

PERCEPTION OF FARMERS ABOUT THE ROLE OF APMC IN MARKET-LED-EXTENSION

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ABSTRACT

Perception is a cognitive process by which individuals organize, interpret, and understand their surroundings and environment which also includes impressions formed by objects, events, and people. The study was carried out in 7 districts of South Gujarat to identify the perception of the farmers about the role of APMC in market-led-extension. Total 160 farmers were randomly selected from 16 villages, 2 villages from each 4 APMCs from Tribal area and 4 APMCs from non-tribal area of South Gujarat. It was found that majority of the farmers from both the area had moderately perceived the roles of APMC in market-led-extension. The land holding, extension contact, training received, knowledge about the statutory activities of APMC, economic orientation, scientific orientation and risk orientation of farmers were found highly significantly associated with the role perception about market-led-extension. Whereas, education, source of information on marketing and cropping intensity were found significantly associated with role perception about market-led-extension. Therefore, it was suggested that systematic efforts on the part of APMC required for conducting the awareness activities among the farmers regarding reforms in regulated markets and role to be played by APMC in market-led-extension.

Keywords: perception, role, market-led-extension, APMC, association

INTRODUCTION

The globalization of market has created an avenue to the farmers who are ready to transform themselves from mere producers cum sellers in the domestic market to a wider market to best realize the returns for their investments, risks and efforts. This signifies that the farmers' needs to be oriented with knowledge and skills related to market. Markets are the primary drivers for agricultural development. Agricultural markets are as important as the actual farming itself. Regulated markets where the prices, market procedures and operations are controlled by the government and prevent the exploitation of farmers by removing the handicaps in the marketing of their products. To accomplish efficient marketing, the infrastructure like information and extension services to farmers, transport and communication facilities, public utility supply, trade and advertisement, public storage, market and abattoir facilities are very much required (Vinaya et al., 2018). The new Agricultural Policy emphasizes on commercialization, diversification, value addition and export orientation, which emphasizes the importance of market-led-extension. Market-led-extension is the market ward orientation of agriculture through extension includes agriculture & economics, is the perfect blend for reaching at the door steps of farming community with the help of appropriate technology. Market-led-extension works with various aspects on quality, consumer's preference, market

intelligence, processing, value addition and other marketing information on regular basis. These can help the farmers to realize high returns for their produce, minimize the production costs and improve the product value and marketability. This is done to maximize the profits of the producer whilst, at the same time, focusing on lowering the costs of production and expose them direct to markets.

The APMCs have been established with a view to protect the interests of the farmers in general and small and marginal farmers in particular. The APMC is responsible for providing the required infrastructure as well as for preventing unfair trade practices. After reforms in the APMC Act, the APMCs are more responsible to implement the reforms for creating better facilities and market-led-extension for the farmers to change their perception about APMC and marketing behavior. Considering the importance of market and activities of APMCs at grass root level, the present study had been carried out with the following objectives.

OBJECTIVES

- (1) To explore the perception of farmers about the role of APMCs in Market-led-extension
- (2) To ascertain the association between profiles and role perception of farmers about market-led-extension

METHODOLOGY

The ex-post-facto as well as exploratory research designs were adopted in the present investigation. Eight APMCs (4 from non-tribal and 4 from tribal area) were randomly selected from the area of seven districts of South Gujarat. One village each from within the distances of 5 km from APMC and 5 to 10 km per APMC were selected randomly. Ten farmers as respondents were randomly selected from each village which made the total of 160 farmers.

