

An Empirical Study on Rural Talent Retention Practices and its Influence on Employee Satisfaction at T.A.P.C.M.S. Ltd., Sirsi

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Abstract

Employee retention is a growing concern for rural cooperative organisations, which often struggle to compete with urban employers on pay, career growth, and infrastructure. This study examines the retention practices followed by Taluk Agricultural Produce Co-operative Marketing Society Ltd. (T.A.P.C.M.S.), Sirsi, and their influence on employee satisfaction. Using a descriptive research design, primary data were collected from 129 employees through a structured questionnaire and analysed using the Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit test. The results show a statistically significant association between the retention practices adopted by the society and the level of employee satisfaction. Welfare facilities, job security, and compensation emerged as the strongest contributors to satisfaction, while career development and formal recognition programmes remain areas for improvement. The study concludes with practical suggestions for strengthening retention strategies in rural cooperative settings.

Keywords: Employee retention, employee satisfaction, rural cooperatives, T.A.P.C.M.S., workforce stability, Chi-Square test

1. Introduction

Cooperative institutions occupy a distinct place in India's rural economy. Unlike private enterprises, they are built on principles of mutual assistance and shared benefit, and their workforce plays a direct role in connecting farmers to fair markets. For an organisation such as T.A.P.C.M.S. Ltd., Sirsi, retaining competent employees is not simply a human resource concern; it is central to the society's ability to serve its farmer-members and sustain long-term growth.

A cooperative society is a group of individuals who come together to achieve shared economic and soci-

al goals. Cooperatives are commonly classified as consumer societies, producer societies, marketing societies, credit societies, and housing societies, each serving a different function within the rural economy.

Company Profile

T.A.P.C.M.S. Ltd. Taluk Agricultural Produce Co-operative Marketing Society Limited is headquartered on New Market Road, Sirsi, Uttara Kannada. It was established on 7 May 1985 under the encouragement of the late Shri Ramakrishna Hegde, former Chief Minister of Karnataka, and registered under the Karnataka Co-operative Societies Act, 1959. The society began with 124 members holding 1,03,900 shares and has since grown into a multi-service organisation supporting farmers with agricultural marketing, credit facilities, input supply, and storage.

The society's core business is the marketing of arecanut, pepper, and cardamom, alongside services such as cattle feed production, fertiliser and pesticide supply, and the T.M.S. Supermart retail chain. It operates from its Sirsi headquarters along with branches at Banavasi (established 2012) and Dasankoppa (established 2017), and has invested over ₹21 crore in buildings and infrastructure.

Retention Strategies in Practice

T.A.P.C.M.S. Ltd. relies on a mix of retention measures rather than any single approach. These include:

- Financial security and benefits fair, timely wages, provident fund, insurance, and performance-based incentives.
- Growth and development training programmes in agricultural marketing, technology, and cooperative management, along with clear paths to promotion.
- A positive work environment and recognition a supportive, transparent workplace with appreciation for employee contributions.
- Community engagement and welfare local recruitment, transportation and housing assistance, and social activities that build belonging.
- Work-life balance flexible arrangements during peak agricultural seasons to reduce workplace stress.
- Technological and infrastructure support modern tools and safe working conditions.

These measures set the context for the present study, which asks how effectively they translate into employee satisfaction.

Industry Context and Competitive Environment

Agriculture remains a vital sector of the Indian economy, yet it continues to face marketing difficulties, labour shortages, crop diseases, inadequate storage, and limited access to finance. T.A.P.C.M.S. Ltd. was set up specifically to address these gaps for farmers in Sirsi Taluk, and its human resource practices operate within this broader set of sectoral constraints a seasonal workload tied to arecanut and pepper harvests, dependence on a narrow crop base, and competition from both private traders and other cooperative institutions.

Within the local cooperative sector, T.A.P.C.M.S. Ltd. competes with organisations such as TSS Sirsi, which serves a wider geographical area spanning Sirsi, Siddapur, Yellapur, Ankola, and Mundgod, the Kadamba Co-operative Society, which focuses on spice procurement and marketing; and KDCC Bank, a cooperative financial institution offering credit services to farmers and societies. This competitive landscape matters for retention because employees in the region have visible alternative employers, and

a society that cannot match pay, welfare, or career prospects elsewhere risks losing skilled staff to these nearby organisations.

