

## **Role of Agricultural Producers Cooperative Marketing Society (APCMS) in Empowering Women: A Study in Tamil Nadu**

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### **Abstract**

In developing countries, among the poor rural women are the poorest and more vulnerable. Cooperatives can be used as breeding ground for socio-economic empowerment of women. The study examined agricultural produce marketing cooperatives in relation to women empowerment. While making the study, the following questions emerged and that needs to be addressed. Based on the above background the objectives of the study. The research particularly examined the socio economic characteristics of the female respondents in Erode APCMS. The Agricultural Producer Cooperative Marketing Society that brought changes in their life. It is basically to bring economic, social and environmental benefits. The study conducted by contacting 50 respondents and they were selected by adopting purposive sampling method. Primary data were collected through interview schedule. Both the primary and secondary data were collected. To this light, the major concern of this study is to analyze and assess the role of cooperatives in performing socio-economic empowerment of women. The study reveals that women's involvement in cooperatives has some positive impacts.

**Keywords:** agricultural, cooperatives, empowerment, women

### **Introduction**

Women and Children together constitute about 67.7% of the country's population, as per 2011 census. The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution. The Constitutions not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the state to adopt measures of equality and empowerment in favour of women to neutralize the cumulative socio-economic and political discrimination. (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2023-24)

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Empowerment of women is a process that leads women to claim their rights to have access to equal opportunities in economic, cultural, social and political spheres of life and realise their full potential. (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2023-24) This progress has to be accompanied by their freedom in decision making within and outside their home with the ability to influence the direction of social change.

Promoting women's empowerment is essential because in most causes women are responsible for their children and for their family, thus empowering women is empowering the society in large. The global statistics show that women are in charge of 60-80 percent of the food.

History has shown a number of approaches to development have been employed to solve the socio-economic ills of the third world. However, these approaches failed to achieve their goals partly because they completely ignored women and their contribution to the efforts of development.

Throughout the history and in many societies inequalities of women and men were part and parcel of an accepted male-dominated culture. One of the basic factors causing unequal share of women in development relates to the division of labor between the sexes.

Cooperatives can be used as breeding grounds to empower women by enhancing their specific knowledge and capacities. The Study thus deal with the role of Agricultural Producers Cooperative Marketing Society in Empowering women. The paper is organized in to five sections. The second section composes review of related literature. The third section describes the research methodology used, the fourth section deals with analysis and discussion of the result and the five section is a summary and a conclusion of the results.

### **Objective**

- The research particularly examined the socio economic characteristics of the female respondents
- The Agricultural producer cooperative marketing societies that brought changes in their life.

### **Literature Review**

The Study highlights traditional perceptions of Women's roles, where they are often considered secondary in economic matters However, evidence shows women engaging in productive activities like cross border trade (Abdulsalam-Saghir, 2006) Constrains Identified in the study

Include poor transportation infrastructure, lack of modern financial facilities, security issues, and limited business skills. The author (Woldu & et al, 2015) demonstrates the intersection of socio-cultural, economic, and intuitional factors shaping women's participation in agricultural cooperatives. (jeckoniah, 2012) in this article Empowerment is defined as a multifaceted process that includes economic, social, and political dimension. Women's Empowerment is crucial for sustainable societal development and achieving gender equality. (Tiwari, 2024) the review discusses how cooperatives help women achieve economic independence by providing them with access to financial resources, training, and support. This economic empowerment enables women to contribute to their households and communities, improving their overall quality of life.

### **Methodology**

The study is Descriptive in nature. Both Primary and Secondary sources of data were used. Primary data were collected through interview Schedule. Secondary data were collected from internal documents of the Erode Agricultural Producers Cooperative Marketing Society, Audit, Annual Reports, Published books and Journals. The Study was Conducted in Erode District. 50 Respondents were selected from Erode Agricultural Producers cooperative Marketing Society. The study employed Simple Random Sampling to select 50 Women respondents from APCMS in Erode. A random number generator (Lottery Method) was used to ensure an unbiased selection process, giving each member an equal probability of being chosen. In order to bring the fruitful findings and outcome of the study the collected data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools, like Frequency, percentage and correlation through SPSS.

### **Erode Agricultural Producers Cooperative Marketing Society**

Thiru.S.K.Paramasivam Ex. M.P., a veteran Co-operator promoted the Erode Agricultural Producers Co-operative Marketing Society Limited on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1960 and commenced its business from 29<sup>th</sup> June 1960 onwards. It was started with 58 members with a share capital of Rs.14, 885/- As on 31 January 2025, the society functions with 16,221 members and has accumulated a share capital of Rs.40.14 lakhs. The Society is running with net profit since its commencement and is distributing 14% dividend to its members since 1990.

