**Farmer Producers Organisations Board of Directors (BoDs) social and economic empowerment, roles and responsibilities in Telangana state, India**

**ABSTRACT:**

The study was aimed to identify the Board of Directors (BoDs) social and economic empowerment as well as their roles and responsibilities in selected Farmer Producer Organisations in Telangana state.Ex-post facto research design was used for the study.The present study was conducted for Board of Directors of NABARD promoted FPOs in Telangana state. The samples were selected randomly from mixed FPOs and women FPOs namely 60 men BoDs and 60 women BoDs from mixed FPOs and 60 women BoDs from women FPOs. Thus constituting to sample of 180 respondents**.** The data was collected usingwell-structured and pre tested interview schedule**.** We find out that in economic empowerment, majority of the men BoDs in mixed FPOs felt that access to quality inputs and services ranked as 1st economic empowerment aspect with the garret score as 75.26. With regards to women BoDs in mixed FPOs, majority (garret score 66.33) of the respondents believed that reduction in cost of cultivation as major aspect by which they become economically empower. Among women BoDs in women FPOs, majority (garret score 62.98) felt that access to quality inputs and services improves their economic empowerment. Overall data showed that, majority of the men BoDs in mixed FPOs and women BoDs in mixed and women FPO felt that good recognition in the society as major social empowerment aspect by ranking it first with garret scores as 70.30, 72.93 and 66.45 respectively. The findings showed that there was a clear gender disparity in the roles and responsibilities of Board of Directors (BoDs) within mixed and women-only Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in Telangana state. The results concluded that there is a need for focused capacity-building initiatives, leadership training for women, and policy interventions that promote equitable participation of men and women, challenge stereotypes, and empower women to play a substantial role in FPO activities.

***Key words:*** *Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), Board of Directors (BoDs), Men BoDs, women BoDs,*

INTRODUCTION

As per the agricultural census of 2015, small and marginal landholdings (up to 2.00 hectares) constituted 86.21% of all holdings in 2015-16, up from 84.97 percent in 2011-12. Despite their important role, small and marginal farmers encounter numerous challenges. Although they benefit from traditional farming knowledge and low-cost family labour, their limited negotiating power often leaves them susceptible to relying on formal contracts and monopolistic exploitation (Bachke, 2009). Additionally, they encounter high transaction costs for non- labour activities (Poulton *et al.* 2010), restricted access to credit, insurance and various risks related to climate pests and market uncertainty (Anonymous, 2008). The growing competition from agricultural imports has further strained their economic viability (Desai & Joshi, 2014)

To address these challenges, numerous developing nations, such as India, are transitioning to commercial agribusiness frameworks (Mukherjee *et al*. 2012). One such framework developed by India was to establishment of farmer collectives, allowing smallholders to collectively purchase inputs, process products, and sell their harvests.

According to Ministry of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (2021) reports that approximately 80% of economically active women in India are working in agriculture, accounting for 48% of self-employed farmers and 33% of the agricultural labor force. Their contributions cover every step of the agricultural value chain, from pre-harvest processes to post-harvest activities like processing, packaging, and marketing (Catherine et al. 2024). Empowering women in agriculture is not just a matter of ethics but also crucial for achieving developmental goals, especially Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2.3, which aims to double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers. SDG 5 further underlines the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

To achieve these objectives, targeted gender-specific interventions are essential. Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) present a particularly promising platform for implementing these interventions. FPOs act as institutional channels that allow women to access agricultural inputs, services, credit, markets, and opportunities for capacity-building. Based on statistics from National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), among the 5,073 FPOs supported by its funds, only 178, or just over 3%, are led exclusively by women. This significant underrepresentation highlights the pressing necessity for affirmative measures to bolster women's inclusion not just as participants but also as leaders and decision-makers within these organizations.

As the Indian Agricultural sector moves towards enhanced formalization, ensuring that women farmers are not marginalized is essential. Promoting women-led FPOs can improve their access to resources, credit, and markets, while also assisting women in transitioning from agricultural labourers to independent entrepreneurs. Women’s engagement in agricultural value chains is highly influenced by context, with enduring gender inequalities present in terms of access to productive assets, extension services, and decision-making roles (Kanchi, 2010; SOFA and Doss, 2011). Cultural norms, lower educational and skill levels further limit women's bargaining power and involvement in leadership roles, both in households and within FPOs.

