

Innovations

Exploring the Leadership and Competency Skills of Women in FPOs: An Examination of Age, Education, and Marital Status

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Abstract : *This study delves deeper into the leadership and competency skills exhibited by women involved in Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), examining the potential influences of age, educational background, and marital status. Utilizing a qualitative research methodology, comprehensive data were meticulously collected through a combination of interviews and surveys from a diverse group of women who are actively engaged in FPOs. These participants represented a broad spectrum of socio-economic backgrounds, providing a rich and multifaceted dataset for analysis. The research findings unveil compelling correlations between the leadership capabilities of women in FPOs and their levels of educational attainment. Women with higher educational qualifications were found to demonstrate stronger leadership skills, suggesting that educational opportunities play a pivotal role in shaping leadership potential within this context. Furthermore, marital status was identified as another significant factor influencing leadership competencies, with married women often exhibiting distinct leadership styles and approaches compared to their unmarried counterparts. Additionally, age was identified as a crucial factor impacting the development of competency skills among women in FPOs. Younger women were observed to possess a greater propensity for adopting innovative practices and leveraging technology, while older women often showcased valuable experience-based wisdom and resilience in their leadership roles. These nuanced insights provide a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics that shape women's roles within agricultural cooperatives like FPOs. By highlighting the importance of education, marital status, and age in influencing leadership capabilities, this study offers valuable implications for policy-makers, organizational leaders, and community stakeholders. Emphasizing the enhancement of women's leadership capacities can not only empower them individually but also*

*contribute to fostering sustainable community development and gender equality within the agricultural sector.***Keywords:***Women, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), Leadership Skills, Competency, Age, Education, Marital Status, Agricultural Cooperatives, Community Development*

Introduction

The Government of India has initiated the Central Sector Scheme aimed at establishing and promoting 10,000 new Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs). These FPOs are designed to harness economies of scale in both production and marketing, thereby boosting productivity and ensuring sustainable income-oriented farming practices. The scheme endeavours to reduce the cost of farm production and increase farmers' earnings, thereby contributing significantly to the goal of doubling farmers' income.

Under this scheme, newly formed FPOs receive professional handholding support for five years. The scheme encompasses various essential services and activities aimed at fostering the development of FPOs, all geared towards enhancing farmers' income:

- i. Provision of high-quality production inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, etc., at competitive wholesale rates.
- ii. Access to production and post-production machinery and equipment, including cultivators, tillers, sprinkler sets, combine harvesters, etc., on a custom hiring basis to reduce per-unit production costs.
- iii. Value addition services including cleaning, sorting, grading, packing, farm-level processing facilities, etc., at affordable rates. Additionally, storage and transportation facilities are made available.
- iv. Implementation of income-generating activities such as seed production, beekeeping, mushroom cultivation, etc.
- v. Aggregation of smaller lots of produce from farmer-members, adding value to enhance marketability.
- vi. Provision of market information to aid in informed decision-making regarding production and marketing strategies.
- vii. Facilitation of logistics services such as storage, transportation, loading/unloading, etc., on a cost-sharing basis.
- viii. Marketing of aggregated produce with improved negotiation power to secure better and more remunerative prices in the market channels.

The role of women in the FPOs is also increasing in all places of the country. To succeed in any business women in particular need leadership and competency skills. So the researcher has analysed the leadership and competency skills of the women in the select districts of Andhra Pradesh.

Objectives

The present study is undertaken to fulfil the following objectives

- a. To examine the socio-economic and demographic profile of the women members of the FPOs selected for the study
- b. To analyse the levels of various leadership and competency skills of the women members of the FPO in the study area.
- c. To offer suggestions to improve the leadership and competency skills of women entrepreneurs through FPOs based on the major findings of the study.

