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## Farmers Producer Organisation (FPOs) Are Instrumental for the Upliftment of Socio- Economically Vulnerable Tribal Farmers

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### Abstract

Scheduled Tribes (ST) are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged socio-economic groups in India. The Government of India has made numerous efforts to empower these tribes through schemes for the development and progressive legislation. Farmers Producer Organisations (FPOs) in collaboration with non-government and government organisation, has a vital role to play in the upliftment of agriculture for livelihood improvement. However, this role needs to be re-assessed and finetuned to work at the interface of biophysical and socio-economic barriers. For this, Five FPOs were studied in the state of Madhya Pradesh in central India. Madhya Pradesh is the home for 21 % of the Schedule Tribal population in India, and Jhabua district has 87 % of the ST population in the state. Most of the rural population in the district depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Different FPOs were selected based on different criteria like commodities/crops preferences, activity and services portfolio and operating mechanisms for promoting institutions etc. Out of these 5 FPOs, ten farmers each were selected by adopting a random sampling technique to know the socio-economic impact of FPOs on their member farmers. The data was collected from the respondents on a well-designed and adopted survey questionnaires and from the organisations through telephonic interviews. Reflection on data was analysed in the light of secondary sources consultation and literature review to understand the socio-economic performance & constraints of FPOs. Interviews with the farmer members suggest that the FPO has been successful on many fronts as an institution for collective action. The success in bargaining for lower input supply prices, the ability to pool produce to get a higher price for outputs, and the innovative methods in training and information dissemination have resulted in significant benefits to the members in enhancing their incomes. However, the main challenge appears to be the inability to access capital, which, to some extent, is undermining the advantages of collectivisation. The results of the study highlighted the significant contribution of farmer organisations towards developing the socio-economic conditions of farmers, thus making them self-sufficient and self-reliant.

**Keywords:** FPO, Livelihood , Madhya Pradesh, Schedule Tribes