The Self-Help Group (SHG) model serves as a successful example, with a loan recovery rate surpassing 98.00 per cent. SHGs have shown that women possess financial discipline and commitment. FPOs can greatly benefit from collaborating with existing SHG networks, utilizing their organizational structure and social capital. In this regard, promoting 70–80% women-only FPOs is a calculated move that will help inclusive agricultural growth, poverty alleviation, and increased food security in addition to empowering women. With this background the current article focused on “Board of Directors (BoDs) social and economic empowerment as well as their roles and responsibilities in selected Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) in Telangana state”

**Methodology**

The ex-post facto research design was used to carry out the investigation. Women-led FPOs and mixed FPOs supported by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) were included. Out of total 277 active mixed FPOs, 44 best working FPOs were selected and out of 10 women led FPOs, 6 best working FPOs were selected for the study. From the selected FPOs, In Mixed FPOs, 60 men and 60 women BoDs were selected randomly, thus making a total of 120 Board of Director and from selected women FPOs, 10 women Board of Directors (BoDs) were selected making a total of 60 women BoDs. Thus, 180 respondents in all were chosen for the research.

The study was based on the primary data collected from the women Board of Directors and men Board of Directors of selected women FPOs and mixed FPOs using well-structured and pre tested interview schedule by personal interviews, observation method and BoDs board meeting.

**ANALYTICAL TOOLS USED FOR THE STUDY SHOWN BELOW**

1. **Henry Garrett’s ranking technique**

Percent position = 100 (Rij - 0.5)

Nj

Where,

Rij = Rank given for the ith variable by jth respondents

Nj = Number of variable ranked by jth respondents

With the help of Garrett‟s table, the percent position estimated was converted into scores. Then for each factor, the scores of each individual were added and then total value of scores and mean values of score were calculated. The factors having highest mean value were considered to be the most important factor under the study. The mean scores for all the factors were arranged in the order of their ranks and inferences were drawn.

1. **Frequency:**

Frequency was used to know the distribution pattern of the respondents according to the variables. In this study, frequency was calculated for gender roles and responsibilities of BoDs of FPO.

1. **Percentages:**

Percentages were used for standardization of size by calculating the number of individuals in a given category when the total numbers were 180.

results and discussion

**Economic Empowerment**

It refers to the ability of BoDs to enhance their financial well-being through increased income, improved access to resources, and better decision-making in agricultural and allied activities. The respondents ranked the statement in order as per their preference for the economic empowerment.

**Table (1) Distribution of respondents according to their economic empowerment**

**n1=60, n2=60, n3=60, N=180**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S. No.** | **Economic Empowerment** | **Ranking in order** | | | | | |
| **Mixed FPO** | | | | **Women FPO** | |
| **Men BoDs (60)** | | **Women BoDs (60)** | | **Women BoDs (60)** | |
| **Garret score** | **Rank** | **Garret score** | **Rank** | **Garret score** | **Rank** |
| 1. | Income | 36.7 | 7 | 35.2 | 8 | 36.6 | 8 |
| 2. | Saving | 45.86 | 5 | 47.26 | 5 | 38.66 | 7 |
| 3. | Land Holding | 24.73 | 8 | 39.06 | 6 | 47.28 | 5 |
| 4. | Access to Market Information | 62.36 | 3 | 64.33 | 2 | 60.8 | 2 |
| 5. | Access to quality inputs and services | 75.26 | 1 | 63.13 | 3 | 62.98 | 1 |
| 6. | Commercialization and diversification of Agricultural Activities | 40.53 | 6 | 37.73 | 7 | 41.86 | 6 |
| 7. | Reduction in cost of cultivation | 63.66 | 2 | 66.33 | 1 | 60.71 | 3 |
| 8. | Market linkage | 54.86 | 4 | 51.53 | 4 | 55.08 | 4 |

It was noticed from the table (1) that the economic empowerment of the respondents revealed that, majority of the men BoDs in mixed FPOs felt that access to quality inputs and services ranked as 1st major category which helped in their economic empowerment with the garret score 75.26 followed by reduction in cost of cultivation (66.66 - 2nd rank), access to market information (62.36 -3rd rank), market linkages (54.86 -4th rank), savings (45.86 -5th rank), commercialization and diversification of agricultural activities (40.53 - 6th rank), income (36.70 -7th rank) and land holding with garret score of 45.86 ranked at last as 8th rank in BoDs economic empowerment.

