

Farmer Producer Organisations Lead Climate-Resilient Farming Amid El-Nino Threat

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Farmer Producer Organisation Latest News

- With the southwest monsoon expected to be weak due to El Niño conditions, the Union Ministry of Agriculture is leveraging the network of 10,000 Farmer Producer Organisations to promote drought-resistant crops and climate-resilient farming practices.

About Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)

- A Farmer Producer Organisation is a collective body of primary producers, primarily small and marginal farmers, formed to enhance productivity, profitability, and bargaining power through collective action.
- FPOs are registered either under the **Companies Act** (as Producer Companies) or under the Cooperative Societies Act of respective states.
- **Concept and Structure**
 - FPOs combine the strengths of two organisational forms:

- The professional management of companies.
- The member-driven democratic governance of cooperatives.
- This hybrid structure enables farmers to pool resources, access institutional credit, procure quality inputs, and market their produce collectively, thereby capturing greater value from the agricultural value chain.

• Objectives of FPOs

- Aggregating produce of small farmers for better market access.
- Improving bargaining power of farmers in input and output markets.
- Reducing transaction costs through collective action.
- Providing technical support and capacity building.
- Facilitating access to credit, insurance, and government schemes.
- Promoting value addition and processing of agricultural produce.
- Adopting modern technology and climate-resilient practices.

Government Initiatives for FPOs

• Formation and Promotion of 10,000 FPOs Scheme

- Launched in 2020 with an outlay of **Rs. 6,865 crore**, this Central Sector Scheme aims to form and promote 10,000 new FPOs across the country by 2027-28.

• Key features include:

- Financial support of up to Rs. 18 lakh per FPO over three years.
- Equity grant of up to Rs. 15 lakh per FPO.
- Credit guarantee facility up to Rs. 2 crore.
- Cluster-based business organisations approach.
- Implementation through Implementing Agencies (IAs) such as NABARD, NCDC, SFAC, and state agencies.

• Other Supporting Initiatives

- NABARD's Producer Organisation Development Fund (PODF) for credit support.
- Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) providing equity grants and credit guarantees.
- Agricultural Infrastructure Fund (AIF) with Rs. 1 lakh crore for farm-gate infrastructure.
- Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) support.

Significance of FPOs

- FPOs play a transformative role in Indian agriculture:
 - Economic empowerment of small and marginal farmers who constitute 86% of India's farmers.
 - Access to markets including e-NAM and direct procurement.
 - Reduced dependence on middlemen, improving farmer incomes.
 - Adoption of best practices in cultivation and post-harvest management.
 - Channel for government schemes and subsidies.
 - Platform for climate-resilient agriculture and sustainable practices.

Current Status

- Over 10,000 FPOs have been formed under the scheme.
- They represent more than 63 lakh farmer members across India.
- FPOs are active across all major agricultural states.
- They cover diverse activities including crop cultivation, horticulture, dairy, fisheries, and beekeeping.

News Summary

- The **India Meteorological Department** (IMD) has projected that the southwest monsoon (June-September) 2026 is likely to be at **90% of the Long Period Average (LPA)**, with a model error of $\pm 4\%$. The LPA, based on data from 1971 to 2020, is 87 cm for the country as a whole.
- More concerning is the projection for the monsoon core zone, where rainfall is expected to be below normal (less than 94% of LPA).
- The monsoon core zone covers most of India's rain-fed agriculture areas, including Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Telangana and Odisha.

Ministry's Strategic Response

- The Union Ministry of Agriculture is stepping up preparations to tackle the challenges of a weak monsoon by leveraging the vast network of FPOs:
 - Prepared a list of 10,000 FPOs that have adopted climate-resilient farming practices.
 - Identified FPOs cultivating drought-resistant crops like millets.
 - Promoting mulching for moisture conservation, drip irrigation, and mixed cropping systems.
 - Hosting daily webinars to promote natural farming, one state at a time.
 - Planning a series of webinars to promote climate-resilient farm practices.

Climate-Resilient Practices Being Promoted

• Mulching for Moisture Conservation

- Officials describe mulching as one of the simplest and most effective ways to conserve soil moisture:
 - Covering soil surface with crop residues or organic materials.
 - Reduces evaporation losses significantly.
 - Suppresses weeds and improves soil health.
 - Low-cost intervention accessible to small farmers.

• Drought-Resistant Crops

- The Ministry is encouraging cultivation of:
 - Millets (ragi, jowar, bajra) – naturally drought-resistant.
 - Pulses (moong, urad, kulthi/horse gram) – require less water.
 - Mixed cropping to spread risk.
 - These crops are naturally resilient, require less water, and perform well in marginal environments.

Success Stories from Jharkhand

- Two FPOs from Jharkhand have emerged as torchbearers:
- **Torpa Mahila Krishi Bagwani Swavlambi Sahkari Samiti Limited**
 - Located in Khunti district, Jharkhand.
 - Has about 4,000 farmer members.
 - Adopting natural mulching using straw and gunny bags.
 - Planning to shift from paddy to pulses and millets like ragi in kharif 2026.
 - Encouraging other farmers to plant water-efficient crops.
 - The director of this FPO mentioned that the shift is significant; most farmers traditionally grew paddy in the kharif season, but with weak monsoon projections, they are now switching to crops that require less water.
- **Senem Nirem Farmer Producer Company Limited**
 - Also adopting natural mulching techniques.
 - Low-cost interventions helping retain moisture in soil for longer periods.
 - Enabling crops to withstand dry spells more effectively.

Source: IE | TH

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