



# Sustainable Livelihoods and Community Resilience: A Case Study of Bio Mountain FPC and Its Contribution to SDGs in Kannur, Kerala

 Amal George<sup>1\*</sup>  Joji Scaria<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Vels Institute of Science, Technology & Advanced Studies, Chennai, India.

<sup>2</sup>Research Scholar, Srinivas University, Mangalore, India.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70333/ijeeks-04-02-007>

\*Corresponding Author: [agp2873@gmail.com](mailto:agp2873@gmail.com)

Article Info: - Received : 28 January 2025

Accepted : 25 March 2025

Published : 30 March 2025

Abstract

Rural sustainable development in India depends on uniting financial strength with environmental sustainability and social empowerment initiatives. The Farmers Producer Company known as Bio Mountain demonstrates this model through its operation under the Thalassery Social Service Society (TSSS) and the Archdiocese of Tellicherry, which function in Kannur, Kerala. The Archdiocese of Tellicherry, a key stakeholder in the FPC, plays a significant role in the implementation of sustainable agriculture practices and the empowerment of small-scale farmers. Bio Mountain helps farmers escape poverty through organic agriculture market availability and financial resources, which support SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Through its initiatives, Bio Mountain simultaneously supports sustainable agriculture techniques and gender equality participation, which fulfils SDG 12 and SDG 5 as well as SDG 13. This work adopts secondary data and conducts a case study evaluation to understand how Bio Mountain affects rural livelihoods alongside economic resilience and sustainable community growth. Research evidence shows that FPCs succeed in linking agricultural value chains and stopping middlemen's overexploitation, thereby developing sustainable rural communities. Such models possess the ability to scale up for wider implementation across rural development programs according to policy recommendations.

**Keywords:** *Sustainable Development, Farmers Producer Company, Financial Inclusion, Organic Farming, Rural Empowerment, SDG Goals.*



© 2025. Amal George and Joji Scaria., This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license, and indicate if changes were made.

## 1. Introduction

India's agricultural sector is a crucial economic sector that substantially impacts national GDP measurements and rural

employment rates especially. According to the Government of India (GoI, 2014), the agriculture sector contributes nearly 14 per cent to the total GDP while accounting for approximately 55 per

cent of total employment. Many agricultural workers who operate small farms experience multiple obstacles because they lack suitable market connections alongside minimal trading power and are exposed to market price instability. Different development organizations and the government have worked toward implementing Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) to address current agricultural difficulties. Farmer Producer Companies unite farmers to increase their bargaining strength and provide better market access to technology and fairer crop prices. A Farmer Producer Company (FPC) can be formed by any 10 or more primary producers by two or more producer institutions or by contributing to both. An FPC is a hybrid between cooperative societies and private limited companies. The Farmer Producer Companies, registered under the Indian Companies Act 2013, have democratic governance; each producer or member has equal voting rights irrespective of the number of shares held. (What Is a Farmer Producer Company? | NAFPO, n.d.)

Registered under the Companies Act of 2013, FPCs establish operations to organize farmers into collectives, which manage the entire value chain from production through marketing. "India's agricultural sector has demonstrated resilience, with an average growth rate of 5 per cent annually from FY17 to FY23, reflecting the effectiveness of government initiatives to enhance productivity and increase farmers' incomes (Government of India, 2025). The innovative FPCs provide a new approach to solving problems that small and marginal farmers experience. Pooling resources and collaboration across value creation production and marketing stages enable collectives to improve traditional farming into an efficient and sustainable enterprise. The combinations of services from farmer-producer companies help increase financial inclusion and access to credit while establishing needed market connections and technological resources that improve rural income and economic stability.

As of March 31, 2021, India had 15,948 registered producer companies, highlighting a growing movement toward collective farming and rural entrepreneurship. The density of 5.6 producer companies per 1 lakh farmers reflects gradual adoption but indicates potential for expansion. This potential for expansion is a hopeful sign for the future of agriculture in India.

The historical development of collective farming spirits and cooperative organizational structures dominates Kerala through its well-established community-based systems. Within Kerala, the state government has led the way through agrarian reforms and community-based efforts, and it puts particular importance on cooperative and collective farming models. Kerala's role in promoting these models is a source of pride and inspiration for the entire country.

This study focuses on the Bio Mountain Farmer Producer Company (FPC) operating under the Thalassery Social Service Society (TSSS). The Archdiocese of Tellicherry is the subject of this research because it strengthens sustainable livelihoods and community resistance. According to Bio Mountain Farmer Producer Company (FPC), its organic farming, alongside fair trade and farmer empowerment practices, actively promotes 3 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), SDG 1, SDG 2 and SDG 12 through rural development and environmental sustainability.

