Profile characteristics of Users and Non- users of Kalgudi Digital Platform in Mulkanoor FPO

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ABSTRACT: In recent years, use of digital technologies, more so platforms, have contributed immensely to the strengthening FPOs and helped them solve diverse challenges in relation to market linkages, access to financial services The present study was conducted during 2021-22 in Mulkanoor farmers producer organisation in Mulkanoor village of Bheemadevarapally mandal, Hanumakonda district, Telangana state. This FPO was selected purposively as it adopted Kalgudi digital platform for FPO management, dissemination of information and community interaction. For studying the effectiveness of digital platform in mulkanoor farmer producer organization even the profile characteristics of the users and non-users of kalgudi digital platform in mulkanoor farmer producer organization were studied. Users and Non-users from four villages of two mandals was selected. From each villages26 users and 26 non-users were selected making a total of 56 respondents from each village. Users are those who are the members of mulkanoor farmer producer organization and using kalgudi digital platforms and non-users are those who are the members of mulkanoor farmer producer organization and using other digital platform for their agricultural activities. Hence, a total of 208 farmers were selected as primary respondents and data was collected from them with the help of well-structured interview schedule though personal interview method. Most of users (75.96 %) and non-users (63.46 %) belonged to Middle age category, most of the users having secondary school level of education (30.77 %) whereas non-users were senior secondary school level of education (26.92 %). Nearly one- third of users (31.73 %) were marginal farmers and non-users (35.58%) were small farmers. Higher proportion of users (75.96 %) and non-users (71.15%) had 5-10 years of farming experience. More than two-third of users (69.23 %) and non-users (62.50 %) had membership in one social organization. One-third of the users (35.57%) had attended more than two training programmes whereas one-third of non-users (34.61%) had not attended training programmes. Half of the users (51.92 %) had high level of mass media exposure whereas more than one-third of non-users (41.34 %) had high level of mass media exposure. Nearly half of the users (45.19 %) had high level of innovativeness and non-users (39.62 %) had medium level of innovativeness. Most of the users (46.15 %) had high level of utilization of digital platform and most of the non-users (38.46 %) had low- level utilization of digital platform. Higher percentage of users (46.15 %) and non-users (52.88 %) had medium level of information management behaviour.

Keywords: Agri-business, digital platform, Mulkanoor farmer producer organization, profile.

INTRODUCTION

In India, nearly three-fourth of the farming community consists of small and marginal farmers. Thus, to improve the living the standard of the farmers, it becomes necessary to empower the small and marginal farmers (Kanavi, 2014). Farmer Producer Organization is one such viable approach to empower the small and marginal farmers (NABARD, 2021). FPO aims to enhance the farmer's competitiveness and to increase their advantage in emerging market opportunities by providing inputs for farming, market linkages, training, networking, financial and technical advice to the farmers. In order to avoid middlemen exploitation and

to supply farm inputs to farmers, providing market linkages; Farmer Producer Organization acts as an efficient way. Similarly, to address the problems of FPOs, it needs marketplaces coupled with extension services to provide sustainable impact (Ajith, 2018). Digital platforms facilitate the FPO, to acts as a single window system, to reach out the farmers and to transfer technologies (Raju *et al.,* 2017). Kalgudi digital platform is one such agri-business platform, which is available online at free of cost and developed by Vasudhaika software solutions, Hyderabad. It connects all the stakeholders in agriculture such as producers (farmers), buyers (traders), service providers, input companies, logistics companies, consumers,