Erode district is one of the most important centers for Turmeric in Tamilnadu as it is grown more by the farmers in the district and nearby districts. Erode district also holds the GI tag for "Erode Turmeric". The Society organizes a daily market for agricultural products of its members,

Especially turmeric. The Society conducts e-Tender in its premises in all working days of a week. The Highest rate offered by the trader in the tender is confirmed in consultation with the farmers. A nominal service charge of 1.5% is collected and the sale amount of turmeric is disbursed to the members through RTGS, NEFT and through immediate cash payment.

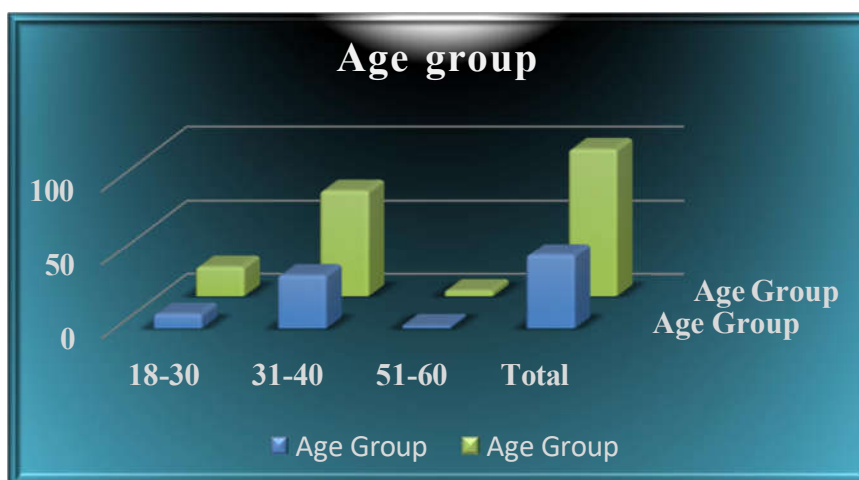
### **Socio-economic Characteristics of the female Respondents**

Analyzing the socio-economic characteristics is essential to understanding their demographic profile, education, occupation, and financial status. It helps assess their economic contribution, decision-making power, and access to resources like land, credit, and government schemes. Social and cultural factors, including family structure and gender norms, influence their mobility and work participation. Additionally, evaluating their health and nutrition status provides insights into their well-being and productivity. Understanding these aspects enables policymakers and researchers to design targeted programs that promote women's empowerment, financial inclusion, and overall socio-economic development. The Study conducted by contacting the 50 respondents.

**Table 1**  
**Age wise classification of the respondents**

<b>Value (N=50)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
18-30	10	20.0
31-40	36	72.0
51-60	2	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Chart 1**

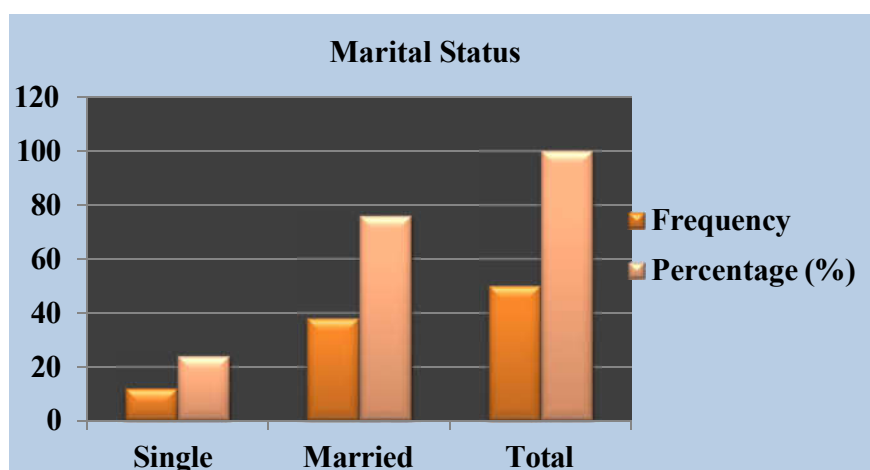


The age distribution of the sample indicates that the majority of respondents, 72% (36 out of 50), fall within the 31-40 age group, suggesting that most individuals in the study are in their prime working years. The 18-30 age group accounts for 20% (10 respondents), representing younger individuals who may be newly engaged in agriculture or self-employment. Meanwhile, only 4% (2 respondents) belong to the 51-60 age groups, indicating a lower presence of older individuals in the sample. This distribution suggests that the workforce in this sector is predominantly middle-aged, with a smaller proportion of younger and older individuals. The data may imply active participation from individuals in their most economically productive years, while the lower representation of older individuals might suggest retirement or reduced workforce engagement beyond 50 years of age.

