, consumer services, etc.

ii. Research & Documentation: To ascertain the performance, status and challenges faced by FPOs in India, various research studies are planned to be conducted across the country. In this regard, both primary and secondary information on organizational, functional, managerial and business aspects of FPOs will be collected and analysed followed by a report highlighting the key findings of the study and proposed strategies based on the research findings.

Furthermore, information on successful FPOs in different thematic areas like Women FPOs, organizations adopting sustainable agricultural practices i.e. organic/natural farming, FPOs in integrated farming systems, FPOs in dairy, fisheries and sericulture sector, etc.,

from across the country will be collected and documented as success stories. The main purpose of this activity is to capture the role played by the FPOs in enhancing farmers' income and to have clear visibility about its activities. This can become a learning tool for many farmers or nascent FPOs across the globe.

iii. Policy Advocacy: Most of the FPOs are facing a challenge of viability because of low paid-up capital. As per the study report by Azim Premji University, by the month of March 2019, only 7374 FPCs were registered with a total Paid-up Capital (PUC) of Rs.860.18 crore. However, 49 per cent of the registered PCs have a PUC of Rs. <1 lakh and it is also a matter of concern to note that the top 20 PCs contribute to more than 50 per cent of the total PUC across the world. This skewed distribution indicates that aggregation models are becoming successful mostly in the case of milk and the horticulture sector. The other challenges faced by FPOs are in terms of social capital. In most cases, there is a lack of awareness about the concept of FPOs and lack of quality leadership. Moreover, FPOs are facing challenges in terms of regulatory issues like statutory compliance requirements, lack of protection to the shareholders of Producer Company from Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) as in the case of publicly traded companies and unavailability of reliable data for researchers and practitioners which is limiting them for designing future policy and interventions. Besides, complex compliance filing, there is lack of awareness about their eligibility for different schemes made available for cooperatives and individual farmers.

In view of the above facts, the FPO academy plays a crucial role in terms of policy advocacy to the Government of India and other stakeholders involved in the promotion of FPOs in various issues like the sustainability of FPOs, regulatory issues, impact studies and training need assessment etc.

Activities of FPO Academy

MANAGE has been organising a number of programs for different stakeholders of FPOs since 2013. So far, the institute has organised more than 100 programs covering over 3000 participants consisting of extension officers, CEOs, Board of Directors and Members of FPOs in the country. MANAGE has also documented case studies, research studies and policy papers on different aspects of FPOs. These programs serve as a platform for sharing different aspects of FPO and for facilitating interaction with the experts available

with the institute and experts from other organizations. The major activities carried out in FPO Academy are mentioned below.

Capacity Building Programs: In order to sensitise the stakeholders various workshops, national seminars, training programs, webinars and buyer-seller meets were organized in both physical and virtual mode. As on 31st December 2021, 16 capacity building programs were organized on the following aspects (Details may be seen in the Annexure).

- A three-day training program on issues and challenges in formation, management and implementation of FPOs was organized to deal with the concept of FPO, legal provisions governing producer companies in the Companies Act, finance, accounts and auditing etc.
- Collaborative Training for Chief Executive Officers of FPOs was conducted for existing and aspiring CEOs
- A webinar on "Opportunities for Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in the New Regime of Marketing Reforms" was organized in order to sensitize the stakeholders of FPOs with respect to the national policy for the promotion of FPOs and various marketing opportunities for FPOs were explained. Moreover, case studies related to marketing strategies adopted by women FPOs as well as the journey of Sahyadri farms, the largest farmers collective of horticultural commodities in India were dealt with in detail.
- An online webinar on linking FPOs with e-NAM was conducted for stakeholders in the state of Karnataka in which ways and approaches to link FPOs with markets were dealt.
- A Training programme on Promotion and implementation of Farmer Producer Organizations in Maharashtra was conducted in Marathi for effective reach among the farmers in the state
- Linking FPOs to market in Andhra Pradesh was another program wherein the participants were informed about various concepts like ways and means of linking FPOs to markets, integration of FPOs to eNAM Market in Andhra Pradesh.

