**Factors influencing the role performance of Board of Directors of selected Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) in Telangana state**

**ABSTRACT**

The Board of Directors (BoDs) play a crucial role in the functioning of Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), acting as essential intermediaries between farmers and institutional or governmental stakeholders. Their responsibilities are varied and intricate, encompassing planning and registration, procurement, processing, marketing, and interaction with financial institutions and government departments. The present study was conducted on Board of Directors of NABARD promoted FPOs in Telangana state. The samples were selected randomly from mixed FPOs and women FPOs i.e., 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 chi-square analysis determined that there was a **significant difference** in the impact of administrative, education and family support variables on the roles of BoDs. Hence, NABARD should consider some of family sensitization programs, economic literacy trainings, and the empowerment programmes for women to enhance the effectiveness and participation of both women and men BoDs in FPO activities.

**KEY WORDS**

Board of Directors (BoDs), Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), men BoDs, women BoDs,

**INTRODUCTION**

FPOs serve as an essential connection between small and marginal farmers and the larger agri-business framework, allowing them to operate within a more market-driven and business-oriented environment that encompasses the entire agricultural supply and value chain. By encouraging collective action, FPOs boost not only individual farmer incomes but also the overall sustainability of India's agricultural sector *(Venkattakumar & Vasanthi, 2023 and* Harikrishna et al. 2022*).*

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has played a significant role in advancing the Farmer Producer Organization (FPO) movement across India, including in Telangana. As per 2025 data, 375 FPOs have been formed under NABARD's direction, with around 1.59 lakh farmer members. Of these, 11 are women-oriented FPOs, with a total of 3,393 women members (Shiva Jyothi *et al*., 2025).

A significant challenge for FPOs is the limited capacity and orientation of their Board of Directors (BoDs), who often rely on promoting agencies due to a lack of adequate training and support. Consequently, FPOs face difficulties in establishing strong, well-trained, and dedicated BoDs and chief executive officers (CEOs). This capacity gap impacts several operational areas, including good governance, business management, effective system implementation, access to finance and markets, and utilization of government schemes.

The BoDs play a crucial role in the functioning of FPOs, acting as essential intermediaries between farmers and institutional or governmental stakeholders. Their responsibilities are varied and intricate, encompassing planning and registration, procurement, processing, marketing, and interaction with financial institutions and government departments. Key roles they fulfill include planning and strategy formulation, auditing and compliance, member registration, distribution of inputs (such as seeds, fertilizers, loans, and subsidies), bulk procurement and processing, value addition and storage, market linkage &negotiation, resource mobilization and institutional coordination.

Given this extensive array of responsibilities, strong and engaged leadership is vital for effectively mobilizing resources and guiding FPOs toward sustainability and profitability. Although there has been growth and development of FPOs in recent years, a study by Chirwa *et al*. (2005) indicates that success stories are inconsistent in India. There is a need for a deeper understanding of the factors influencing role performance of BoDs, particularly through a gender lens. With this background, the current study focused on “Factors influencing the role performance of Board of Directors of selected Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) in Telangana state”

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study was conducted usingthe ex-post facto research design. Mixed FPOs and women led FPOs promoted by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) was taken for the study. 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 Board of Directors (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. Hence, a total of 180 respondents were selected for the study. 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**

To study the effect of seven factors on role performance of BoDs, the chi square test was used as the following formula:



 Where, d.f. = (m-1) (n-1)

 Oij = Observed frequency of (i.j)th cell

 Eij = Expected frequency of (i.j)th cell

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**1. Administrative factor**

 From the Table 1, it was revealed that among men BoDs in mixed FPOs, majority (93.33 %) of the respondents felt that lack of availability of inputs was major factor influencing role performance followed by power not handled in time (68.33 %), lack of interest by BoDs on FPOs and absence of BoDs involvement (26.66 % each) and 20.00 per cent of the respondents felt that lack of cooperation of BoDs was major factor influencing role performance. In case of women BoDs, cent (100.00 %) per cent of the respondents believes that lack of availability of inputs was major factor followed by power not handled in time, lack of interest by BoDs on FPOs, absence of BoDs involvement and Lack of cooperation of BoDs with the percentages of 93.33, 50.00, 48.33, and 26.66 per cent respectively.