Methodology

The present is both descriptive and analytical. The researcher has considered that primary data is suitable for the present research work. The object of the descriptive research is to test the formulated hypotheses that denote the present state in order descriptive research aims to test the formulated hypotheses that denote the present state to explain it. This study is analytical in nature and the researcher has collected information from the selected members of the FPOs through a finalised interview schedule. The present study collects both primary and secondary data. Primary data needed for the study were collected through the finalised interview schedule from the selected members. The secondary data required for the study was collected from Websites, textbooks, Journals and Reports. To fulfil the objectives of the study and test the hypotheses, the researcher has used the interview schedule to collect the required information from the selected members of the FPOs. The interview schedule has been framed with the required assumptions to achieve the aims of the study. The questions and statements designed in each part are partly constructed by the researcher and partly adopted from earlier studies about the present research work. Further, the information collected from the members of the FPOs is subjected to validity and reliability tests. So, the researcher has confirmed the items and factors designed for the study after computing the validity and conducting a pilot study.

Since the researcher belongs to Tirupati District of Andhra Pradesh. 613 FPOs are functioning in the Andhra Pradesh. Since the number of FPOs and members are large in number the researcher has planned to follow the convenience sampling technique under the non-probability sampling method. Further, the researcher has decided to collect data from the 480 sample members. The sample size is determined by using the margin of error calculator. The required number of 480 sample members of the FPOs is drawn from the three major districts which are functioning with more than 50 FPOs. As per the data, three districts namely Anantapur, Chittoor and Kurnool are functioning with more than 50 FPOs. From these three districts, the researcher

has selected the 40 FPOs randomly and four members from each FPO. Totally 480 members were selected by using the convenience sampling technique.

Analysis and Interpretation of data

The following table shows the socio-economic profile variables of the selected women members of the FPOs.

Socio-Economic Profile of the Members of the FPOs

Socioeconomic Profile Variables		Count	Percentage
Age of the Respondents	26 – 35	127	26.46%
	36 – 45	183	38.13%
	46 – 55	149	31.04%
	Above 55	21	4.38%
	Total	480	100.00%
Educational Qualification	Upto Elementary school level	110	22.92%
	Upto high school level	186	38.75%
	Upto Hr. Sec school level	144	30.00%
	Upto Degree level	23	4.79%
	Other courses like certificate/diploma etc.,	17	3.54%
	Total	480	100.00%
Marital Status	Married	395	82.29%
	Unmarried	85	17.71%
	Total	480	100.00%
Number of family members	2 members	86	17.92%
	3 members	155	32.29%
	4 members	112	23.33%
	5 members	58	12.08%
	More than 5 members	69	14.38%
	Total	480	100.00%
Number of Dependents	1 only	217	45.21%
	2 members	227	47.29%
	3 members	16	3.33%
	More than 3 members	20	4.17%
	Total	480	100.00%

Source: Primary data

Age-wise classification of the members

The researcher has classified the selected members of the FPOs based on the age group into four categories. From the collected data it is noted that out of 480 members, 26.46 percent of the members of the FPOs are in the age group of

26-35, 38.13 percent of the members of the FPOs are in the age category of 36-45, 31.04 percent of the members of the FPOs are in the age group of 46-55 and the remaining members are in the age category of above 55 years. From this analysis, it is concluded that most of the members of the FPOs are in the age group of 36-45.

Educational Qualification

Regarding the educational qualification of the selected members of the FPOs, it is found that out of 480 members, 22.92 percent of the members of the FPOs studied up to elementary school, 38.75 percent of the members of the FPOs completed high school level education, 30.00 percent of the members of the FPOs have completed the higher secondary level of school education, 4.79 percent of the members of the FPOs are studied up to degree level and the balance 3.54 percent of the members have studied the other courses like certificate and diploma. It is disclosed that most of the members (38.75 per cent) are studied up to high school level of education.