The researcher made extensive review of literature, held interactions with the farmers, office bearers / staff of the APMC, extension personnel of the line department, academicians and extensionist, economist and market professionals of the NAU, Navsari and AAU, Anand to identify the critical roles of APMC in market-led-extension. As a result, finally 33 roles were identified. These roles were grouped into five heads namely; (i) service, (ii) advisory, (iii) market intelligence, (iv) facilitator and (v) organizer. The yes response against each item was scored one and for no response the zero score was given. The data were collected with the help of well-structured, pre-tested interview schedule through personal contact. The data were compiled, tabulated and analysed by using appropriate method of analysis. The collected data were separated on the basis of scores obtained by an individual and grouped in to three categories by using mean and standard deviation. Later on, category wise responses were weighted by score to find out the correlation with independent variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Role perception about market-led-extension

The APMCs have to play the roles for market-led-extension. Considering this fact the investigator has tried to know the specific and overall role perception about market-led-extension. Firstly, the specific role perceived by the farmers was discussed and secondly, their overall role perception was discussed separately as role perception about market-led-extension by the farmers.

(1) Specific role perception about market-led-extension of farmers

The responses about specific role perception about market-led-extension by the APMC farmers are presented in table 1.

The data regarding specific role perception about

market-led-extension depicted in table 1 revealed that under the service role, all the farmers (100.00 per cent) from non-tribal area perceived that APMC should provide service of weighing of farm produce followed by storage of farm produce (96.25 per cent), storage of perishable farm produce (90.00 per cent), grading of farm produce (85.00 per cent), laboratory for testing the produce (37.50 per cent), packaging of farm produce (21.25 per cent), supply of agricultural inputs (17.50) and processing of farm produce (02.50). While farmers from tribal area perceived that APMC should provide service of weighing of farm produce (100.00 per cent), storage of farm produce (100.00 per cent), grading of farm produce (61.25 per cent), storage of perishable farm produce (51.25 per cent), packaging of farm produce (33.75 per cent), laboratory for testing the produce (18.75 per cent), processing of farm produce (06.25) and supply of agricultural inputs (02.50).

Under the advisory role, large majority of the farmers (96.25 per cent) from non-tribal area perceived that APMC should provide advice on avoiding post harvest losses of crops followed by post harvest technology of crops (80.00 per cent), crop advise as per market demand (78.75 per cent), high quality farm produce (70.00 per cent), legal aspects of marketing and export (50.00 per cent), export oriented farming (50.00 per cent), crop production technology (22.50 per cent) and export of farm produce (11.25 per cent). While farmers from tribal area perceived that APMC should provide advice on avoiding post harvest losses of crops (92.50 per cent) followed by high quality farm produce (71.25 per cent), legal aspects of marketing and export (66.25 per cent), crop advise as per market demand (53.75 per cent), post harvest technology of crops (45.00 per cent), export oriented farming (45.00 per cent) and crop production technology (01.25).

Regarding market intelligence, farmers from non-tribal area perceived that APMC should play role on updating the farmers regarding current rates in different markets (88.75 per cent) followed by anticipate and communicate possible changes of markets (70.00 per cent), availability of markets (41.25 per cent), maintaining record of the farmers producing specific goods (17.50 per cent) and survey on consumers preference (15.00 per cent). While farmers from tribal area perceived that APMC should play role on updating the farmers regarding current rates in different markets (91.25 per cent), anticipate and communicate possible changes of markets (80.00 per cent), availability of markets (40.00 per cent), maintaining record of the farmers producing specific goods (23.75 per cent) and survey on consumers' preference (03.75 per cent).

Table 1: Distribution of farmers according to their specific role perception about market-led-extension

