



Role of Farmer's Clubs in Diversification of Agriculture and Livelihood Security

Kuldeep Singh¹ and B S Meena²

Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Sangaria-335063 Hanumangarh (Rajasthan)

ABSTRACT

The present investigation was undertaken with the objective of impact assessment on diversification in agriculture and livelihood security of its members through club activities. The investigation adopted ex-post facto research design. A sample size of 80 farmers' club members by employing whole sampling from four farmers' clubs were purposively selected. The findings of the investigation revealed that majority of club members were of young (38.75%) and middle age (46.75%) having education level of secondary (48.75%) and graduation level (38.75%). About 44 per cent of members had 2-4 ha. followed by 28.75 per cent possessed 1-2 ha. land. The maximum number of club members (36.25 %) took up organic farming followed by pisciculture activity (22.50%) and animal husbandry & dairying (21.25%). Other activities like vegetables, beekeeping also took up by respondent members which gave them additional farm income. Further, it was evident that maximum number of club members found to expressed their satisfaction in food security and social security aspects (48.75%).

Key Words: Diversification, Farmer's club, Livelihood, Perception.

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the foundation of the Indian economy. In contrast to the average increase of less than 2% during the previous 50 years, the tenth five-year plan and the national agriculture policy guidelines call for a growth level of 4% in agriculture. The Farmers' Club Program, which NABARD launched in late 1982 is an appropriate and most suitable strategy for transferring agriculture technology to farmers' fields, orienting them to forge better relationships with banks, and allowing them to benefit from collective bargaining power for purchasing inputs and output management. Farmers' clubs (FC) are neighborhood informal gathering places for farmers. Such clubs are organized by rural branches of banks with the backing and financial aid of NABARD. With the improvement of the program, more organizations such as NGOs, Village Associations, KVKs,

SAUs, etc. are now added as organizations for the establishment and promotion of FC. These clubs are designed with the overarching goal of achieving prosperity for the farmers and overall agricultural development in their service area.

Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Sangaria formed eight farmers' club in two clusters namely Sangaria and Pilibanga of Hanumangarh district of Rajasthan. Under NABARD's sponsorship during year 2015-16. Krishi Vigyan Kendra Sangaria extended regular technical, managerial guidance and advisories to the members of farmers clubs for effective functioning in selected area. Different technical and advisory interventions like awareness and meet with expert programmes were provided to these farmers clubs for strengthening and sustainability of these clubs. The present investigation was undertaken with the objective of impact assessment on diversification in agriculture and livelihood security of its members through the clubs' activities.

Corresponding Author's Email: singhkuldeepkvk@gmail.com

¹SMS(Extn. Education), Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Sangaria-335063 Hanumangarh (Rajasthan)

²Professor (Agril.Ext.), SKRAU-ARS, Sriganganagar-335001(Rajasthan)

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Table 1. Details of selected farmers Clubs under investigation.

Sr. No.	Block	Name of farmers Club	Number of Members
1	Sangaria	Guru Nanak Kisan Club, Bhakhranwali	24
2	Pilibanga	Guru Arjun Dev Kisan Club, Amarsinghwala	17
3	Sangaria	Guru Govind Singh Kisan Club, Singhpura	19
4	Sangaria	Baba Ved Parkash Kisan Club, Jandwala Sikhan	20

Table 2. Socio-personal profile of the farmers club members . (N=80)

Variables	Category	Respondents/members	
		Frequency	Percentage
Age (years)	Young (up to 35)	31	38.75
	Middle age (36 to 55)	37	46.25
	Old age (Above 55)	12	15.00
Education	Secondary	39	48.75
	Graduation	31	38.75
	Above Graduation	10	12.5
Land Holding (ha)	Less than 1 ha	07	8.75
	1-2 ha	23	28.75
	2-4 ha	35	43.75
	Above 4 ha	15	18.75
Family Type	Joint	57	71.25
	Nuclear	23	28.75
Animal Possession	up to 2 animals	23	28.75
	2-4 animals	48	60.00
	Above 4 animals	09	11.25
Social Participation	PRI member	02	02.50
	GSS member	67	83.75
	Dairy Cooperative (GANGMUL)	71	88.75
	Others	07	8.75
Mass Media Exposure	News Paper	35	43.75
	Agriculture Magazine	23	28.75
	TV	75	93.75
Social Media Exposure	Cell phone	76	95.00
	Internet/website	11	13.75
	facebook	62	77.5
	You tube	65	81.25
	Whatsapp	71	88.75
	Instagram	23	28.75
	Twitter	05	06.25