Marital Status position of the members

Concerning the marital status of the selected members of the FPOs, it is disclosed that out of 480 members, 82.29 percent of the members of the FPOs are in the married category and the balance 17.71 percent of the members are in the unmarried category. It is noted that the majority of the members of the FPOs (82.29 per cent) are in the married category.

Number of family members

The researcher has also gathered the details regarding the number of family members of the selected members of the FPOs. From the gathered data it is discovered that out of 480 members, 17.92 percent of the members have 2 members in their family. 32.29 percent of the members of the FPOs have 3 members, 23.33 percent of the members have 4 members, 12.08 percent of the members of the FPOs have 5 members in their family and the balance 14.38 percent of the members of the FPOs have more than 5 members in their family. It is revealed that most of the members of the FPOs (32.29 per cent) have three members in their family.

Number of Dependents

The dependents mean that other than the family members. To know the number of dependents of the selected members of the study has been made and it is noted that out of 480 members, 45.21 percent of the members of the FPOs have only one dependent, 47.29 members have 2 dependents, 3.33 percent of the members of the FPOs have three dependents in their family and the remaining 4.17 percent of the members of the FPOs have more than three dependents in

their family. It is explored that most of the members (47.29 per cent) have two dependents in their family other than the family members.

Leadership Competency Skills gained through FPOs

The researcher has measured the leadership competency skills gained by the women members through the FPOs. For this purpose information is gathered under five different skills, namely self-management skill, innovation management skill, task management skill, employee management skill and social responsibility skill. Various statements are designed to collect data under each skill and gathered information is summed up based on the rank allotted for each amount under Likert’s five points. Five points are allotted for very high, four points for high, three points for medium, two points for low and one point for very low-level responses. Then the total responses are computed and recoded into five responses namely, very high, high, medium, low and very low. The members are also classified based on the responses and the same are shown in the following table.

Table: Leadership Competency Skills gained through FPOs

Various Skills	Details	Very high	High	Medium	Low	Very low	Total
Self-management skill	Count	44	214	163	33	26	480
	%	9.17%	44.58%	33.96%	6.88%	5.42%	100.00%
Innovation management skill	Count	26	171	184	49	50	480
	%	5.42%	35.63%	38.33%	10.21%	10.42%	100.00%
Task management skill	Count	42	191	155	43	49	480
	%	8.75%	39.79%	32.29%	8.96%	10.21%	100.00%
Employees management skill	Count	27	238	190	11	14	480
	%	5.63%	49.58%	39.58%	2.29%	2.92%	100.00%
Social responsibility skill	Count	12	234	160	42	32	480
	%	2.50%	48.75%	33.33%	8.75%	6.67%	100.00%

Source: Computed Data

Self-Management Skill

After joining the FPOs the women members of the FPOs have gained various skills. Regarding self-management skills, it was found that out of 480

members, 9.17 percent of the members of the FPOs reported that the self-management skill obtained through FPOs is very high, 44.58 percent of the members of the FPOs stated that the high level of self-management skill is obtained through FPOs, 33.96 percent of the members of the FPOs are reported that the self-management skill obtained through FPOs is medium, 6.88 percent of the members of the FPOs are stated that the self-management skill obtained through FPOs is low and the remaining 5.42 percent of the members of the FPOs are reported that the self-management skill obtained through FPOs is very low. It is exposed that most of the members (44.58 per cent) have self-management skills through FPOs at a high level.

Innovation Management Skill

Regarding innovation management skills, it is found that out of 480 members, 5.42 percent of the members of the FPOs have developed innovation management skills at a very high level through FPOs, 35.63 percent of the members of the FPOs have developed a high level of innovation management skill through FPOs, 38.33 percent of the members of the FPOs have a medium level of innovation management skill, 10.21 percent of the members of the FPOs have developed a low level of innovation management skill and the balance 10.42 percent of the members of the FPOs have developed a very low level of innovation management skill through FPOs. It is noted that most of the members (38.33 per cent) have got medium level of innovation management skills through FPOs.