A SWOT assessment of the society highlights the retention challenge in context. Its strengths include a dependable marketing platform, multiple income streams, and strong community relationships; its weaknesses include a limited geographical footprint and heavy dependence on arecanut prices; its opportunities include export growth and product diversification; and its threats include regulatory change, climate-related crop risk, and rising competition. Employee retention sits at the intersection of these factors a stable, satisfied workforce is what allows the society to act on its opportunities despite its structural weaknesses and external threats.

2. Literature Review

- A substantial body of research links human resource practices to employee retention and satisfaction, though most of it is set in corporate or urban contexts. Kwon and Kim (2019) found that emotionally engaged employees remain with organisations longer, while Ibrahim and Al Falasi (2019) showed that job security lowers stress and strengthens commitment. De Winne and Sels (2020) demonstrated that structured training and fair appraisal systems build workforce stability, and Narayanan and Rajendran (2020) linked welfare measures such as financial aid and healthcare to higher satisfaction.
- Career-related factors have also been studied extensively. Kaur and Sandhu (2020) found that training and promotion opportunities influence employees' decisions to stay, and Garg and Rastogi (2021) showed that work-life balance and flexible scheduling reduce turnover. Kadiresan et al. (2021) linked fair compensation to loyalty, while Yadav and Sharma (2021) found that supportive leadership fosters satisfaction. Bibi, Ahmad, and Majid (2021) confirmed that training strengthens both confidence and retention.
- More recent studies point to softer organisational factors. Jena and Pradhan (2022) associated a respectful, collaborative culture with stronger attachment to the organisation, and Singh and Gupta (2022) showed that recognition programmes reduce turnover intent. Ahmed and Malik (2022) linked motivation to job satisfaction, and Thomas and Joseph (2022) identified limited career opportunities and weak infrastructure as key challenges specific to rural workforces.
- Studies closer to the present context reinforce these findings. Choudhary and Saini (2023) linked transparent performance appraisal to satisfaction, and Karthikeyan and Balaji (2023) showed that involving employees in decision-making builds ownership. Mishra and Dubey (2023) examined cooperative organisations directly and found that welfare measures, job security, and supportive management encourage retention. Nair and George (2024) linked psychological empowerment to satisfaction, and Patel and Mehta (2024) emphasised safe, communicative work environments. Most recently, Ramesh and Kulkarni (2025) found that limited career advancement drives turnover in rural enterprises, and George and Fernandes (2025) confirmed that satisfaction is itself a reliable predictor of retention.

Research Gap

Although employee satisfaction and retention are well researched, the bulk of this literature concentrates on corporate and urban settings. Rural cooperatives have received comparatively little attention, despite their distinct operating conditions — such as seasonal work cycles, dependence on a single crop economy, and limited access to formal career ladders. Studies specific to T.A.P.C.M.S. Ltd., Sirsi, are

scarce, and the relationship between its retention practices and employee satisfaction remains largely unexamined. This study addresses that gap.

3. Research Design

Statement of the Problem

The study is titled: “A Study of Rural Talent Retention Practices and Their Influence on Employee Satisfaction at Taluk Agricultural Produce Co-operative Marketing Society Ltd., Sirsi.”

Need for the Study

Rural cooperative organisations frequently struggle to retain skilled employees amid shifting career expectations and competing opportunities elsewhere. Understanding how T.A.P.C.M.S. Ltd.'s retention strategies affect employee satisfaction can help the society identify employee needs and refine its workforce policies.

Objectives

- To evaluate the employee retention practices adopted by T.A.P.C.M.S. Ltd. for retaining rural talent.
- To assess the impact of these retention strategies on the satisfaction levels of employees at T.A.P.C.M.S. Ltd., Sirsi.

Scope

The study is confined to T.A.P.C.M.S. Ltd., Sirsi, and examines how workplace conditions, welfare provisions, career growth, and recognition influence employee satisfaction and retention. Because the research covers a single organisation, its findings apply specifically to T.A.P.C.M.S. Ltd. and are not generalised to other cooperatives.

Research Methodology

- Research design: Descriptive research design.
- Data sources: Primary data collected through a structured employee questionnaire; secondary data drawn from journals, websites, published papers, and organisational records.
- Sampling technique: Convenience sampling.
- Sample size: 129 employees.
- Data analysis: Microsoft Excel, using the Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit test.

Hypothesis

H₀₁ (Null): Employee retention practices implemented by T.A.P.C.M.S. Ltd. are not effective in retaining rural talent.

H₁₁ (Alternative): Employee retention practices implemented by T.A.P.C.M.S. Ltd. are effective in retaining rural talent.