- A training program for the Board of Directors (BoDs) of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in the state of Haryana was conducted to impart training on the preparation of a business plan, accounting and social capital. A detailed session on financial aspects of FPOs and credit linkages with financial institutions was delivered by Samunnathi, an NGO. Besides, the establishment of an efficient value chain system and market linkages, promotion of exports and a few success stories of FPOs were a part of this program.
- A two-day consultative workshop on linking selected FPOs to the market was organized in Andhra Pradesh to discuss the concept of model FPOs, agribusiness models for FPOs in Andhra Pradesh, Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFRUTI) for linking FPOs to the market. The representatives of FPOs expressed their constraints and challenges faced by them i.e., registration process, financial issues, infrastructure and market linkages.
- A training program on Promotion of FPO in livestock sector: Opportunities and Challenges was conducted by the Centre for Allied Extension, MANAGE.
- Training on Climate Change and Natural Resource Management for Sustainable Agricultural Development for the FPOs was organized by the Centre for Climate Change and Adaptation, MANAGE.
- A program on strengthening agricultural extension through participation of FPOs was organized in Punjab to create awareness on incorporation process of FPC, various legal issues pertaining to FPCs, supporting agencies as well as various extension strategies for aggregation of farmers and in turn linking the farmers to markets.
- A training program was organized on linking farmers to futures trading, wherein the extension officials were trained by resource persons exclusively from NCDEX Institute of Commodity Markets and Research (NICR) in various aspects related to commodity markets, hedging, speculation, price analysis, commodity transactions that take place in futures trading and strategies for on boarding FPOs in derivatives.

- One Day Buyer - seller interface was organized for Farmer Producer Organizations & agribusiness firms in Vishakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh to provide a platform for the selected FPOs to interact with the agribusiness companies for procurement of agricultural commodities and value chain solutions in project districts.
- A national level orientation program was organized for all the stakeholders of FPOs to sensitize them on Agriculture Infrastructure Fund Scheme. The features of the scheme and process of registration by the beneficiaries, eligible projects that can be availed under the schemes were explained in detail.

Besides, need based meetings were conducted by MANAGE with the knowledge partners of FPO Academy and various experts. The suggestions given by the experts from time to time are as follows.

- a. There is a dire need to identify FPOs in the selected clusters and strengthen them with regard to quality testing of the produce and identifying the traders for feasible marketing. More emphasis should be on branding of the produce from FPOs.
- b. Construction of warehouses, mini/micro cold rooms at FPO premises can be useful for storage of small quantities of produce to reduce the operating cost. The importance of capacity building programs for strengthening FPOs in various aspects was highlighted.
- c. More focus should be on sustainability of FPOs across India and challenges faced with regard to governance of FPOs. Moreover, FPOs in organic farming may be promoted to produce quality food.
- d. With regard to marketing, an institutional linkage between FPOs and agribusiness firms has to be established. Moreover a benchmark survey is to be conducted in identification of FPOs and their approaches towards integrated supply chain and value chain.
- e. Mapping of commodity specific existing FPOs followed by their value chain mapping should be done. However, a proposal on linking RAWE program with FPOs was also one of the major suggestions.

- f. Improving storage structures with the support of the Government and further, the experiences from successful FPOs can be taken and imparted for further action.
- g. The prospective marketing of FPO needs to be critically understood. The end-to-end value chain needs to be considered and emphasis should be given on marketing. For this, what needs to be done is to first identify potential buyers, then map the buyers and find out their requirements in terms of quantity and quality, later build up their capacity to meet the requirement and then connect the buyers. Followed by this a market survey for the ecosystem to identify the gaps on the production and marketing side should be done. Moreover, the IT cell Digital platform like Kalgudi can be roped in and available schemes should be integrated, and convergence with line departments has to take place. It was also suggested to focus on three important gaps viz., infrastructure, finance and capacity and on the maintenance of accounts, audit and compliance of company act. At the district level persons from service providers (technology/finance, etc.) can be trained by MANAGE for greater sustainability for greater success. A horizontal integration is needed instead of vertical integration. An integrating platform with the start-ups across the value chain is necessary.

• **Research & Documentation:** The academy undertakes research on different aspects of promotion, formulation and strengthening of farmer-organisations. However, to capture the overall performance of FPOs in agriculture and allied sectors, both primary and secondary information was collected from respective organizations regarding various activities, interventions, strategies followed by the producer organizations across India.

The primary data was collected from NGOs or promoters of FPOs, CEOs, BODs and farmer members through telephonic interviews with the help of well-structured questionnaires. The secondary information was collected from different published sources and official websites of concerned FPOs. Thus, a wide range of data has been collected from different FPOs promoted in agriculture, horticulture, dairy, poultry, fisheries, livestock sector and exclusively women-owned FPOs.