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MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present investigation adopted ex-post facto research design. The eight farmer's clubs promoted by Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Sangaria formed in Sangaria and Pilibanga blocks. Out of eight, four farmers' clubs were purposively selected and from which a sample size of 80 club members by employing whole sampling method were selected (Table 1). Various types of security such as housing security, economic security, educational security, social security, and overall livelihood security were worked out separately to assess the livelihood security of the farmers' club members. Assigned scores were given to the selected indicators of each type of security. A well-structured interview schedule was prepared to collect the data. Percentage analysis, mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Farmers' Club Members

It was evident (Table 2) that majority of club members were of young (38.75%) and middle age (46.75%). The educational level of club members was found to be secondary (48.75%) and graduation level (38.75%). Rest of the club members (12.5%) having educational level above graduation. About 44 per cent of members had 2-4 ha. followed by 28.75

per cent possessed 1-2 ha. land. Majority of club members were viewing TV followed by reading newspapers for awareness on general information as well agriculture techniques and various schemes implemented by development departments. The respondents under the investigation were mostly used social media platforms- mobile facebook, youtube and whatsapp for seeking information in agriculture and entertainment.

Assessment of diversification of agricultural activities

The focus of formation and implementation of objectives activities of the group based activities was to improve the income the members which acts as support platform for providing the livelihood security. Under the investigation, the diversification of various land based activities in addition to crop production was documented from their inception and has been presented in the table 3.

The results (Table 3) revealed that there were changes in the agricultural enterprises taken up the farmer's club members after becoming member of their respective clubs. The maximum number of club members (36.25 %) took up organic farming followed by pisciculture activity (22.50%) and animal husbandry & dairying (21.25%). Other activities like vegetables, beekeeping also took up by farmers' club members which gave them

Table 3. Status of diversification of agriculture among farmers' club members. (N=80)

Particulars of diversification	Changes in enterprises over time in due to farmers' club activities			
	At the time of joining the club membership (2015)	Up to year 2022	Changes in enterprises activity in number/area/unit	Percentage change in enterprises activity (%)
Crops	72	79	7	08.75
AH and Dairy	56	73	17	21.25
Vegetables	03	19	16	20.00
Pisciculture	09	27	18	22.50
Organic farming	04	33	29	36.25
Goat Rearing	03	15	12	15.00
Beekeeping	01	09	8	10.00
Value addition	01	07	6	07.50
Others	03	08	5	06.25

Table: 4 Perception assessment of farmer club members on livelihood security**(n=80)**

Livelihood Particulars	Response of Club members (Frequencies and Percentage)				
	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Somewhat agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed
Household Security	37 (46.25)	35 (43.75)	6 (07.50)	2 (02.50)	0 (00.00)
Food Security	39 (48.75)	36 (45.00)	4 (05.00)	1 (01.25)	0 (00.00)
Educational Security	33 (41.25)	37 (46.25)	6 (07.50)	3 (03.75)	1 (01.25)
Income Security	37 (46.25)	39 (48.75)	3 (03.75)	1 (01.25)	0 (00.00)
Social Security	31 (48.75)	39 (48.75)	8 (10.00)	1 (01.25)	1 (01.25)
Overall Security	35 (44.25)	37 (46.50)	5 (06.75)	2 (02.00)	1 (00.50)

*figures in parentheses are percent to total respondents

additional income. It can be said that becoming members of farmers' clubs developed their capacity in farm management and diversification which helps them to increased their farm income.

Perception of respondent's on Livelihood Security

The investigation also recorded the farmer's club member's perception on the various aspects of the livelihood on five point continuum (Table 4). The findings reveal that maximum number of club members found to express their satisfaction in food security and social security aspects (48.75%) equally in the continuum *i.e.*, strongly agreed followed by income, social and educational security as agreed category 48.75, 48.75 and 46.25 per cent, respectively. It was evident (Table 4) that approx. 91 % of the farmers' club members shown their willingness to choose strongly agreed and agreed choices in perception ladder which signified the significance of farmers' club in their livelihood security.

CONCLUSION

It was concluded that formation and sustaining the farmers club have been benefited its members

to diversified their agricultural enterprises which directly support them to enhanced their household income thereby increased their overall livelihood security.

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