 With respect to women BoDs in women led FPOs, cent (100.00 %) per cent of the respondents felt that power not handled in time and lack of availability of inputs each were

major factor in effective performance of BoDs roles in FPOs, 30.00 per cent of BoDs believe that lack of interest by BoDs on FPOs and absence of BoDs involvement each was major factor and only 16.66 per cent of the respondents felt lack of cooperation of BoDs was major administrative factor influencing role performance of BoDs in FPOs. Overall, respondents from both **women-led FPOs and mixed FPOs** identified **lack of input availability** and **power not being handled in time** as major factors affecting their role performance. This was primarily due to the **lack of leadership experience** of most of the BoDs in FPO, due to **low academic qualifications** and **lack of awareness** in organising and managing large groups of farmers. Additionally, since many FPOs were still in their **nascent stage** and due to lack of **full support from NABARD**, they are facing challenges in securing the required inputs for effective functioning and performance.

**Table 1 Factors Influencing the Role Performance of BoDs of FPOs N= 180**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S.No** | **Administrative** | **Mixed FPO (n=120)** | **Women FPO (n= 60)** |
| **Men BoDs (n=60)** | **Women BoDs (n=60)** | **Women BoDs (n=60)** |
| **Yes**  | **No** | **Yes**  | **No** | **Yes**  | **No** |
|  | Lack of cooperation of BoDs | 12(20.00 %) | 48(80.00 %) | 16(26.66 %) | 44(73.33 %) | 10(16.66%) | 50(83.33 %) |
|  | Absence of BoDs involvement | 16(26.66%) | 44(73.33 %) | 29(48.33 %) | 31(51.66%) | 18(30.00 %) | 42(70.00%) |
| 1.
 | Lack of interest by BoDs on FPOs | 16(26.66%) | 44(73.33 %) | 30(50.00 %) | 30(50.00 %) | 18(30.00 %) | 42(70.00%) |
|  | Lack of availability of inputs | 56(93.33 %) | 04(06.66%) | 60(100.00 %) | 00 | 60(100.00 %) | 00 |
|  | Power not handled in time | 41(68.33%) | 19(31.66%) | 56(93.33 %) | 04(06.66 %) | 60(100.00 %) | 00 |
|  | **Financial** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Lack of fund to carry out organization | 60(100.00 %) | 00 | 60(100.00 %) | 00 | 60(100.00 %) | 00 |
| 1.
 | Inadequate cooperation from funding institutions | 60(100.00 %) | 00 | 60(100.00 %) | 00 | 60(100.00 %) | 00 |
|  | Lack of resources  | 60(100.00 %) | 00 | 60(100.00 %) | 00 | 60(100.00 %) | 00 |
|  | **Political**  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Interference of Political leaders in functioning of FPOs  | 10(16.66%) | 50(83.33 %) | 20(33.33 %) | 40(66.66%) | 22(36.66 %) | 38(63.33 %) |
|  | Difference in opinions of members | 28(46.66 %) | 32(53.33 %) | 28(46.66 %) | 32(53.33 %) | 24(40.00 %) | 36(60.00 %) |
|  | Lack of cooperation with the other FPOs | 46(76.66 %) | 14(23.33 %) | 52(86.66 %) | 08(13.33 %) | 38(63.33 %) | 22(36.66 %) |
|  | **Personal** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Less time investment  | 44(73.33 %) | 16(26.66 %) | 56(93.33 %) | 04(06.66 %) | 60(100.00 %) | 00 |
|  | Lack of proper guidance from government agencies and NGOs | 60(100.00 %) | 00 | 60(100.00 %) | 00 | 60(100.00 %) | 00 |
|  | Lack of proper education | 60(100.00 %) | 00 | 60(100.00 %) | 00 | 60(100.00 %) | 00 |
|  | Lack of facilities available | 60(100.00 %) | 00 | 60(100.00 %) | 00 | 60(100.00 %) | 00 |
|  | **Education** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Gender ratio at basic education | 04(06.66 %) | 56(93.33 %) | 20(33.33 %) | 40(66.66%) | 22(36.66 %) | 38(63.33 %) |
|  | Biasness with vocational trainings  | 12(20.00 %) | 48(80.00 %) | 48(80.00 %) | 12(20.00 %) | 42(70.00%) | 18(30.00 %) |
|  | Lack of knowledge on media Exposure | 60(100.00 %) | 00 | 56(93.33 %) | 04(06.66 %) | 60(100.00 %) | 00 |
|  | Lack of access to new technology equipment’s | 60(100.00 %) | 00 | 52(86.66 %) | 08(13.33 %) | 60(100.00 %) | 00 |
|  | Inequality in professional trainings | 43(71.66 %) | 17(28.33 %) | 56(93.33 %) | 04(06.66 %) | 60(100.00 %) | 00 |
|  | **Family Support** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Lack of strong support from spouse in all activities | 00 | 60(100.00 %) | 52(86.66 %) | 08(13.33 %) | 30(50.00 %) | 30(50.00 %) |
|  | Lack of career support by family members | 00 | 60(100.00 %) | 60(100.00 %) | 00 | 32(53.33 %) | 28(46.66 %) |
|  | Pressure in participating in family functions | 00 | 60(100.00 %) | 60(100.00 %) | 00 | 32(53.33 %) | 28(46.66 %) |
|  | Gender inequality in house maintenance | 00 | 60(100.00 %) | 44(73.33 %) | 16(26.66 %) | 30(50.00 %) | 30(50.00 %) |
|  | Decision in savings and other capital transactions  | 00 | 60(100.00 %) | 52(86.66 %) | 08(13.33 %) | 44(73.33 %) | 16 |
|  | **Possession of soft skills** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Lack of communication skills | 08(13.33 %) | 52(86.66 %) | 32(53.33 %) | 28(46.66 %) | 20(66.66%) | 40(33.33 %) |
|  | Lack of Group leadership | 04(06.66 %) | 56(93.33 %) | 35(58.33 %) | 25(41.66 %) | 23(38.33 %) | 37(61.66 %) |
|  | Lack of Group decision making | 12(20.00 %) | 48(80.00 %) | 21(35.00 %) | 39(65.00 %) | 15(25.00 %) | 45(75.00 %) |
|  | Lack of Self control | 00 | 60(100.00 %) | 12(20.00 %) | 48(80.00 %) | 10(16.66 %) | 50(83.33 %) |
|  | Lack of Positive attitude | 12(20.00 %) | 48(80.00 %) | 24(40.00 %) | 36(60.00 %) | 20(66.66%) | 40(33.33 %) |