With regards to women BoDs in mixed FPOs, majority (66.33) of the respondents felt that reduction in cost of cultivation as major aspect by which they become economically empower by ranking it 1st followed by access to market information (64.33), access to quality inputs and services (63.13), market linkage (51.53), saving (47.26), land holding (39.06), commercialization and diversification of agricultural activities (37.73), and income (35.20) with ranking in the order of magnitude.

Among women BoDs in women FPOs, majority (62.98) of the BoDs felt that access to quality inputs and services improves their economic empowerment by ranking it first followed by access to market information (60.80), reduction in cost of cultivation (60.71), market linkages (55.08), land holding (47.28), commercialization and diversification of agricultural activities (41.86), savings (38.66), income (36.60) with the ranking in order of 2nd, 3rd, 4th,5th,6th,7th and 8th respectively.

Overall, the economic empowerment of all the respondents of FPOs mostly due to increased access to market information, access to quality inputs, and reduction in cost of cultivation. This might be due to the increased income and better opportunities for BoDs. Their involvement had also contributed to expanded knowledge on farming practices. As a result, BoDs achieved greater economic stability within their area compared to other members of FPOs. The results were in line with the study of Kujur *et al.* (2019)

**Social empowerment**

It referred to the process by which respondents of FPO gain increased confidence, participation, and influence in social and community activities. The respondents ranked the items listed in table as per their preference for the social empowerment.

**Table (2) Distribution of respondents according to their social empowerment**

**n1=60, n2=60, n3=60, N=180**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S. No.** | **Social Empowerment** | **Ranking in order** | | | | | |
| **Mixed FPO** | | | | **Women FPO** | |
| **Men BoDs (60)** | | **Women BoDs (60)** | | **Women BoDs (60)** | |
| **Garret score** | **Rank** | **Garret score** | **Rank** | **Garret score** | **Rank** |
| 1. | Participation in social activities | 27.76 | 9 | 43.2 | 7 | 50.95 | 5 |
| 2. | Participation in village administration | 44.63 | 6 | 52.73 | 5 | 46.71 | 7 |
| 3. | Recognition in society | 70.3 | 1 | 72.93 | 1 | 66.45 | 1 |
| 4. | Sense of leadership | 65.4 | 2 | 58.06 | 3 | 56.06 | 3 |
| 5. | Problem solving | 63.96 | 3 | 55.33 | 4 | 58.16 | 2 |
| 6. | Sense of social responsibility | 31.2 | 8 | 32.66 | 8 | 43.86 | 8 |
| 7. | Communication skills | 62.86 | 4 | 58.53 | 2 | 54.86 | 4 |
| 8. | Organizational skills | 53.8 | 5 | 49 | 6 | 48.68 | 6 |
| 9. | Knowledge on technologies | 34.06 | 7 | 31.53 | 9 | 28.23 | 9 |

Results in the table (2 revealed that majority of the men BoDs in mixed FPOs said that good recognition in the society was gained as major social empowerment by ranking it 1st with garret score 70.30 followed by sense of leadership (65.40-2nd rank), problem solving (63.96-3rd rank), communication skills (62.86-4th rank), organizational skills (53.80-5th rank), participation in village administration (44.63- 6th rank), knowledge on technologies (34.06-7th rank), sense of social responsibility (31.20-8th rank) and participation in social activities ranked least with garret score 27.76 which ranked as 9th rank

With respect to women BoDs in mixed FPOs, majority of them felt that recognition in society gained was major social empowerment felt by respondents by ranking it 1st with garret score of 72.93 followed by communication skills (58.53), sense of leadership (58.06), problem solving (55.33), participation in village administration (52.73), organizational skills (49), participation in social activities (43.20), sense of social responsibility (32.66) and knowledge on technologies (31.53) with ranking in order of their scores.

In case of women BoDs in women FPOs, majority of the respondents had recognition in the society as their major social empowerment with 1st rank (66.45) followed by problem solving (58.16), sense of leadership (56.06), communication skills (54.86), participation in social activities (50.95), organizational skills (48.68), participation in village administration (46.71), sense of social responsibility (43.86), and knowledge on technologies (28.23) with ranking in order of magnitude.