institutional buyers, FPOs and its members to solve each other's problems and benefit together towards agricultural and horticultural development. It can be accessible through web browsers and mobile devices and supports communication through SMS. Kalgudi digital platform is one such agri-business convergence platform, which provides solutions to problems by collaborating with different service providers, business and Government and research organizations. Similarly, Kalgudi digital platform was introduced in Mulkanoor FPO for provide personalized agricultural recommendations to its farmers. Thus, there arises a need to understand the profile characteristics of users and non-users of Kalgudidigital platform.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Ex-post facto research design was adopted since the phenomenon was already occurred. In Telangana, Hanumakonda district was purposively selected since it possesses more number of farmers registered in Mulkanoor FPO. Two mandals from Hanumakonda district were purposively selected; namely Elkathurthy and Bheemdevarapallli, since more number of farmers in this two mandals were registered in Mulkanoor FPO.From each mandal, two villages were selected purposively. The villages with highly active users of kalgudi digital platform were selected. They were Gopalpur and Jeelgula from Elkathurthy mandal and Mulkannor and Kothapally from Bheemdevarapalli mandal respectively. From each village, 52 farmers will be selected based on proportionate sampling method. Among the 52 farmers, 26 farmers were users and 26 farmers were non-users of Kalgudi digital platform. Hence, a total of 208 farmers as primary respondents of the study were selected. A well-structured interview schedule was developed and the primary data was gathered from the users and non-users from the kalgudi digital platform through personal interview method. The responses from the farmers were recorded, tabulated, assigned scores and analyzed to understand the profile characteristics of users and non-users of Kalgudi digital platform. The major findings of the study were presented as follows;

RESULTS

Age. From the Table 1, It was observed that majority of the users belonged to middle age (75.96%), followed by old age (14.42%) and young age (9.62%) farmers. Similarly, most of the non-users belonged to middle age (63.46%), followed by old age (29.80%) and young age (6.73%) respectively.

Education. From the Table 1, It was reported that majority of the users were educated upto secondary school level of education (30.77%), followed by senior secondary school (22.12%), upper primary school (14.42%), primary school (11.54%), under-graduate (7.69%), illiterate (6.73%), can read and write (4.81%), post-graduate (1.92%) level of education respectively. Similarly, among the non-users of Kalgudi digital platform, most of them were educated upto senior secondary level of education (26.92%), followed by secondary school (20.19%), upper primary school

(14.42%), primary school (12.50%), illiterate (10.27%), can read and write (8.65%), undergraduate (6.73%) respectively. None of the non-users had post graduation level of education.

Farm size. From Table 1, It was observed that most of the users of the Kalgudi digital platform were marginal farmers (31.73%), followed by small (20.19%), medium (19.23%), semi-medium (17.31%) and large (11.54%) size of farm respectively. Similarly, a higher proportion of the non-users of Kalgudi digital platform had small size of farm (35.58%), followed by marginal (22.12%), semi-medium (18.27%), large (12.50%) and medium (11.53%) size of farm respectively.

Farm experience. From Table 1, It can be seen that a higher proportion of the users of Kalgudi digital platform had a farming experience of 5-10 years (75.96%), followed by users had farming experience more than 10 years (14.42%) and only 9.62 per cent of the users had less than 5 years of farming experience. Similarly, most of the non-users had 5-10 years of farming experience (71.15%), followed by more than 10 years of farming experience (15.38%) and remaining 13.46 per cent of the non-users had less than 5 years of farming experience respectively.

Social participation. From Table 1, It was revealed that more than two-third of the users of the Kalgudi digital platform had membership in one social organization (69.23%), followed by 22.12 per cent had membership in more than one organization and 8.65 per cent of them had no membership in any social organization. Meanwhile, nearly two-third of the non-users had membership in one organization (62.50%), followed by membership in more than one organization (17.31%) and no membership in any organization (20.19%) respectively.

Trainings received. From Table 1, It was seen that higher percentage of the users had attended more than two training programmes (35.57%), followed by one training (25.96%), two trainings (21.15%), and no trainings attended (17.30%). Similarly, most of the non-users had not attended trainings (34.61%), followed by attending one training (26.92%), two trainings (20.19%) and only 18.26 percent had attended more than two training programmes.

Mass media exposure. From Table 1, It was reported that Half of the users of Kalgudi platform had High level of mass media exposure (51.92 %), followed by medium (34.61 %) and low level of mass media exposure (13.46 %) respectively. In other hand, (41.34 %) non-users had high level of mass media exposure, followed by medium (31.73 %) and low level of mass media exposure (26.92 %) respectively.

Innovativeness. From Table 1, It was observed that majority of the users of the Kalgudi digital platform had high level of innovativeness (45.19 %), followed by medium (44.23 %) and (10.58 %) low level of innovativeness respectively. Among the non-users, it was observed that (39.62 %) non-users had medium level of innovativeness, followed by high (32.69 %) and low (27.88 %) level of innovativeness respectively.