Sr. No.	Roles	Non-tribal (n=80)		Tribal (n=80)		Pooled (n=160)	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
I	Service						
1	Supply of agricultural inputs	14	17.50	02	02.50	016	10.00
2	Grading of farm produce	68	85.00	49	61.25	117	73.13
3	Packaging of farm produce	17	21.25	27	33.75	044	27.50
4	Weighing of farm produce	80	100.00	80	100.00	160	100.00
5	Storage of farm produce	77	96.25	80	100.00	157	98.13
6	Storage of perishable farm produce	72	90.00	41	51.25	113	70.63
7	Processing of farm produce	02	02.50	05	06.25	007	04.38
8	Laboratory for testing the produce	30	37.50	15	18.75	045	28.13
II	Advisory						
1	Crop production technology	18	22.50	01	01.25	019	11.88
2	Post harvest technology of crops	64	80.00	36	45.00	100	62.50
3	High quality farm produce	56	70.00	57	71.25	113	70.63
4	Avoiding post harvest losses of crops	77	96.25	74	92.50	151	94.38
5	Crop advise as per market demand	63	78.75	43	53.75	106	66.25
6	Legal aspects of marketing & export	40	50.00	53	66.25	093	58.13
7	Export oriented farming	40	50.00	36	45.00	076	47.50
8	Export of farm produce	09	11.25	00	00.00	009	05.63
III	Market intelligence						
1	Availability of markets	33	41.25	32	40.00	065	40.63
2	Current rates in different markets	71	88.75	73	91.25	144	90.00
3	Maintaining record of the farmers producing specific goods	14	17.50	19	23.75	033	20.63
4	Survey on consumers preference	12	15.00	03	03.75	015	09.38
5	Anticipate and communicate possible changes of markets	56	70.00	64	80.00	120	75.00
IV	Facilitator						
1	Communicate about Govt. policies	65	81.25	78	97.50	143	89.38
2	Credit to farmers for farm production	05	06.25	17	21.25	022	13.75
3	Insurance for farm produce	55	68.75	52	65.00	107	66.88
4	Subsidies to farmers	43	53.75	25	31.25	068	42.50
5	Liaison with agro-service providers	06	07.50	00	00.00	006	03.75
6	Organise meet among stockholders	55	68.75	37	46.25	092	57.50
7	Communicate problems to concerned	51	63.75	68	85.00	119	74.38
V	Organizer						
1	Form the cooperative societies	31	38.75	26	32.50	57	35.63
2	Establish commodity wise SHGs	24	30.00	38	47.50	62	38.75
3	Consumers organizations	04	05.00	02	02.50	06	03.75
4	Sale of farm produce under trade name	25	31.25	35	43.75	60	37.50
5	Award the producers on quality produce	37	46.25	50	62.50	87	54.38

Under the facilitator role, farmers from non-tribal area perceived that APMC should facilitate the farmers to communicate about Government policies (81.25 per cent) followed by insurance for farm produce (68.75 per cent), organise meet among stockholders (68.75 per cent), communicate problems to concerned (63.75 per cent), subsidies to farmers (53.75 per cent), liaison with agro-service providers (07.50 per cent) and credit to farmers for farm production (06.25 per cent). While farmers from tribal area perceived that APMC should facilitate the farmers to communicate about Government policies (97.50 per cent),

communicate problems to concerned (85.00 per cent), insurance for farm produce (65.00 per cent), organise meet among stockholders (46.25 per cent), subsidies to farmers (31.25 per cent) and credit to farmers for farm production (21.25 per cent).

Regarding organizer role, farmers from non-tribal area perceived that APMC should organize awards the producers on quality produce (46.25 per cent), form the cooperative societies (38.75 per cent), sale of farm produce under trade name (31.25 per cent), establish commodity

wise SHGs (30.00 per cent) and consumers organizations (05.00 per cent). While farmers from tribal area perceived that APMC should organize award the producers on quality produce (62.50 per cent), establish commodity wise SHGs (47.50 per cent), sale of farm produce under trade name (43.75 per cent), form the cooperative societies (32.50 per cent) and consumers organizations (02.50 per cent).

The pooled data shows that the APMC farmers perceived the weighing of farm produce as prime role under services (100.00 per cent) followed by storage of farm produce (98.13 per cent) and grading of farm produce (73.13 per cent). Under the advisory role, avoiding post harvest losses of crops (94.30 per cent) followed by high quality farm produce (70.63 per cent) and crop advice as per market demand (66.25 per cent). About the market intelligence role, current rates in different markets was the prime role (90.00 per cent) followed by anticipate and communicate possible changes of markets (75.00 per cent) and availability of markets (40.63 per cent). As facilitator, communicate about government policies (89.38 per cent) followed by communicate problems

to concerned (74.38 per cent) and insurance for farm produce (66.88 per cent). Under the organizer role of APMC, award the producers on quality produce as prime role (54.38 per cent) followed by establish commodity wise SHGs (38.75 per cent) and sale of farm produce under trade name (37.50 per cent).