**Table 2**  
**Marital Status of the respondents**

<b>Value (N=50)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Single	12	24.0
Married	38	76.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Chart 2**



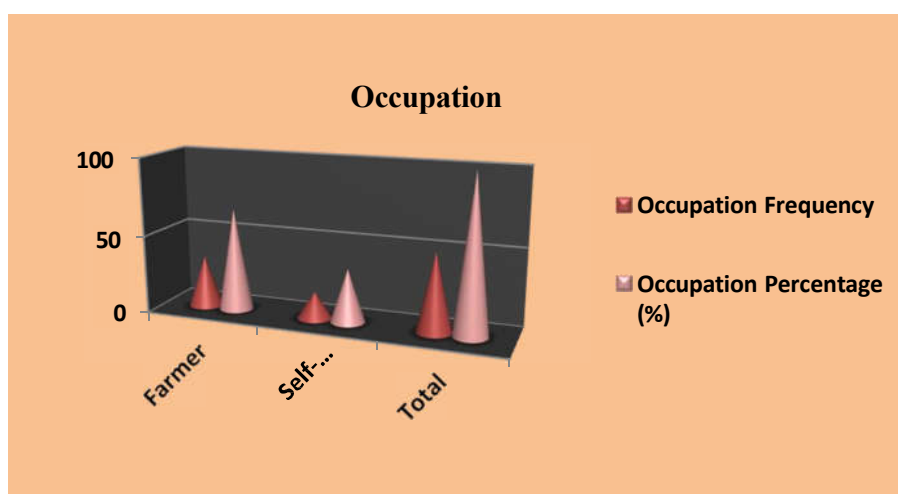
The marital status distribution of the sample shows that the majority of respondents, 76% (38 out of 50), are married, indicating that most individuals in the study belong to stable family structures. In contrast, 24% (12 respondents) are single, representing a smaller proportion of the

population. This suggests that marriage is a common social norm among the respondents, which may have implications for financial responsibilities, decision-making, and economic stability. The higher percentage of married individuals could also indicate that most respondents are in a phase of life where they are actively engaged in long-term economic activities, such as farming or self-employment, to support their families.

**Table 3**  
**Occupation of the respondents**

Value (N=50)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Farmer	33	66.0
Self-employed	17	34.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

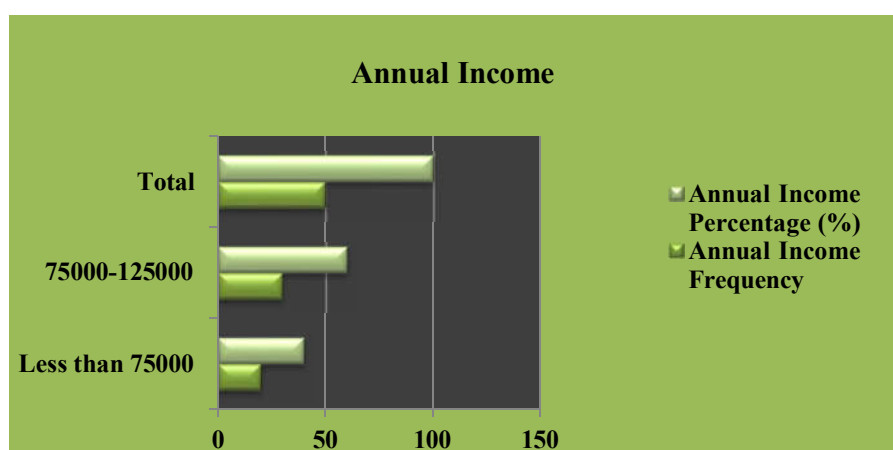
**Chart 3**



The occupational distribution of the sample reveals that a significant majority, 66% (33 out of 50 respondents), are engaged in farming, highlighting agriculture as the dominant livelihood. The remaining 34% (17 respondents) are self-employed, indicating a notable presence of individuals involved in non-agricultural independent businesses or entrepreneurship. This distribution suggests that while farming remains the primary source of income for most individuals, a considerable portion has diversified into self-employment, possibly in agri-based businesses or other economic activities. The data reflects the continued reliance on agriculture while also showcasing the growing role of self-employment in rural or semi-rural economies.