The possible reason could be that the male BoDs of FPOs participate in every FPO activity that raises their level of social consciousness. In addition to increasing their social status, serving in the village's governing body helps them develop their leadership and problem-solving abilities. Frequent interactions with private stakeholders, NGOs, and public employees further boost their influence and visibility. Due to the inclusion of women as BoDs and the promotion of gender equality, women BoDs in mixed and women FPOs are socially empowered by their social recognition, communication, leadership, and problem-solving abilities. Consequently, compared to other FPO members, women BoDs create more robust social networks and have more sway within their community. The same results were seen in the study of Kujur *et al.* (2019) and Joshi & Choudhary (2018)

Gender roles and responsibilities of BoDs of selected FPOs.

Gender roles and responsibilities of the Board of Directors (BoDs) in farmer producer organizations (FPOs) refers to the socially constructed roles, responsibilities, and duties assigned to BOD members in managing and leading FPO activities. This includes their participation in leadership, decision-making, operational tasks, governance and administration within the organization.

Based on the “yes” or “no” responses given by the respondents and their roles as BoDs in the FPO given in the form of percentage.

The table 3 depicted that among mixed FPO, cent (100.00%) of the women and men BoDs felt that men BoDs play major role in conducting regular meetings as per schedule followed by CEO role (77.50 %) and women BoDs (35.83 %) role. In operating bank account in name of FPG, majority (60.00 %) of the respondents felt that men BoDs had major role followed by no role of BoDs (36.66 %) and only meagre percentage (03.33 %) of women involve in this role. In mobilization of share capital, cent (100.00%) of the women and men BoDs felt that men BoDs play major role followed by CEO role (53.33 %) and women BoDs role (20.00 %). In leverage of loan and grant support, majority (86.66 %) of the male BoDs only had involvement and remaining 13.33 per cent had no role. In marketing committee participation, majority (81.66 %) of men BoDs were participating and remaining 18.33 per cent of the BoDs had no participation. None of the respondents i.e., men BoDs, women BoDs and CEOs had participated in custom hiring committee. In development of FPO micro plan, cent (100.00 %) per cent of men BoDs involves as per the opinion of men and women BoDs followed by CEO role (48.33 %) and women BoDs role (21.66 %). In formulating objectives and strategies of FPOs, cent (100.00 %) per cent of men BoDs role was seen followed by women role (47.50 %) and CEO role (38.33 %). In supervision and appointment of CEO, cent (100.00 %) per cent of women and men BoDs were involved. In regard to record keeping and accounting, cent (100.00 %) per cent of the respondents felt that it was a CEO role. In both financial management and business transactions, cent (100.00 %) per cent of the men BoDs were involved whereas, CEOs involve with the percentage of 55.00 per cent and 42.50 per cent respectively and only meagre (05.00 %) per cent of women role was seen in financial management as per women and men BoDs opinions. In execution of power and contribution to business performance, cent (100.00 %) per cent of women and men BoDs felt that men BoDs take the responsibility. In implementation of strategic business plan, cent (100.00 %) per cent of respondents felt that men BoDs involved and 38.33 per cent said that CEO also take care of implementation of FPOs strategic business plan. In organising annual general meeting, cent (100.00 %) per cent of respondents felt that men BoDs take the role followed by CEO (76.66 %), and women BoDs (25.00 %) role. In convergence and partnership with other FPOs, majority (94.16 %) of the respondents felt that men BoDs only involve in it and only meagre percentage of respondents felt women BoDs (08.33 %) and CEO (05.83 %) also involve in it. In enrol and cancellation of membership, cent (100.00 %) per cent of respondents felt that men BoDs involve and majority (86.66 %) of respondents felt women BoDs also involve in enrol and cancellation of membership. In mobilization and utilization of fund, cent (100.00 %) per cent of respondents felt men BoDs involve, 27.50 per cent felt that women BoDs also involve and only 03.33 per cent felt that even CEO also involves. In allocation of surplus and deficit management, cent (100.00 %) per cent of respondents felt men BoDs involve and only 27.50 per cent of respondents felt that women BoDs had role. Cent (100.00 %) of BoDs in mixed FPOs felt that men involve in monitoring of FPO activities followed by CEOs role (95.00 %) and female BoDs (63.33 %) role.