(2) Overall role perception of farmers about market-led-extension

The perception among the farmers about roles has prime importance, which helps to change the behavior about marketing of their produces. An attempt was made in the present investigation to know the overall perception about the role of APMC in Market-Led-Extension. The data in this regard were collected from the APMC farmers about market-led-extension through structured schedule and grouped into three categories viz., (i) lower level of role perception (up to 11 score), (ii) moderate level of role perception (12 to 21 score) and (iii) higher level of role perception (above 21 score). The responses got are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of farmers according to their overall role perception about market-led-extension (n=160)

Sr. No.	Role perception	APMC of Non-Tribal area	APMC of Tribal area	Overall
1	Lower level of role perception	15 (18.75)	19 (23.75)	34 (21.25)
2	Moderate level of role perception	52 (65.00)	55 (68.75)	107 (66.88)
3	Higher level of role perception	13 (16.25)	06 (07.50)	19 (11.88)
(Mean= 15.83 /SD= 04.76)				
	Mean	16.43	15.23	15.83
	't' value	1.6030		

It is evident from the table 2 that majority of the farmer of non-tribal area (65.00 per cent) had moderately perceived their roles about market-led-extension followed by 18.75 and 16.25 per cent of them had lower and higher level of role perception about market-led-extension respectively. Whereas in case of farmer of tribal area, majority of them (68.75 per cent) had moderately perceived their roles about market-led-extension followed by 23.75 and 07.50 per cent of them had lower and higher level of role perception about market-led-extension respectively. Overall, it was found that two third majority (66.88 per cent) of the farmers had moderate level of role perception followed by 21.25 and 11.88 per cent had lower and higher level of role perception respectively. This may be due to the lack of knowledge and awareness about market-led-extension activities of the APMC among the farmers and on the other hand may be due

to the lack of sufficient efforts done by the APMCs in the area.

The mean score of role perception about market-led-extension of non-tribal area was 16.43 and 15.23 for the farmers of tribal area. The calculated 't' value (1.6030) among the APMC farmers of non-tribal and tribal area regarding role perception about market-led-extension was non- significant. Similar findings were observed by Kavadi and Pandya (2013), Kumar (2010), Nirban (2004), Singh and Singh (2003) and Desai *et al.* (2024a).

(2) Association between profiles and role perception about market-led-extension of farmers

The association between the independent variables with

perception of role of APMC by the farmers about market-led-extension were worked out through coefficient of correlation to know the association. The findings are presented in table 3.

Table 3: Relationship between profile of the farmers and role perception about market-led-extension (n=160)

Sr. No.	Profile of the farmers	Coefficient of correlation ('r' value)		
		Non Tribal area	Tribal area	Overall
X ₁	Age	-0.04852	-0.12911	-0.06003
X ₂	Education	0.10824	0.25086*	0.20138*
X ₃	Land holding	0.27004*	0.04979	0.22704**
X ₄	Farming experience	0.01070	-0.12118	-0.04082
X ₅	Distance from market	-0.28352*	0.29483**	0.02880
X ₆	Annual income	-0.16545	0.27401*	0.14156
X ₇	Social participation	0.19312	0.12458	0.15215
X ₈	Extension contact	0.25532*	0.47364**	0.31278**
X ₉	Source of information on marketing	0.13250	0.24519*	0.18024*
X ₁₀	Training received	0.14379	0.46751**	0.20698**
X ₁₁	Cropping pattern	0.00912	0.27428*	0.15508
X ₁₂	Cropping intensity	0.10599	0.18086	0.18688*
X ₁₃	Marketable surplus	-0.13876	0.14554	-0.06042
X ₁₄	Marketed surplus	-0.13851	0.15407	-0.05805
X ₁₅	Knowledge about the statutory activities of APMC	0.53360**	0.48389**	0.51924**
X ₁₆	Economic orientation	0.20688	0.53622**	0.37174**
X ₁₇	Scientific orientation	0.45939**	0.62219**	0.53187**
X ₁₈	Risk orientation	0.40032**	0.49075**	0.45120**
X ₁₉	Group cohesiveness	0.14361	0.13209	0.13714