*\*Multiple responses were taken*

**2. Financial support**

The results from the Table 1 depicts that, cent (100.00 %) per cent of the respondents from both mixed FPOs and women led FPOs identified **lack of funds to carry out organizational activities, inadequate cooperation from funding institutions, and lack of resources for the FPOs** each as major challenges impacting their role performance in FPO. The results were in line with Kavin et al. (2023)

The probable reason could be that **NABARD's financial support for FPOs is limited to a certain period of time i.e., only for five years**, which may not be sufficient for long-term sustainability of FPO. Additionally, since **FPOs are located in rural areas, the resources required to increase their operational capacity are limited**. Moreover, as FPOs were often established to meet NABARD’s target, the formation of multiple FPOs under a single institution may have led to **inadequate cooperation from funding institutions**, further affecting their growth and efficiency.

**3 Political factors**

 The data from **Table 1** indicates that among **men BoDs in mixed FPOs**, just over **three-fourths (76.66%)** of respondents identified **lack of cooperation with other FPOs** as the major political factor influencing their role performance followed by **differences in opinions among members (46.66%)** and **interference of political leaders in FPO operations (16.66%).** Among **women BoDs in mixed FPOs**, the majority (**86.66%**) of the respondents also considered **lack of cooperation with other FPOs** as a significant factor, followed by **differences in opinions among members (46.66%)** and **political interference (33.33%).** In the case of **women BoDs in women-led FPOs**, **majority (63.33 %)** of respondents viewed **lack of cooperation with other FPOs** as the primary issue, followed by **differences in opinions among members (40.00%)** and **political interference (36.66%)**.

 Lack of coordination and networking among FPOs and government organisations was the major political factor affecting the BoDs performance in FPOs. It might be due to geographical dispersion and lack of communication between promoting institutions and FPOs. Another probable reason might be that due to limited training and exposure of BoDs to cooperative business models may prevent them from effectively engaging with other FPOs for mutual growth. Lack of leadership skills and limited trainings on conflict resolution further escalate these differences in opinion of BoDs, which was affecting the smooth functioning of FPOs. Some BoDs may be politically affiliated, leading to biased decision-making which does not align with the collective interests of other FPO members.

**4 Personal factors**

 Table 1 shows the findings about personal factors influencing BoDs role performed in FPOs. For **male BoDs in mixed FPOs**, **cent (100.00 %) per cent of respondents** identified the key factors affecting their role performance were **lack of available facilities, inadequate education, and insufficient guidance from government agencies and NGOs** each as major concerns. Whereas, **73.33 per cent** of respondents believed that **less time investment by BoDs** also influenced their role performance. Women BoDs in mixed FPOs also felt that lack of facilities available, lack of proper education and lack of proper guidance from government agencies and NGOs each contribute to role performance of BoDs with cent (100.00 %) per cent and a higher percentage **(93.33%**) of **women BoDs** also considered **less time investment** as a significant factor impacting their roles in FPOs.