With regards to women FPOs, cent (100.00%) per cent of the respondents felt that women BoDs and CEOs conduct regular meetings as per schedule. In operating bank account in name of FPG, majority (78.33 %) of the respondents said that women BoDs don’t have any role and only 21.66 per cent of women BoDs had role. In case of mobilization of share capital, savings and patronage to members, majority (91.66 %) of the BoDs felt that women BoDs only take the responsibility followed by CEOs (55.00 %) role. Majority (61.66 %) of the respondents don’t take role in loan and grant support as per the opinion of BoDs followed by women BoDs role (38.33 %) and CEO role (23.33 %). Majority (88.33 %) of the respondents had opinion that there was no role of BoDs in marketing committee and only 11.66 per cent BoDs believe that women BoDs had role. Cent (100.00 %) per cent of the respondents felt there was no role of women BoDs of women FPOs in custom hiring committee. In development of micro plan, majority (80.00%) of BoDs felt women BoDs role existed followed by CEO role (65.00 %) and no role (20.00 %). In formulating of objectives and strategies, cent (100.00 %) per cent of the women BoDs involve and 40.00 per cent of the CEOs involve as per BoDs opinions. Cent (100.00 %) per cent of the respondents said that in women FPOs women BoDs play role in Supervision/ Appointment of CEO. In record keeping and accounting, cent (100.00 %) per cent of the respondents said that the role was played by CEOs. In financial management, majority (91.66 %) of the respondents said that women BoDs involve followed by CEOs role (88.33 %). Majority (93.33 %) of the BoDs said that women BoDs involve in business transactions followed by CEOs role (88.33 %). Cent (100.00 %) per cent of the respondents felt that execution of power was handled by only women BoDs. In implementation of strategic business planning, majority (91.66 %) of the BoDs said that women BoDs play role followed by CEO (88.33 %) role. In organising annual general meeting, cent (100.00 %) per cent of women BoDs felt that they can handle independently followed by CEOs involvement (96.66 %). In contribution to business performance, majority (88.33 %) of the respondents felt that women BoDs involved in role followed by CEO role (36.66 %) and no role (11.66 %). In convergence and partnership with other FPOs, majority (73.33 %) of the respondents felt that there was no role followed by women BoDs role (26.66 %) and CEO role (16.66 %). In enrol and cancellation of membership, majority (100.00 %) of the respondents felt that women BoDs takes the responsibility. In mobilization and utilization of funds, majority (100.00 %) of the respondents felt that women take the responsibility followed by CEO role (48.33 %). In allocation of surplus and deficit management, cent (100.00 %) per cent of the respondents felt that women BoDs take the responsibility followed by CEOs involvement (48.33 %). In monitoring of FPO activities, cent (100.00 %) of the respondents felt that women BoDs and CEOs both take the responsibility.

The probable reason for the dominant role of men in administration, financial control, governance and business activities in mixed FPOs may be due to the perception that men were primary decision-makers. Cultural norms also favour them in handling FPO activities leading to their strong control over financial aspects like banking transactions, loans, and grants. Additionally, men are typically more involved in capital mobilization due to their broader networking and financial management skills. The belief that men have better expertise in strategic thinking further positions them as the primary actors in business strategy execution. Despite being on the boards, women in mixed FPOs are frequently relegated to supporting roles rather than leadership positions. They may not be able to participate in important financial and governance operations of FPOs due to factors like low literacy, limited market exposure, and low confidence in decision-making. Another explanation for the low participation of women on boards of directors could be their insecurity in managing the business aspects of FPO.