Extent of utilization of digital platform. From Table1, It was reported that majority of the users (46.15 %) had

high level of utilization of digital platform, followed bymedium (30.76 %) and low(23.07 %) level of utilization of digital platform respectively. Similarly, most of the non-users reported low level of utilization (38.46 %), followed by high (35.58 %) and medium (25.96 %) level of utilization of digital platform respectively.

Information Management Behaviour. From Table 1,

It was identified that higher percentage of the users had medium level of information management behavior (46.15 %), followed by high (32.69 %) and high (21.15 %) level of information management behavior respectively. Similarly, most of the non-users had medium (52.88 %) level of information management behavior, followed by low (27.88 %) and high (19.23 %) level of information management behavior respectively.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents based on profile.

Sr. No.	Variable	Categories	Users (n=104)		Non- Users (n=104)	
			f	%	*f*	%
1.	Age	Young age (< 35 years)	10	9.62	13	6.73
		Middle age (36-55 years)	79	75.96	47	63.46
		Old age (> 55 years)	15	14.42	44	29.80
2	Education	Illiterate	7	6.73	11	10.27
		Can read and write	5	4.81	9	8.65
		Primary school (Up to5th)	12	11.54	13	12.50
		Upper primary school (Up to 8th)	15	14.42	15	14.42
		Secondary school (Up to 10th)	32	30.77	21	20.19
		Senior secondary school (Up to 12th)	23	22.12	28	26.92
		Undergraduate	8	7.69	7	6.73
		Post-graduate	2	1.92	0	0.00
3.	Farm size	Marginal (<1 ha)	33	31.73	23	22.12
		Small (1-2 ha)	21	20.19	37	35.58
		Semi-medium (2-4 ha)	18	17.31	19	18.27
		Medium (4 -10 ha)	20	19.23	12	11.53
		Large (>10 ha)	12	11.54	13	12.50
4.	Farm experience	Less than 5 years	10	9.62	14	13.46
		5- 10 years	79	75.96	74	71.15
		More than 10 years	15	14.42	16	15.38
5.	Social participation	No membership	9	8.65	21	20.19
		Membership in one organization	72	69.23	65	62.50
		Membership in more than one organization	23	22.12	18	17.31
6.	Trainings received	No trainings attended	18	17.30	36	34.61
		One training	27	25.96	28	26.92
		Two trainings	22	21.15	21	20.19
		More than 2 trainings	37	35.57	19	18.26
7.	Mass media	Low (11-17)	14	13.46	28	26.92
		Medium (17-23)	36	34.61	33	31.73
		High (23-29)	54	51.92	43	41.34
8.	Innovativeness	Low. (9-15)	11	10.58	29	27.88
		Medium (15-21)	46	44.23	41	39.62
		High (21-27)	47	45.19	34	32.69
9.	Extent of utilization of digital platform	Low (14-23)	24	23.07	40	38.46
		Medium (23-31)	32	30.76	27	25.96
		High (31-40)	48	46.15	37	35.58
10.	Information Management Behaviour	Low (20-27)	22	21.15	29	27.88
		Medium (27-34)	48	46.15	55	52.88
		High (34-40)	34	32.69	8	19.23
		Total	104	100.00	104	100.00

SUGESSTIONS

— Though farmers are effectively using Kalgudi digital platform, awareness should be created among the non-users regarding the benefits of digital platform and more farmers & FPOs should be engaged.

— More brands should be included in the selling of produce in digital platforms to increase extent of utilization of platform the usage among users.

— Universities in collaboration with private players should indulge in finding new features in digital platforms (Madan, 2017).

— Digital platforms should be available in regional languages and should have had ease to access by illiterate farmers.

— Transparency and easy usage of digital platform inspires the farmers to use more often (Nithya, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Digital technologies provide tailor made agricultural adviced to farmers according to their individual needs in different ways. Digital technologies reduced information barriers as accessed by all the users of kalgudi digital platform, provided access to new input markets by high extent of utilization of platforms by users, transparent information on market prices made available to every farmer, improved farmer's bargaining power and provide improved access to personalized information, new technologies which ultimately increase the levels of commercialization. By employing these techniques, farmer's cropping pattern changed which in turn increased input intensity, crop yield, sales volume and farmer's income.

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