Task Management Skill

The researcher has analysed the task management skills obtained by the women members of the FPOs. From the study it is found that out of 480 members, 8.75 percent of the members of the FPOs have a very high level of task management skill, 39.79 percent of the members of the FPOs have a high level of task management skill, 32.29 percent of the members of the FPOs have got a medium level of task management skill, 8.96 percent of the members of the FPOs have a low level of task management skill and the remaining 10.21 percent of the members of the FPOs have got a very low level of task management skill through FPOs. It was discovered that most of the respondents (39.79 per cent) have got high level of task management skills through FPOs.

Employee's Management skill

The pollster has examined the employee's management skills obtained by the women members of the FPOs. From the collected data it is found that out of 480 members, 5.63 percent of the members of the FPOs have a very high level of employees management skills, 49.58 percent of the members of the FPOs have a high level of employees management skills, 39.58 percent of the members of the

FPOs have got a medium level of employees management skill, 2.29 percent of the members have a low level of employees management skill and the remaining 2.92 percent of the members of the FPOs have got a very low level of employees management skill through FPOs. It is disclosed that most of the respondents (49.58 per cent) have got high level of employee management skills through FPOs.

Social Responsibility skill

The researcher has also examined the social responsibility skills obtained by the women members of the FPOs. From the collected data it is understood that out of 480 members, 2.50 percent of the members of the FPOs have got a very high level of social responsibility skill, 48.75 percent of the members of the FPOs have got high level of social responsibility skill, 33.33 percent of the members of the FPOs have got a medium level of social responsibility skill, 8.75 percent of the members have got a low level of social responsibility skill and the remaining 6.67 percent of the members have got very low level of social responsibility skill through FPOs. It is found that most of the respondents (48.75 per cent) have got high level of social responsibility skills through FPOs.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The members of the FPOs do not differ in their skills obtained through FPOs when they are clustered under marital status groups.

The researcher has grouped the selected members of the FPOs into two groups based on their marital status. To identify whether these two groups of members differ in their views or not in the various skills obtained through FPOs the following unacceptable presumption has been framed and tested with an Independent sample T-test.

Presumption

The members of the FPOs do not differ in the various skills obtained through FPOs when they are grouped based on marital status. This unacceptable presumption was tested with the Independent sample T-test, and the acquired outcome is interpreted and presented in the following tables.

Marital Status-wise classification of members of the FPOs and various skills obtained through FPOs - Mean, Standard Deviation and Std. Error Mean

Type of skills obtained through FPOs	Marital status	Number of Members	Mean Value	Std. Deviation Value	Std. Error Mean value
Self-management skill	Married	395	2.6000	.96223	.04842
	Unmarried	85	2.3059	.83129	.09017
Innovation management skill	Married	395	2.9038	1.09027	.05486
	Unmarried	85	2.5765	.66146	.07175
Task management skill	Married	395	2.7823	1.12570	.05664
	Unmarried	85	2.4353	.79353	.08607
Employees management skill	Married	395	2.4684	.79713	.04011
	Unmarried	85	2.4941	.59007	.06400
Social responsibility skill	Married	395	2.7089	.96581	.04860
	Unmarried	85	2.5647	.64452	.06991

Source: Computed Data

The result of the Independent sample ‘T’ test shows that there is a disparity among the mean and standard deviation values of the views of the members of the FPOs towards the various skills obtained through FPOs when they are clustered under the marital status base. The standard deviation value is deviated from the mean value towards the various skills obtained through FPOs for the marital status factor. The outcome of the Levene's test for uniformity of variation is presented in the following table.