## 2. Research Objectives

- To examine the impact of Bio Mountain Farmer Producer Company (FPC) on farmers' socio-economic development and sustainable livelihoods in Kannur, Kerala.
- To evaluate Bio Mountain's contribution to achieving relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly poverty alleviation, hunger reduction, and responsible consumption.
- To assess the role of Bio Mountain FPC in promoting organic farming practices, value chain integration, and environmental sustainability in the region.

## 3. Research Questions

- How does Bio Mountain FPC operate, and what distinguishes it from traditional regional cooperatives?
- What socio-economic impacts has Bio Mountain FPC created for its members, particularly regarding income, empowerment, and market access?
- What systemic challenges hinder the scalability and sustainability of Bio Mountain FPC's model in the agrarian context of Kannur, Kerala?

#### 4. Literature Review

Definition and Evolution of FPCs **(Based on the Companies Act, 2002)**: Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) function through the Companies Act of 1956 **(modified in 2002)** as producer companies per sections 581A-581ZT. Farmer Producer Companies implement corporate frameworks to help farmers execute group initiatives. Farmer-producer companies combine cooperative principles with business operation flexibility provided by companies to allow agricultural producers to reduce risks through combined resource usage that streamlines market entry. Farmers Producer Organisation (FPO) is a type of PO that has members who are farmers. Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) supports the promotion of FPOs. PO is a generic name for an organization of producers of any produce, e.g., agricultural, non-farm products, artisan products, etc. (Farmer Connect Portal, n.d.)

#### 5. Key Features:

- Sole members admitted to FPCs are farmers at the sole producer level who join through equity contributions.
- The board of directors exercise control through elections based on a single-member, one-vote principle.
- Pro-producer companies aim to boost farm productivity, market connection, and farming revenue through agriculture collection, processing, and product value enhancement.
- The Companies Act of 2013 maintained sections targeting producer companies, thus ensuring continuous operations and growth potential.

#### 6. Comparative Analysis of FPC vs. Cooperatives

The FPC model has proven effective through several Indian farmer-producer companies that enhance farmers' income and improve rural society.

The Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), distinguished as AMUL, operates between farmer cooperative and large-scale FPC model categories. Through its successful operations, AMUL has demonstrated how cooperative models can boost farmers' earnings while expanding business markets. AMUL runs through multiple cooperative levels while delivering similar FPC functions such as

cooperative control, fair farmer payment, and market accessibility.

Sahyadri Farms represents a successful FPC, a producer company based in Maharashtra. Sahyadri Farms leads grape agriculture and has collected more than 3000 agricultural producers throughout its operations. Sahyadri achieves farmer success through fair pricing and provides cold storage facilities and direct market connections, which raises farmer benefits and decreases agricultural waste.

The documented examples demonstrate how FPCs generate substantial social and economic benefits through improved market connections, superior profit possibilities and sustainable farming approaches.

Research on Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) in Kannur and Kerala remains quite scarce, thus creating difficulties in comprehending their performance in the region's local farming ecosystem. Studies focusing on Farmer Producer Companies are successful across India, but investigations about their operational principles, financial impact, and scalability barriers in Kerala remain limited.

#### 7. Methodology

The research utilizes a qualitative investigation of Bio Mountain FPC activities and assessments of operational barriers and economic effects on Kannur, Kerala. A research design method aims to uncover the interactions between FPC members and how the organization supports sustainable livelihoods and resilience.

The research gathers information through both primary sources and secondary sources of data. The research team conducted interviews with FPC members to investigate FPC data through annual report analysis, government data and a review of operational records from FPC programs.

#### 8. Case Study: Bio Mountain Farmers Producer Company

Bio Mountain is a socially responsible, directly sourced food producer based in Kerala, India. Bio Mountain is passionate about delivering the best quality organic, pure, and premium-packed spices to our customers while also supporting local farmers in the community. (Bio Mountain | Farmers Producer Company, n.d.)

Bio Mountain is an innovative effort aimed at empowering farmers and promoting sustainable

farming techniques, notably in the attractive mountainous regions of Kerala. The initiative focuses on organic farming practices, creating high-quality, chemical-free agricultural products such as Bio Mountain Tea Powder and curry powders. By empowering local farmers with training and tools, Bio Mountain wants to strengthen their agricultural practices, increase income, and contribute to the region's development. The products created under this initiative are rich in flavour and contribute to consumers' health and well-being by supplying organic, unadulterated food items.