H₀₂ (Null): There is no association between retention strategies and employee satisfaction at T.A.P.C.M.S. Ltd.

H₁₂ (Alternative): There is an association between retention strategies and employee satisfaction at T.A.P.C.M.S. Ltd.

Limitations

- A portion of the organisation's internal information is confidential and could not be accessed.
- Convenience sampling limits how far the findings can be generalised.
- Broader economic and social factors affecting retention lie outside the study's control.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Objective 1 : Effectiveness of Retention Strategies

To test whether existing retention strategies are effective, employees were asked whether they would consider leaving if better retention strategies were offered elsewhere. The responses were analysed using the Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit test.

Category	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	(O-E) ² /E
Yes	30	25.8	0.68
Probably Yes	53	25.8	28.69
Neutral	37	25.8	4.86
Probably No	8	25.8	12.28
No	1	25.8	23.84
Total	129	—	$\chi^2 = 70.35$

At 4 degrees of freedom and a 5% significance level, the critical value is 9.488. Since the calculated value (70.35) exceeds this critical value, the null hypothesis H_{01} is rejected and the alternative hypothesis H_{11} is accepted.

Finding: Retention practices at T.A.P.C.M.S. Ltd. Job security, welfare measures, compensation, training, and career development meaningfully contribute to retaining rural employees. Respondents broadly trust that these practices strengthen their commitment and long-term association with the society.

Objective 2 : Impact on Employee Satisfaction

To assess the impact of retention strategies on satisfaction, employees rated their overall satisfaction with their current job. These responses were similarly tested for statistical association.

Category	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	(O-E) ² /E
Very Satisfied	25	25.8	0.03
Satisfied	70	25.8	75.72
Neutral	32	25.8	1.49
Dissatisfied	2	25.8	21.95
Very Dissatisfied	0	25.8	25.80
Total	129	—	$\chi^2 = 124.99$

Against the same critical value of 9.488 (df = 4), the calculated value of 124.99 is far higher, leading to rejection of H_{02} and acceptance of H_{12} . Finding: There is a strong, statistically significant relationship between retention strategies and employee satisfaction. Welfare facilities, salary benefits, and growth opportunities carry the greatest weight in shaping how satisfied employees feel in their roles.

4.3 Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Objective	Test Used	Result
Effectiveness of retention strategies	Chi-Square Test	H_{11} Accepted
Impact on employee satisfaction	Chi-Square Test	H_{12} Accepted

5. Findings, Suggestions, and Conclusion

Findings

- A majority of employees are satisfied with their jobs, indicating a favourable working atmosphere within T.A.P.C.M.S. Ltd., Sirsi.
- Job security, pay and benefits, training opportunities, career advancement, and recognition significantly influence employees' decisions to stay.
- Welfare-linked benefits carry the greatest weight in shaping employee satisfaction.
- Employees generally view the organisation's support, respect, and acknowledgment of their contributions positively.
- Good communication and a positive work atmosphere strengthen both satisfaction and organisational commitment.
- The Chi-Square test ($\chi^2 = 124.99$) confirms a significant statistical association between retention strategies and employee satisfaction.
- Both alternative hypotheses (H_{11} and H_{12}) were accepted, confirming that retention practices meaningfully affect satisfaction.

Suggestions

- Strengthen welfare initiatives by improving healthcare assistance, transportation, and other support services.
- Maintain competitive salaries and benefits to sustain satisfaction and encourage long-term association with the society.
- Establish clear, transparent career progression pathways and promotion criteria.
- Conduct regular training and skill-development programmes to build employee capability.
- Introduce structured recognition and reward systems to formally appreciate employee contributions.
- Preserve a secure, employee-friendly work environment that supports workforce stability.
- Encourage employee involvement and open communication to deepen engagement with organisational goals.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between employee retention practices and employee satisfaction at T.A.P.C.M.S. Ltd., Sirsi. The findings show that retention-related initiatives play an important role in shaping employees' overall satisfaction and commitment. Employees responded favourably to welfare benefits, job security, compensation, and training support, and the statistical analysis confirmed a significant association between retention practices and satisfaction.

The study suggests that well-planned retention efforts can sustain a satisfied and committed workforce while reducing turnover. Continued attention to employee needs, alongside targeted improvements in career development and recognition, can support the long-term stability, productivity, and growth of the Taluk Agricultural Produce Co-operative Marketing Society, Sirsi.

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