

Role of Krishi Vigyan Kendra's in supporting FPO through Capacity Building and Marketing Opportunities

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Most of the farmers in India including Punjab are small and marginal with seasonal produce. There are fragmented buyers for small quantity of seasonal marketable produce. Moreover, there is problem of long marketing channels, transport and warehousing owing to high storage cost. The farmers are also not updated with market information. On other hand, it is not possible for government to provide subsidies to each individual farmer. That's why there is need of aggregation or grouping in the form of farmers' producer companies, farmers' interest group, cooperatives, self help groups, farmers' associations, etc. so that small and marginal farmers may club their marketable produce and find broader marketing opportunities locally as well as in super markets. The govt is also providing subsidies or extending maximum help to farmers' group. In this context, government of India is actively promoting farmers' producer organisations (FPOs) to provide opportunities for small and marginal growers to come together and sale their produce in collective way. The govt of India has also set target to establish 10000 FPOs across the country. Actually, FPOs are emerging as a greater tool in aggregating farmers, empowering them and ensuring better incomes.

FPOs are voluntary organizations command and managed by their farmer members. The members are actively involved in setting up of policies and making decisions related to their particular organization/company. The FPOs are actually open to all persons of similar interest who are willing to accept the responsibilities and give services to the organization without any gender, social, political and or religious discrimination. There are several examples of successful FPOs running across the India particularly in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and

Rajasthan that have made significant growth with time and have shown encouraging results leading to better returns for their produce.

The Krishi Vigyan Kendras' which are working under the mandate of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi are established in almost every district in India. The KVKs are functioning at grass root level and are playing a vital role in agricultural development and execution of lab to land programmes through their extensive role in transferring technologies by regularly organising various extension activities such as skill development training programmes, agro-advisories, exposure visits, exhibitions, demonstrations, literature support, etc. The KVK in other words help in overall socio-economic development of the farmers. The KVKs are also supporting FPOs to greater extent. KVKs are developing and nurturing FPOs for betterment of Farmers. KVK are helping FPOs in business development to marketing. The various services provided by KVKs for the successful running of FPOs are given below:

- Capacity building through skill development programmes (5-7 days) to farmers and farm women or members belonging to FPOs on various technologies viz. improved seed production & planting material/germplasm, scientific cultivation package, improved processing, sorting & grading, packaging techniques, hygienic storage & transportation, dairy farming, pig farming, goat farming, poultry farming, beekeeping, mushroom farming, value addition, integrated farming system, nursery production, embroidery & stitching, organic farming, etc.). Beside short training

programmes (1-3 days) are also conducted time to time or as per the demand of the farmers.

- Extension activities like frontline demonstrations, field days, kisan gosthis, farmers'-scientists interaction programmes, advisories through various platforms like whatsapp groups, youtube channel, m-kisan, exhibitions (also give opportunity to FPOs to display their products), radio/TV programmes, film shows, etc.
- Exposure visits to FPOs running successfully, institutes with well equipped infrastructure & facilities, fields/units of progressive farmers, local mandis, centre of excellence, etc.
- Method demonstrations on sampling techniques, nuresery raising, value added products, hygiene & sanitation, harvesting techniques, handling, packaging, sorting grading, etc.
- Diagnostic visits to identify causes and provide on the spot solutions.
- Tie-ups with reputed of institutes for cross learning and trainings.
- Business planning programmes (offering courses, technical guidance in setting up of units, infrastructure developments, machinery purchase, linkages with firms for branding and packagin, etc.).
- Guide members/farmers regarding credit facilities and establish linkages of farmer-members with banks for loan procedures. Also guide farmer-members for subsidies available with differnt line

departments as farmers are usually not aware of different govt. schmes and flagship programmes.

- Making quality seed/ germplasm available at KVK and providing literature support in local language.
- **Marketing opportunities provided by KVK to FPOs**
- The KVK provide opportunity to FPOs to display their products by making provison of stalls/ exhibitions in various events viz. kisan melas, kisan sammelans, other district/block/village level programmes melas, etc.
- Some KVKs are also helping FPOs associated with them in finalizing demand, arranging transport facility and supplying produce to the wholesaler and retailers. In this way farmers are getting 15-20% extra price due to direct linkages and value addition of produce.
- KVKs also help making provision of marketing of produce with SHGs.
- Provide opportunity of marketing with reputed organisations by creating linkages
- 'Kisan Hut' help farmers sell their produce directly to consumers this increase the profit margin.
- KVKs also help FPOs directly by financial support received in the form of projects from NABARD, etc.
- E-commerce is an online platform of marketing where KVKs can play a pivotal role by guiding FPOs through technical knowledge.

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