The essence of Bio Mountain's manufacturing resides in its devotion to organic farming methods. The tea and spice crops farmed in these mountain regions are grown without synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, or chemical additions. Bio Mountain Tea Powder is made from tea leaves in pristine, chemical-free mountain environments. These places are great for cultivating tea due to their rich soil, pure air, and optimal climate. The tea leaves are meticulously chosen, processed, and made into a fine powder, assuring optimum flavour and nutritional value. In addition, the curry powders are manufactured from organic, locally sourced spices that are dried and processed without chemicals, retaining their natural taste and health benefits.

To ensure the success of this effort, Bio Mountain conducts comprehensive training programs for farmers, helping them adopt contemporary agricultural instruments and technology. Farmers are schooled in organic farming practices, pest management, water conservation, and value-added product manufacturing. Through these efforts, farmers can make high-quality products like Bio Mountain Tea Powder and curry powders, which have a higher market value than raw agricultural goods. Women in the community are also empowered through entrepreneurship training, where they learn skills in product development, marketing, and business management to start their ventures in organic farming and product processing. These programs attempt to build a sustainable ecology that supports economic development and promotes regional food self-sufficiency.

Marketing plays a significant role in the success of Bio Mountain's products. The items are sold through several channels, including Sunday markets in major towns in Northern Kerala,

parish-level units, and internet platforms. Bio Mountain ensures fair rates for farmers and consumers by taking out the intermediaries. Products like Bio Mountain Tea Powder and organic curry powders are marketed directly to customers, providing transparency and supporting organic, locally sourced goods. Collaborations with 50+ NGOs assist in broadening the accessibility of these products, spreading awareness about the value of organic farming and supporting local farmers. This integrated marketing approach generates a loyal consumer base and encourages long-term community and business success.

Through organic farming, sustainable product processing, and a comprehensive training program for farmers and businesspeople, Bio Mountain wants to alter the agricultural landscape in the Thalassery Archdiocese and adjacent territories. By focusing on quality, sustainability, and economic empowerment, Bio Mountain is prepared to influence the local community, strengthening farmers' livelihoods and delivering consumers healthy, organic products at accessible costs.

## **9. Objectives of Bio Mountain FPC**

**Promote Organic Farming:** Encourage farmers to adopt organic farming practices that minimize synthetic chemicals, reduce environmental impact, and improve soil health.

**Farmers with Organic Farming Knowledge:** Provide training on organic farming methods, pest management, crop rotation, and sustainable farming techniques.

**Increase Production of Certified Organic Products:** Help farmers transition to and scale up the production of certified organic crops that meet national and international organic standards.

**Facilitate Organic Product Marketing:** Create marketing channels for organic products, ensuring farmers receive fair prices for certified organic goods.

**Establish Organic Processing Units:** Set up processing units dedicated to converting organic produce into value-added organic products, such as organic snacks, juices, or other processed foods.

**Foster Sustainable Farming Practices:** Promote soil and water conservation techniques, biodiversity, and eco-friendly farming practices that improve long-term agricultural productivity.

**Create a Fair Organic Supply Chain:** Develop a transparent supply chain for organic



products, connecting farmers directly to consumers or retailers without exploitation from intermediaries.

### 10. Products

The products focus on organic, chemical-free, and value-added agricultural items. Bio Mountain Tea Powder is sourced from organic tea leaves cultivated in virgin highland settings, ensuring purity and full flavour without synthetic chemicals. 15+ Curry Powders are produced from carefully selected organic spices, free from additives and preservatives, maintaining their original taste and nutritional value. Both products address the growing need for clean, healthy dietary options. Adding value to raw agricultural products, such as tea and spices, boosts farmers' income while supporting sustainable, eco-friendly practices that assist local communities.

### 11. Marketing of Products

**Sunday Markets in Major Towns:** Organize weekly Sunday markets in important towns across Northern Kerala to directly sell organic items like Bio Mountain Tea Powder, curry powders, and the farmer's products. This allows farmers and local producers to interact directly with consumers, promoting fresh, chemical-free produce and creating a direct sales channel.

**Marketing through Parish-Level Units:** Utilize the parish-level units to distribute and sell organic products within local communities. These units can be focused on local outreach and product marketing, helping raise knowledge about organic farming and goods throughout the Thalassery Archdiocese.

**Collaboration with 50+ NGOs:** Partner with over 50 NGOs working in several sectors, including rural development, agriculture, and health, to broaden the accessibility of organic products. These NGOs may help promote and distribute products and increase awareness among their networks and communities, further boosting the acceptance of organic farming and consumption.

**Online Marketing:** Establish an online presence for organic products, including social media platforms, an e-commerce website, and digital advertising. This will allow products to reach a bigger audience locally, nationally, and worldwide. Focus on teaching consumers about the benefits of organic products through

storytelling, quality certificates, and customer testimonials.