Marital Status-wise classification of members of the FPOs and various skills obtained through FPOs - Output of Independent sample T-test

Type of skills obtained through FPOs		Levene's Test for sameness of variation		T-test result for parity of Means				
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.
Self-Management skill	*	3.878	.049	2.615	478	.009	.29412	.11246
	*			2.874	136.993	.005	.29412	.10234
Innovation Management skill	*	14.154	.000	2.663	478	.008	.32733	.12291
	*			3.62	196.60	.000	.3273	.0903

	*			4	1		3	2
Task Management skill	*	12.700	.000	2.700	478	.007	.34698	.12851
	**			3.368	165.873	.001	.34698	.10304
Employees Management skill	*	5.763	.017	-.282	478	.778	-.02576	.09145
	**			-.341	157.744	.733	-.02576	.07553
Social Responsibility skill	*	12.362	.000	1.314	478	.189	.14415	.10971
	**			1.693	176.029	.092	.14415	.08514

Source: Computed Data;

Note: * - Equal Variances Assumed;

** - Equal Variances Not Assumed

From the above result of the Levene’s test for sameness of variation, it is found that the likelihood value for skills on self-management skill, innovation management skill and task management skill is lower than the conformity value of 0.05. So, the null presumption planned for this analysis is repudiated, and it is clear that the sample members of the FPOs do vary in the three skills obtained through FPOs, namely self-management skill (0.005), innovation management skill (0.000) and task management skill (0.001) when the members of the FPOs are grouped based on the marital status. Further, it is unveiled that the members of the FPOs do not differ in the remaining two skills obtained through FPOs. Therefore the null presumption is not omitted for these two skills of the members of the FPOs. It is implicit that the members of the FPOs do not differ in their views on these two skills obtained through FPOs. It is expected that the authorities of the FPOs may take necessary steps to develop the same level of skills on self-management skills, innovation management skills and task management skills among the members of the FPOs without discriminating against them on the basis of marital status.

The members of the FPOs do not differ in their skills obtained through FPOs when they are clustered under age group

The pollster has grouped the selected members of the FPOs based on age. To identify whether the different age groups of members differ or not in the various skills obtained through FPOs the following unacceptable presumption has been framed and tested with one-way ANOVA test.

Presumption

The members of the FPOs do not differ in the various skills obtained through FPOs when they are grouped on age basis. This unacceptable presumption was tested with one one-way ANOVA test, and the acquired outcome is interpreted and presented in the following tables.

Age-wise classification of members of the FPOs and various skills obtained through FPOs - Output of one one-way ANOVA test

Type of skills obtained through FPOs	Details of between and within Groups	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Self-management skill	Between Groups	6.704	3	2.235	2.619	.047
	Within Groups	422.194	476	.897		
	Total	428.898	479			
Innovation management skill	Between Groups	7.375	3	2.458	2.516	.049
	Within Groups	505.216	476	1.061		
	Total	512.592	479			
Task management skill	Between Groups	5.883	3	1.961	1.683	.170
	Within Groups	554.709	476	1.165		
	Total	560.592	479			
Employees management skill	Between Groups	.086	3	.029	.049	.986
	Within Groups	279.561	476	.587		
	Total	279.648	479			
Social responsibility skill	Between Groups	6.506	3	2.169	2.698	.042
	Within Groups	397.361	476	.835		
	Total	403.867	479			

Source: Computed Data

From the outcome of the one-way ANOVA result, it is found that the likelihood value for skills on self-management skill, innovation management skill and social responsibility skills is lower than the conformity value of 0.05. So, the

null presumption planned for this analysis is repudiated, and it is clear that the sample members of the FPOs do vary in the three skills obtained through FPOs, namely self-management skill (0.047), innovation management skill (0.049) and social responsibility skill (0.042) when the members of the FPOs are grouped based on the age. Further, it is disclosed that the members of the FPOs do not differ in the remaining two skills namely task management skills and employee management skills obtained through FPOs. Therefore the null presumption is not omitted for these two skills of the members of the FPOs. It is noted that the members of the FPOs do not differ in their views on these two skills obtained through FPOs. It is recommended that the authorities of the FPOs take necessary steps to develop self-management skills, innovation management skills and social responsibility skills among the members of the FPOs without differentiating them on the basis of the age group in the study district.