 With respect to **women BoDs in women-led FPOs**, cent **(100.00%) per cent of respondents** agreed that **all personal factors** namely **lack of facilities, inadequate education, insufficient guidance from government agencies and NGOs, and limited time investment** each were influencing their **role performance in FPOs**

 The absence of proper facilities to run the FPOs was major personal factor influencing the BoDs role performance in FPOs. Because, the BoDs opined that without basic infrastructure facilities, they cannot fulfil their governance roles in FPO effectively. Additionally, lack of education among BoDs further limits their ability to navigate these responsibilities effectively.

Although NABARD and other organizations provide support for FPOs, many BoDs lack continuous guidance and advisory services, which are important for the growth and development of FPO. Furthermore, many BoDs, particularly women with multiple responsibilities, including household duties, farming, and other jobs may affect their role in FPO. Societal expectations also playing an additional pressure on women BoDs, making it even more challenging for them to dedicate sufficient time to FPO activities.

**5 Education**

The data from **Table 1** revealed that for **men BoDs in mixed FPOs**, cent **(100.00 %) per cent of respondents** identified **lack of access to new technology equipment and lack of knowledge on media exposure** each as the major factors influencing their role performance followed by **inequality in professional training (71.66%), bias in vocational training (20.00%),** and a **very small percentage (4.44%)** of the respondents felt that the **gender ratio at basic education** was a significant factor. For **women BoDs**, a **majority (93.33%)** of the respondents believed that **inequality in professional training and lack of knowledge on media exposure** each were the primary factors affecting their role performance followed by **lack of access to new technology equipment (86.66%), bias in vocational training (80.00%),** and **gender ratio at basic education (33.33%)** as contributing factors in role performance of FPO.

 With regard to women BoDs in women FPOs, cent (100.00 %) per cent of the respondents felt that lack of media exposure, lack of access to new technology equipment’s and inequality in professional trainings each were the major factors influencing roles of BoDs followed by biasness with vocational trainings (70.00 %) and gender ratio at basic education (36.66 %) were factors influencing roles of BoDs.

 It was observed from the data that many BoDs in FPOs, particularly those in remote areas **have limited access to information** about government schemes, financial assistance, and trends in market. This might be due to **lack of education and knowledge on mass media and social media platforms**. Women BoDs face **even greater media restrictions** due to societal norms that limit their exposure to financial news and business updates. Women BoDs often have fewer chances to **attend workshops, financial management programs, or technology development skill enhancement courses**. This reduce women BoDs ability to participate in **high-value decision-making processes within the FPOs**. The **gender gap in education** contributes to lack of confidence and capability to women in handling **administrative and financial responsibilities** within FPOs. The results were in line with Karadipatil (2021)

**6 Family support**

The data from **Table 1** revealed that among **men BoDs in mixed FPOs**, none of the respondents felt that factors such as **decision-making in savings and other capital transactions, gender inequality in house maintenance, pressure in participating in family functions, lack of career support from family members, or lack of strong support from a spouse** had any influence on their role performance in FPOs. However, for **women BoDs**, cent **(100.00 %) per cent of respondents** identified **lack of career support from family members** and **pressure in participating in family functions each were** major factors affecting their role performance followed by **decision-making in savings and other capital transactions** and **lack of strong support from a spouse in all activities (86.66% each)** and **73.33 per cent of respondents** believed that **gender inequality in house maintenance** significantly influenced their role performance in FPOs.

Among **women BoDs in women-led FPOs**, the majority **(73.33%)** of respondents identified **decision-making in savings and other capital transactions** as a major factor influencing their roles in FPOs. This was followed by **lack of career support from family members** and **pressure in participating in family functions (53.33%** each) and half (**50.00%)** of respondents believed that **lack of strong support from a spouse in all activities** was a significant factor influencing the role performance of BoDs in FPOs. The similar results were seen in the study of Mukherjee et al. (2020)

 The observed results may be due to which men in mixed FPOs generally do not face significant family-related problems, because they are traditionally expected to engage in financial and decision-making roles outside the home. In contrast, women often face dual responsibilities i.e., managing both household duties and FPO commitments which creates challenges in career support, participation in meetings, and decision-making in FPO.

Women BoDs unanimously expressed that family support was major factor affecting the role performance of them. Because in rural areas, women were still expected to prioritize family responsibilities over professional commitments, reducing their active involvement in FPOs. Decisions pertaining to financial matters, including savings and capital transactions, are often dominated by male members within households, reducing women’s autonomy in financial matters. Additionally, women BoDs often receive less encouragement from her family members to take on active leadership roles, affecting their confidence and overall effectiveness. The lack of spousal support in work-related activities also further discourages women from proactively engaging in FPO responsibilities.