The collected data has been analysed and documented as case studies/success stories. Moreover, videos with respect to successful FPOs are also made available in the FPO academy. Besides creating awareness about managerial and organizational aspects of

FPOs among different stakeholders, these case studies were presented in the capacity building programs organized especially in the academy. Moreover, these success stories are disseminated to different stakeholders across the country.

An extensive study was conducted in the state of Maharashtra to assess the impact of Famer Producer Companies (FPCs) on the socio-economic conditions of the farmers. Primary data was collected from BoDs, farmer members, and employees of twenty FPCs selected for the study. The findings of the study revealed the business activities carried out by FPCs, various constraints and challenges faced by them, the role of directors in strategic planning, benefits received by the farmers after being a member in FPC and a few human resource aspects pertaining to the employees of selected FPCs. Based on the findings of the study, a few strategies and recommendations were suggested. The findings along with the recommendations were documented and released as a book.

- **Policy advocacy** to the government based on the findings of the research study and feedback received from the field. The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW) has requested MANAGE to conduct a quick study for developing guidelines for the scheme meant for the promotion of 10,000 FPOs in India. MANAGE has completed the study and shared the same with MoA&FW. A few suggestions from the outcome of the study were a part of the guidelines for promotion of FPOs.

- **Support** is extended to FPOs in the form of identifying the model FPOs and facilitating their linking with emerging marketing channels and export markets. Moreover, the selected FPOs in the state of Andhra Pradesh were supported under the Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI).

Future Strategies of Academy

In view of the promotion of 10,000 FPOs, the Government of India has estimated that around 49 lakh different stakeholders need to be trained. In this direction, MANAGE FPO Academy is planning to play a bigger role as an apex body. In this direction, MANAGE has planned capacity building programs at different levels. MANAGE has its presence across the country and its constituents like SAMETI will be involved in training of trainers like extension officials from the department of agriculture and allied sectors and Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) in training FPO's Board of Directors, farmer members and other stakeholders.

Capacity building and training of different stakeholders of FPOs including BoDs/Leaders of FPOs, and CEOs is the need of the hour. In the guidelines for promotion of 10,000 FPOs of Government of India, it is asserted that Institutions may devise certificate/diploma courses to train "barefoot managers/ CEOs". Such courses need to be institutionalised and developed by concerned institutions viz., agricultural universities, entrepreneurship development institutions, NIAM, BIRD, NIFTEM, MANAGE, VAMNICOM, etc. with Sector Skill Council accreditation.

Capacity building, training and skill development of CEOs/ BoDs and other stakeholders identified by nodal training institutions, in consultation with DAC&FW, through transfer of technology, innovation, is very essential for development of robust FPOs and for running the business activities successfully on a self-sustainable basis. The subject matter of training should cover topics ranging from organisational management/behaviour, crop husbandry, value addition, processing, marketing, trading, export, supply chain, grading, branding, packaging, accounting, auditing, compliance requirements, incubation, ICT & MIS as may be relevant for promotion of FPOs including case studies in best practices if any.

The Bankers Institute of Rural Development (BIRD), Lucknow, promoted by NABARD is designated as the Nodal Training Institution at the central level for FPOs promoted by NABARD and SFAC and other allowed/designated Implementing Agencies. It was proposed in the new guidelines that BIRD will work in partnership with other reputed organisations like NIRD, MANAGE, NIAM, NIFTEM, VAMNICOM and such other national and regional institutions such as IRMA, Anand and ASCI, State and Central Government, Agricultural Universities, National Level Skill Development Universities, KVKs and other National Level Management and Skill Development Institutions, etc. BIRD, in consultation with NABARD and DAC&FW, will prepare a training module and training schedule for the ensuing year, which will be put forward for approval by National Level Project Management Advisory and Fund Management Committee (N-PMAFSC). In this regard, MANAGE prepared a proposal and shared it with BIRD along with the cost of training at different levels.

Laxmanrao Imandar National Academy for Co-operative Research & Development (LINAC), Gurugram promoted by NCDC is designated as Nodal Training Institution at central level for FPOs registered under the Co-operative Societies Act and promoted by NCDC. LINAC will work in partnership with other reputed national and regional training institutions like NIAM, VAMNICOM, MANAGE, NIRD, NCCT, IRMA, ASCI, State

and Central Agricultural Universities, KVK, reputed National level Management and Skill Development Institutions/Universities, etc.