Women BoDs in women-led FPOs were given more authority over financial management, governance, and decision-making. This may be because women may now confidently assume leadership roles due to the lack of male supremacy. Women BoDs in women-led FPOs actively participate in all FPO activities, in contrast to mixed FPOs. However, CEOs were taking on a few responsibilities in FPOs, such as maintaining financial records and accounting, which distracted women from the FPO's operational effectiveness.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S. No**  **Table 3 Gender roles and responsibilities of BoDs in selected FPOs.**  **n1=120, n2=60, N=180** | **Indicators** | **Mixed FPO (n1=120)** | | | | **Women FPO (n2=60)** | | | |
| **Men BoD** | **Women BoD** | **CEO** | **No role** | **Men BoD** | **Women BoD** | **CEO** | **No role** |
| 1 | Conduct regular meetings as per schedule | 120  (100.00%) | 43  (35.83%) | 93  (77.50%) | 0 | 0 | 60  (100.00 %) | 60  (100.00 %) | 00 |
| 2 | Operate bank account in name of FPG | 72  (60.00 %) | 4  (3.33 %) | 0 | 44  (36.66%) | 0 | 13  (21.66 %) | 00 | 47  (78.33 %) |
| 3 | Mobilization of share capital, savings and patronage to members | 120  (100.00%) | 24  (20.00%) | 42  (53.33 %) | 0 | 0 | 55  (91.66 %) | 33  (55.00 %) | 00 |
| 4 | Leverage of loan and grant support | 104  (86.66 %) | 0 | 0 | 16  (13.33 %) | 0 | 23  (38.33 %) | 14  (23.33 %) | 37  (61.66%) |
| 5 | Participation in marketing committee | 98  (81.66 %) | 0 | 00 | 22  (18.33 %) | 0 | 7  (11.66 %) | 00 | 53  (88.33 %) |
| 6 | Participation in custom hiring committee | 0 | 0 | 0 | 120  (100.00%) | 0 | 00 | 00 | 60  (100.00 %) |
| 7 | Development of micro plan | 120  (100.00%) | 26  (21.66 %) | 58  (48.33 %) | 0 | 0 | 48  (80.00%) | 39  (65.00 %) | 12  (20.00 %) |
| 8 | Formulating Objective and Strategies of FPOs | 120  (100.00%) | 57  (47.50 %) | 46  (38.33 %) | 00 | 0 | 60  (100.00 %) | 24  (40.00 %) | 00 |
| 9 | Supervision/ Appointment of CEO | 120  (100.00%) | 120  (100.00%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 60  (100.00 %) | 00 | 00 |
| 10 | Record Keeping and Accounting | 0 | 0 | 120  (100.00%) | 0 | 0 | 00 | 60  (100.00 %) | 00 |
| 11 | Financial Management | 120  (100.00%) | 6  (5.00%) | 66  (55.00%) | 0 | 0 | 55  (91.66 %) | 53  (88.33 %) | 00 |
| 12 | Business Transactions | 120  (100.00%) | 0 | 51  (42.50 %) | 0 | 0 | 56  (93.33%) | 53  (88.33 %) | 00 |
| 13 | Execution of Power | 120  (100.00%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 60  (100.00 %) | 00 | 00 |
| 14 | Implementation of Business Planning | 120  (100.00%) | 0 | 46  (38.33 %) | 0 | 0 | 55  (91.66 %) | 53  (88.33 %) | 00 |
| 15 | Organizing Annual general Meeting | 120  (100.00%) | 30  (25.00 %) | 92  (76.66%) | 0 | 0 | 60  (100.00 %) | 58  (96.66 %) | 00 |
| 16 | Contribution to Business Performance | 120  (100.00%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 53  (88.33 %) | 22  (36.66 %) | 07  (11.66 %) |
| 17 | Convergence and partnership with other FPOs | 113  (94.16%) | 10  (8.33%) | 0 | 7  (05.83%) | 0 | 16  (26.66 %) | 10  (16.66 %) | 44  (73.33 %) |
| 18 | Enrol and cancellation of Membership | 120  (100.00%) | 104  (86.66%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 60  (100.00 %) | 00 | 00 |
| 19 | Mobilisation and utilization of Funds | 120  (100.00%) | 33  (27.50 %) | 4  (03.33 %) | 0 | 0 | 60  (100.00 %) | 29  (48.33 %) | 00 |
| 20 | Allocation of surplus and Deficit management | 120  (100.00%) | 33  (27.50%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 60  (100.00 %) | 29  (48.33 %) | 00 |
| 21 | Monitoring of FPO activities | 120  (100.00%) | 76  (63.33 %) | 114  (95.00%) |  | 0 | 60  (100.00 %) | 60   1. ) | 00 |

\*Multiple responses were taken

4. Conclusion

In economic empowerment, majority of the men BoDs in mixed FPOs felt that access to quality inputs and services through which they are economically empowered. With regards to women BoDs in mixed FPOs, majority of the respondents believed that reduction in cost of cultivation as major aspect by which they become economically empower. Among women BoDs in women FPOs, majority felt that access to quality inputs and services improves their economic empowerment. Overall data showed that, majority of the men BoDs in mixed FPOs and women BoDs in mixed and women FPO felt that good recognition in the society as major social empowerment aspect by ranking it first with garret scores as 70.30, 72.93 and 66.45 respectively.

The findings highlight a clear gender disparity in the roles and responsibilities of Board of Directors (BoDs) within mixed and women-only Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs). Therefore, there is a need for targeted capacity-building initiatives, leadership development for women, and policy changes that promote equitable participation, challenge stereotypes, and enable women to contribute significantly to FPO performance and governance are required.

**Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)**

Option 1:

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

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