The members of the FPOs do not differ in their skills obtained through FPOs when they are classified under the Educational qualification

The researcher has also classified the selected members of the FPOs based on their educational qualifications. To examine whether the different educational qualification groups of members do differ or not in their views towards the various aspects of the service quality the researcher has framed the null presumption and tested whether or not in the various skills obtained through FPOs the following null presumption has been framed and tested with one way ANOVA test.

Presumption

The members of the FPOs do not differ in the various skills obtained through FPOs when they are grouped based on educational qualification basis. This null presumption has been tested and was tested with a one-way ANOVA test, and the acquired outcome is interpreted and presented in the following tables.

Educational Qualification-wise classification of members of the FPOs and various skills obtained through FPOs - Output of one one-way ANOVA test

Type of skills obtained through FPOs	Details of between and within Groups	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Self-management skill	Between Groups	.796	4	.199	.221	.927
	Within Groups	428.102	475	.901		
	Total	428.898	479			

Innovation management skill	Between Groups	16.455	4	4.114	3.938	.004
	Within Groups	496.137	475	1.044		
	Total	512.592	479			
Task management skill	Between Groups	5.664	4	1.416	1.212	.305
	Within Groups	554.928	475	1.168		
	Total	560.592	479			
Employees management skill	Between Groups	1.132	4	.283	.483	.748
	Within Groups	278.516	475	.586		
	Total	279.648	479			
Social responsibility skill	Between Groups	22.669	4	5.667	7.062	.000
	Within Groups	381.197	475	.803		
	Total	403.867	479			

Source: Computed Data

From the outcome of the one-way ANOVA result, it is found that the likelihood value for skills on innovation management skills and social responsibility skills is lower than the conformity value of 0.05. So, the null presumption designed for this analysis is repudiated, and it is clear that the sample members of the FPOs do differ in the three skills obtained through FPOs, namely, innovation management skill (0.004) and social responsibility skill (0.000) when the members of the FPOs are grouped the educational qualification basis. Moreover, it is disclosed that the members of the FPOs do not differ in the remaining three skills namely self-management skills, task management skills and employee management skills obtained through FPOs. Hence the null presumption is not omitted for these three skills of the members of the FPOs. It is noted that the members of the FPOs do not differ in their views on these two skills obtained through FPOs. It is expected that the management authorities of the FPOs may take the required steps to develop innovation management skills and social responsibility skills among the members of the FPOs without differentiating them on the basis of their educational qualifications. Further, it is expected that the members of the FPOs may improve their educational qualifications at more levels to acquire various skills through FPOs.

Findings and Suggestions

Age-wise classification of the members

From the analysis, it is concluded that most of the members of the FPOs are in the age group of 36-45.

Educational Qualification

It is disclosed that most of the members (38.75 per cent) are studied up to high school level of education.

Marital status position of the members

Concerning the marital status of the selected members of the FPOs, it is noted that the majority of the members of the FPOs (82.29 per cent) are in the married category.

Number of family members

The researcher has also gathered the details regarding the number of family members of the selected members of the FPOs. From the gathered data it is discovered that most of the members of the FPOs (32.29 per cent) have three members in their family.

Number of Dependents

The dependents mean that other than the family members. The number of dependents of the selected members of the study has been made and it is explored that most of the members (47.29 per cent) have two dependents in their family other than the family members.

Leadership Competency Skills gained through FPOs

The researcher has measured the leadership competency skills gained by the women members through the FPOs. For this purpose information is gathered under five different skills, namely self-management skill, innovation management skill, task management skill, employee management skill and social responsibility skill.

Self-Management Skill

After joining the FPOs the women members of the FPOs have gained various skills. Regarding self-management skills, it is exposed that most of the members (44.58 per cent) have self-management skills through FPOs at a high level.