In the light of two national nodal agencies i.e., BIRD for FPOs promoted under companies act and LINAC for FPOs promoted under cooperative sector, there is a need for convergence of agencies to fulfil the capacity building needs for the upcoming 10,000 FPOs. Well-coordinated activities under a single platform of convergence will ease the mandate of capacity building of an estimated 48 lakh stakeholders in the process of formation of 10,000 FPOs.

Understanding the importance of the subject and the kind of focus required to reach a large number of stakeholders, MANAGE FPO Academy has initiated, with a long term objective, to act as a 'one-stop solution' for all the issues related to promotion and implementation of FPOs. With the help of the wide network of institutes and expertise available, MANAGE can take up any task of capacity building of FPOs. Accordingly, a decision was taken in the Executive Council meeting of MANAGE to have a meeting between the apex agencies involved in the capacity building activities in the agriculture and allied sector.

As far as research is concerned, MANAGE is planning to have a comprehensive database and there is a plan to document a large number of success and failure stories on a case study mode which will act as inputs for policy advocacy. However, based on research conducted in the academy, time to time policy advocacy will be given by MANAGE to GoI on sustainability of FPOs and regulatory issues faced by them. Moreover, FPOs are still facing issues related to their formation and incorporation at the national, state and district level. Hence policy advocacy will be given on these issues as well.

The academy in the long run will continue the activities in tune with any policy changes by the Government of India and will try to address issues related to formulation and registration of FPOs, legal issues and issues related to sustainability of farmer-organisations. For wider and comprehensive coverage of different aspects of FPOs, the efforts of the academy will coordinate with other public and private institutes.

References

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- Richa Govil, Ananurna Neti and MadhushreeR.Rao (2020). Farmer Producer Companies: Past, Present and Future. Azim Premji University, March 2020

Annexure

Progress of Activities in MANAGE FPO Academy

S. No	Title	From	To	Venue	No. of participants
1)	Issues and Challenges in Formation, Management and Implementation of FPOs	05/04/2021	08/04/2021	MANAGE (Virtual)	27
2)	International Webinar on Opportunities for Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in the New Regime of Marketing Reforms	27/04/2021	27/04/2021	MANAGE (Virtual)	176
3)	Collaborative National Seminar on "Agricultural Marketing System in India towards online marketing	29/05/2021	29/05/2021	MANAGE (Virtual)	286
4)	Training program on Promotion of FPO in livestock sector: Opportunities and Challenges	15/06/2021	17/06/2021	MANAGE (Virtual)	198
5)	Webinar on Linking FPOs with e-NAM in Kannada for Karnataka State	18/06/2021	18/06/2021	MANAGE (Virtual)	63
6)	Webinar on Promotion and Implementation of Farmer Producer Organizations in Maharashtra	29/06/2021	29/06/2021	MANAGE (Virtual)	141

7)	Training Programme on Linking FPOs to Market in Andhra Pradesh	27/07/2021	29/07/2021	MANAGE (Virtual)	21
8)	Training Program for Board of Directors (BoDs) of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), Haryana	29/07/2021	31/07/2021	Horticulture Training Institute, Karnal, Haryana	38
9)	Consultative workshop on Linking Selected FPOs to Market in Andhra Pradesh	06/08/2021	07/08/2021	Andhra Pradesh	65
10)	Approaches to Link FPOs with Market	24/08/2021	26/08/2021	MANAGE (Virtual)	38
11)	Climate Change and Natural Resource Management for Sustainable Agricultural Development for the FPOs	24/08/2021	26/08/2021	MANAGE (Virtual)	27
12)	Training Program on Supply Chain Management and Market Linkages for Agriculture and Horticulture Produce	20/09/21	22/09/21	MANAGE (Virtual)	38
13)	Training Program on Collaborative Training to CEOs of FPOs promoted by ICAR-IIMR	27/09/2021	30/09/2021	MANAGE Hyderabad	48
14)	One Day Buyer - seller interface for Farmer Producer Organization in Andhra Pradesh	15/11/2021	15/11/2021	RARS, Anakapalli, Visakhapatnam	55
15)	Training Program on Linking Farmers to Futures Trading	09/11/2021	11/11/21	MANAGE (Virtual)	39
16)	Training program on Strengthening Agricultural Extension through participation of FPOs,	22/11/2021	25/11/2021	Online PAMETI, Ludhiana, Punjab	30