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

The data manifested in table 3 revealed that the knowledge about the statutory activities of APMC (0.53360**), scientific orientation (0.45939**) and risk orientation (0.40032**) among the APMC farmer of non-tribal area were found highly significantly associated with their role perception about market-led-extension. Further, land holding (0.27004*), extension contact (0.25532*) and distance from market (-0.28352*) found significantly associated with their role perception about market-led-extension. However, age (-0.04852), education (0.10824), farming experience (0.01070), annual income (-0.16545), social participation (0.19312), source of information on marketing (0.13250), training received (0.14379), cropping pattern (0.00912), cropping intensity (0.10599), marketable surplus (-0.13876), marketed surplus (-0.13851), economic orientation (0.20688) and group cohesiveness (0.14361) were not associated with role perception about market-led-extension among the farmers of non-tribal area.

Among the farmer of tribal area, the distance from market (0.29483), extension contact (0.47364**), training received (0.46751**), knowledge about the statutory activities of APMC (0.48389**), economic orientation (0.53622**), scientific orientation (0.62219**) and risk orientation (0.49075**) found highly significantly associated with the role perception about market-led-extension.

Whereas, education (0.25086*), annual income (0.27401*), source of information on marketing (0.24519*) and cropping pattern (0.27428*) were significantly associated, however, age (-0.12911), land holding (0.04979), farming experience (-0.12118), social participation (0.12458), cropping intensity (0.18086), marketable surplus (0.14554), marketed surplus (0.15407) and group cohesiveness (0.13209) were not have significant association with the role perception about market-led-extension.

The overall data indicates that the land holding (0.22704**), extension contact (0.31278**), training received (0.20698**), knowledge about the statutory activities of APMC (0.51924**), economic orientation (0.37174**), scientific orientation (0.53187**) and risk orientation (0.45120**) of the farmer had highly significant association with role perception about market-led-extension. Whereas, education (0.20138*), source of information on marketing (0.18024*) and cropping intensity (0.18688*) were significantly associated, however, age (-0.06003), farming experience (-0.04082), distance from market (0.0288), annual income (0.14156), social participation (0.15215), cropping pattern (0.15508), marketable surplus (-0.06042), marketed surplus (-0.05805) and group cohesiveness (0.13714) were non-significantly associated with the role perception about market-led-extension. This finding has been supported by

the findings of Sundaresan *et al.* (2000), Kavadi and Pandya (2015) and Desai *et al.* (2024b), Machapathri *et al.* (2024), Kumbhani *et al.* (2024).

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that majority of the farmers from both the non-tribal and tribal area had moderately perceived the role of APMC in market-led-extension. This may be due to the lack of knowledge and awareness about market-led-extension activities of the APMC among the farmers and on the other hand may be due to the lack of sufficient efforts done by the APMCs in the area. The land holding, extension contact, training received, knowledge about the statutory activities of APMC, economic orientation, scientific orientation and risk orientation of APMC farmers were found highly significantly associated with the role perception about market-led-extension. Whereas, education, source of information on marketing and cropping intensity were found significantly associated with role perception about market-led-extension.

MESSAGE FOR POLICY MAKERS

As majority of the farmers had moderately perceived the roles of APMC about market-led-extension therefore, it is suggested that systematic efforts on the part of APMC required conducting the awareness activities among the farmers regarding reforms in regulated markets and role to be played by APMC in market-led-extension.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

This is to declare that there is “No conflict of interest” among researchers.

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