**Table 4****Annual Income of the respondents**

<b>Value (N=50)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Less than 75000	20	40.0
75000-125000	30	60.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Chart 4**

The annual income distribution of the sample indicates that the majority of respondents, 60% (30 out of 50), earn between ₹75,000 and ₹1, 25,000 per year, suggesting that most individuals have a moderate income level. Meanwhile, 40% (20 respondents) earn less than ₹75,000 annually, reflecting a significant portion of the population with relatively lower earnings. This distribution highlights income variations among the respondents, with a larger proportion falling within the middle-income range. The data suggests that while a majority have a somewhat stable income, a considerable percentage may face financial constraints, potentially influencing their economic decisions and standard of living.

**Correlation**

Correlation is a statistical measure that shows the relationship between two variables. It indicates how changes in one variable are associated with changes in another.

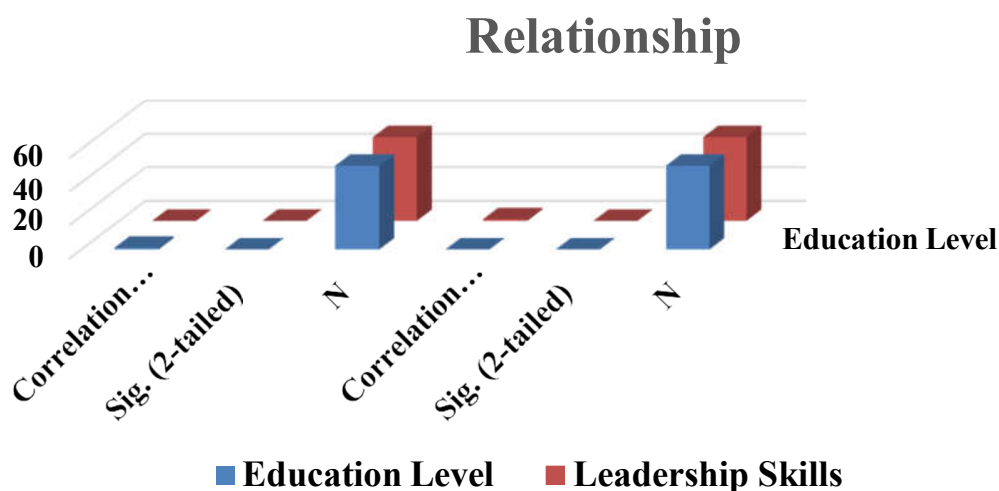
**Table 5**

	<b>Education Level</b>		<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Leadership Skills</b>
		Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.430**

<b>Spearman's Correlation</b>		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.002
		N	50	50
	<b>Leadership Skills</b>	Correlation Coefficient	.430**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.
		N	50	50

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Chart 5**



### Result and Discussion

Above the table 5 explain the Spearman's Correlation between the Educational level and Leadership Skills for a sample of 50 respondents. The range of Possible Values for the correlation Coefficient is -1 to 1. -1 represents a perfect negative correlation between two variables. While 1 represents a perfect positive correlation between two variables.

A Correlation Coefficient of 0 indicates that there is no monotonic relationship between the variables. The correlation coefficient for our example is 0.430 falls in the moderate range, it suggest that higher education is moderately associated with better leadership skills.

Therefore this suggests that individuals with higher education level tend to acquire better leadership skills.

The second value of interest is Sig. (2 tailed). The standard significance level ( $\alpha$ ) is 0.05 (5%) or 0.01 (1%). Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative hypothesis



(H<sub>1</sub>), concluding that education level has a significant positive correlation with leadership skills.

### **Findings**

- Based on the socio economic results younger (20%) and older women (4%) have lower representation, highlighting the need for initiatives to boost their involvement.
- Women are facing difficulties in bringing the products what they produce.
- Based on the Correlation result the higher education is moderately associated with better leadership skills among the respondents.

### **Suggestion**

- Based on the interview, the respondents expressed the need for transport facilities to collect goods, as they face difficulties in transportation.
- The government should provide transport facilities for farmers. Proper transportation arrangements will encourage greater participation of female members.
- Enhancing education among women in APCMS could potentially boost their leadership skills and decision-making capabilities. So the training and education provide to the members.
- Otherwise, they are providing good services to farmers. The Erode Agricultural Producers Cooperative Marketing Society is one of the best in marketing and providing services to farmers.

### **Conclusion**

The study highlights the significant role of Agricultural Producers Cooperative Marketing Societies (APCMS) in empowering women in Tamil Nadu. These societies provide women with economic opportunities, financial inclusion, and skill development, enabling them to participate actively in agricultural marketing and related activities. By offering employment, credit facilities, and training programs, APCMS enhances women's decision-making power and social status. Despite these benefits, challenges such as limited awareness, social norms, and access to resources still hinder women's full participation. Overall, APCMS plays a crucial role in promoting gender equality and improving the socio-economic status of women in Tamil Nadu's agricultural sector.

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