**Direct Selling in Northern Kerala Districts:** Set up direct selling initiatives in important marketplaces across Northern Kerala districts, including towns and rural areas.

### 12. Other Areas of Operation

**TRAINING:** Training programs will empower farmers, women, and the public with the necessary skills. Farmers will receive hands-on training on generating value-added goods, such as Bio Mountain Tea Powder and chemical-free curry powders, and learn current agricultural tools, technology, and organic farming techniques. Women will attend entrepreneurship training, developing skills in product development, marketing, and business management to launch their enterprises. Public awareness activities will educate consumers on the benefits of organic products. Capacity-building activities will also target youth and community leaders, training them with leadership skills to promote sustainable agriculture in their communities.

### 13. Conclusion

Bio Mountain is a transformative effort combining sustainable agriculture, organic product development, and community empowerment in the Thalassery Archdiocese and Northern Kerala. By supporting organic farming, value-added product innovation, and innovative marketing tactics, the project promotes financial resilience among local farmers while ensuring customers have access to excellent, chemical-free food items. Through its focus on self-sufficiency, direct farmer-consumer ties, and sustainable methods, Bio Mountain addresses the socio-economic and environmental challenges encountered by the agriculture sector in the region.

A crucial part of this project is the creation of value addition and food processing units, such as the one at Kunnoth, Iritty (Kannur), where locally grown foodstuff is turned into high-quality goods like Bio Mountain Tea Powder, organic curry powders, and pickles. Bio Mountain ensures that farmers receive fair prices. At the same time, customers access cheap organic food by eliminating intermediaries and implementing direct selling methods through Sunday markets, parish-level units, online platforms, and NGO

networks. Introducing modern agricultural technologies like tractors further assists farmers by minimizing labour-intensive tasks and enhancing production.

Beyond product development, Bio Mountain plays a crucial role in capacity building through extensive training programs on organic farming, agricultural technologies, and entrepreneurial development for women and adolescents. These initiatives empower local communities with the skills and knowledge to strengthen their livelihoods and promote sustainable farming practices

Integrating economic empowerment, environmental sustainability, and community development, Bio Mountain is a model for building financial resilience in agriculture, assuring a healthier future for producers and consumers alike. This effort corresponds with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 3; SDG 10, and SDG 16) by creating better health, decreased disparities, and stronger institutions to boost rural development in Kerala.

## References

- Bio Mountain | Farmers Producer Company. (n.d.). Retrieved February 3, 2025, from <https://biomountain.in/>
- Bosko, I., Ahado, S., & Rating, T. (2020). The effects of the participation in producer organizations on the performance of dairy farmers in the Czech Republic and future challenges. *Agricultural Economics (Czech Republic)*, 66(8), 345–354. <https://doi.org/10.17221/2/2020-AGRICECON>
- Farmer Connect Portal. (n.d.). Retrieved February 3, 2025, from [https://farmerconnect.apeda.gov.in/Home/ForGroups?PaccessID=1&utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://farmerconnect.apeda.gov.in/Home/ForGroups?PaccessID=1&utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- Farmer producer companies report II: inclusion, capitalization and incubation - ePrints@APU. (n.d.). Retrieved February 3, 2025, from <https://publications.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/3401/>
- Mourya, M., & Mehta, M. (2021). Farmer Producer Company: India's Magic Bullet to Realize Select SDGs? <https://doi.org/10.1177/0973005221991660>, 17(1\_suppl), 115S-147S. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0973005221991660>

Suresh, V., & Ss, S. (2024). Discover Sustainability Enabling and inhibiting factors of sustainability of Farmer's Producers Organisations in Indiasproducers organizations · Organizational sustainability · Sustainable agriculture · Sustainable food production · Sustainable development goals. 5, 333. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43621-024-00527-5>

What is a Farmer Producer Company? | NAFPO. (n.d.). Retrieved February 3, 2025, from [https://www.nafpo.in/about-us/what-is-a-farmer-producer-company/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.nafpo.in/about-us/what-is-a-farmer-producer-company/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

Bio Mountain Farmers Producer Company Limited. Annual report 2024.

Bio Mountain Farmers Producer Company Limited. Retrieved [03-02-2025], from <https://biomountain.in/>

**Cite this article as:** Amal George and Joji Scaria., (2025). Sustainable Livelihoods and Community Resilience: A Case Study of Bio Mountain FPC and Its Contribution to SDGs in Kannur, Kerala. *International Journal of Emerging Knowledge Studies*. 4(3), pp. 338- 343. <https://doi.org/10.70333/ijeks-04-02-007>