Even in women-led FPOs, where female participation is higher, balancing personal and professional responsibilities remains a challenge, leading to less engagement in leadership roles. Gender-based restrictions in decision-making may reflects existing of broader societal norms where men traditionally take control of financial matters. Among women, household chores and caregiving responsibilities often take precedence over professional commitments, further limiting women’s active participation in FPO activities.

**7 Possession of soft skills**

 It can be noted from the Table 1 that among men BoDs in mixed FPOs, the respondents felt that lack of positive attitude and lack of group decision making was influencing the BoDs role in FPO with 20.00 per cent each followed by lack of communication skills (13.33 %) and only meagre percentage (06.66 %) of the respondents believe that lack of group leadership was major factor influencing BoDs roles. None of the respondents felt that lack of Self-control was major factor influencing roles of BoDs. With respect of the women BoDs, most (58.33 %) of the respondents felt that lack of Group leadership was major factor influencing roles followed by lack of communication skills (53.33 %), lack of Positive attitude (40.00 %), lack of group decision making (35.00 %) and only 20.00 per cent of the respondents believe that lack of self-control was major concern for role performance of BoDs. The similar results can be seen in the study of Amitha et al. (2021)

 With respect to women BoDs in women led FPOs, majority (66.66 %) of the respondents believe that lack of positive attitude and lack of communication skills was major factor influencing BoDs role followed by lack of group leadership (38.33 %), lack of group decision making (25.00 %) and 16.66 per cent of the respondents felt that lack of self-control was major reason for the factors influencing roles of BoDs in FPO.

 The results may be due to the fact that regarding soft skills, male BoDs often have greater exposure in society, which helps mitigate concerns related to group leadership and self-control. In contrast, women BoDs greater challenges in development of leadership and communication skills, may be due to limited training opportunities and societal expectations.

**Comparison of factors influencing the role performance of BoDs of selected FPOs using Chi-square analysis**

The Chi-square analysis was carried out to determine the factors influencing role performance of BoDs of selected FPO activities. The chi-square analysis was carried out for all the respondents in seven categories to find out the significant contributing factors.

**Table 2 Tabular comparison factors influencing the role performance of BoDs of selected FPOs using Chi-square analysis N=180**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S.No** | **Factors** | **Chi square** | **Degrees of freedom** | **P value** |
| 1 | Administrative factor | 16.858\*\* | 2 | 0.0000 |
| 2 | Financial support | 2.899 | 2 | 0.0886 |
| 3 | Political factor | 3.793 | 2 | 0.0515 |
| 4 | Personal factor | 4.034 | 2 | 0.0446 |
| 5 | Education | 27.858\*\* | 2 | 0.0000 |
| 6 | Family support | 212.115\*\* | 2 | 0.0000 |
| 7 | Possession of soft skills | 66.592 | 2 | 0.0000 |

*\*\* significant at 0.01 level of significance*

*Tabulated for df= 2 at 0.01 level of significance =4.605*

Table 2 illustrates that the **chi-square value for administrative factors** influencing the role performance of BoDs in FPOs was **16.858**, which exceeds the **tabulated chi-square value of 4.605** for **df = 2 at the 1% level of significance**. This indicates a **significant difference** in the impact of administrative variables on the roles of BoDs. Similarly, the **chi-square values for education and family support factors** were **27.858 and 212.115**, respectively, both of which are greater than the **chi-square value of 4.605** for **df = 2 at the 0.01% level of significance**. This suggests a **statistically significant difference** in how education and family support influence the role performance of BoDs in FPOs.

 This is because lack of availability of inputs, power not handled in time, manpower shortages, inadequate infrastructure such as office space and delays in licensing & approvals result in low administrative role performance by BoDs. Another reason might be that due to lack of access to new technologies, lack of equality in professional trainings, lack of formal education in management of business, finance, and governance further impacts their role performance. Additionally, their limited exposure to digital tools and record-keeping methods reduces their involvement in FPO. Women BoDs often facing family issues like lack of spouse support, lack of career support, gender inequality in house maintenance and pressure in prioritizing household responsibilities over FPO commitments, which restrict their role in FPOs. Overall, administrative inefficiencies, low education, and less family support systems significantly impact the role performance of BoDs in FPOs

**CONCLUSION**

Administrative, educational, and family support factors were found to influence the role performance of the respondents. Therefore, government interventions are essential to reduce gender disparities and improve access to resources. In addition, NABARD should conduct some family sensitization programs, initiatives in economic literacy development, and empowerment programmes for women to increase the participation of both women and men BoDs in FPO activities.

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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