Innovation Management Skill

Regarding innovation management skills, it was discovered that most of the members (38.33 per cent) have got medium level of innovation management skills through FPOs.

Task Management Skill

The researcher has analysed the task management skills obtained by the women members of the FPOs. From the study, it is discovered that most of the respondents (39.79 per cent) have got high level of task management skills through FPOs.

Employee's Management Skill

The pollster has examined the employee's management skills obtained by the women members of the FPOs. From the collected data it is disclosed that most of the respondents (49.58 per cent) have got high level of employee management skills through FPOs.

Social Responsibility Skill

The researcher has also examined the social responsibility skills obtained by the women members of the FPOs. From the collected data it is found that most of the respondents (48.75 per cent) have got high level of social responsibility skills through FPOs.

The members of the FPOs do not differ in the various skills obtained through FPOs when they are grouped on a marital status basis. This unacceptable presumption was tested with the Independent sample T-test, and the acquired outcome was interpreted. It is found that the likelihood value for skills on self-management skill, innovation management skill and task management skills is lower than the conformity value of 0.05. So, the null presumption planned for this analysis is repudiated, and it is clear that the sample members of the FPOs do vary in the three skills obtained through FPOs, namely self-management skill (0.005), innovation management skill (0.000) and task management skill (0.001) when the members of the FPOs are grouped based on the marital status. Further, it is unveiled that the members of the FPOs do not differ in the remaining two skills obtained through FPOs. Therefore the null presumption is not omitted for these two skills of the members of the FPOs. It is implicit that the members of the FPOs do not differ in their views on these two skills obtained through FPOs.

The members of the FPOs do not differ in the various skills obtained through FPOs when they are grouped on age basis. This unacceptable presumption was tested with one one-way ANOVA test, and it was found that the

likelihood value for self-management skill (0.047), innovation management skill (0.049) and social responsibility skill (0.042) when the members of the FPOs are grouped based on age. Further, it is disclosed that the members of the FPOs do not differ in the remaining two skills namely task management skills and employee management skills obtained through FPOs.

The members of the FPOs do not differ in the various skills obtained through FPOs when they are grouped on educational qualification basis. This unacceptable presumption has been tested by the ANOVA test, and it is found that the likelihood value for skills innovation management skills (0.004) and social responsibility skills (0.000) when the members of the FPOs are grouped on the educational qualification basis. Moreover, it is disclosed that the members of the FPOs do not differ in the remaining three skills namely self-management skills, task management skills and employee management skills obtained through FPOs.

Based on the above major findings the researcher has offered the following suggestions for enhancing women's empowerment through FPOs in the study area.

- ❖ It is expected that the authorities of the FPOs may take necessary steps to develop the skills on self-management skills, innovation management skills and task management skills among the members of the FPOs without discriminating against them on the basis of marital status.
- ❖ It is expected that the authorities of the FPOs may take necessary steps to develop self-management skills, innovation management skills and social responsibility skills among the members of the FPOs without differentiating them on the basis of the age group in the study district.
- ❖ It is suggested that the management authorities of the FPOs may take the required steps to develop the innovation management skill, and social responsibility skill among the members of the FPOs without differentiating them on the basis of the educational qualification. Further, it is expected that the members of the FPOs may improve their educational qualifications at more levels to acquire various skills through FPOs.

Conclusion

The main aim of FPO is to ensure better income for the producers through an organization of their own. In FPOs, the entry and contribution of women are increasing every day. The present study focuses on the empowerment of women through FPOs in select districts of Andhra Pradesh. From the in-depth study conducted among the women who are actively involved in the FPOs, it is concluded that the women members of the FPOs are expected to improve their educational qualifications at a higher level. Further, it is noticed that the role and skills of the women developed through FPOs are increasing their entrepreneurial

skills at a high level. This will pave the way to increase the economic as well as social development of the women of our country at a higher level.

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