

SWOT Analysis of Private Extension Service Providers in Andhra Pradesh

S. Naveen Kumar^{1*}, P. Gidda Reddy² and R. Ratnakar³

¹Senior Scientist and Programme Coordinator, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Nizamabad, PJTSAU, (Telangana), India.

²Former Director of Extension, ANGRAU, Hyderabad, (Telangana), India.

³Former Director, EEI, ANGRAU, Hyderabad, (Telangana), India.

(Corresponding author: S. Naveen Kumar*)

(Received 04 October 2021, Accepted 09 December, 2021)

(Published by Research Trend, Website: www.researchtrend.net)

ABSTRACT: Agricultural Extension means the application of scientific research, adoption of innovations in agricultural technologies, expansion of knowledge arena and up scaling the skill oriented activities through farmers education. Farmers education is not a simple task in a country like India, where diversified cultures, food habits, topographical variations, monsoon based farming systems, multiple crop ecosystems etc., Hence, to educate and make them to follow innovation decision process attributes while adopting new technologies would be a big challenge to any extension system. Keeping this in view, an explorative and analytical study was taken to elicit the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats of private extension system in Andhra Pradesh state. It is clearly denoted that the private extension service providers were having personal mobility and transport facilities, wider and deep rooted marketing network, supportive finance and acquiring required material in time, effective mass and social media utilization channels, employee welfare measures, high paid salaries etc. At the same time it has been encountering few weaknesses such as; lack of static office buildings and demo farms, ineffective and insufficient functional linkages with organizations and institutions, average farmers acceptance etc. But it would have immediate opportunities like location of the organization at farmer door step, diversified market demand, functional marketing linkages with startups, organizations and institutions etc. Major threats were frequent changes in Govt. policies, sudden change in management policies etc.

Keywords: Pluralism, Agricultural Extension Service Providers, Private Extension Service Providers, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

INTRODUCTION

Since the inception of new economic policies in India in the year 1991-92, a significant change has been taken place in secondary (Industrial sector) and tertiary sectors (Services sector). The primary sector (Agriculture) largely depends on agriculture and allied activities is also no more exception till date. This has also been witnessed in vast change in its gross food production from subsistence level to exporting of wide range agriculture products produced by Indian farmers. Padma *et al.* (2005) opined that private extension system can offer a variety of services like farm advisory services, input supply, marketing, providing market information, processing etc., for farmers in a competitive environment which the public sector may not be able to do. At the same time the study conducted by the Kumar *et al.*, (2019) explored that the present

public extension system has few advantages over other systems such as; well infrastructural facilities like buildings, mobility and transport facilities, finance and material resources, organizational structural aspects like recruitment and selection procedures, functional linkages with other organizations and institutions. The reasons could be not only change in government policies regarding trade, market and tariff system but also adaptation of new methods and techniques by Indian agricultural extension system in providing agricultural extension services and information to their clientele groups. Besides public extension system, itinerant nature of extension system involved by many systematize and structurally organized agricultural extension service providers like private extension service providers, philanthropists, voluntary organizations, local caste groups, farmers associations,

NGOs and so on engaged in providing need based, localized, problem specific and product based extension services. Ganesamoorthi *et al.*, (2005) opined that pluralistic extension system has certain limitations such as inability to equip, train and support the extensionists for the adoption and use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to enhance their extension programmes. The rapid development in the software, hardware and telecommunication has generated both challenges and opportunities for the extension professional to face the future. This scenario changed multiple consumers' demands in the free market for wide range of products, product diversification and finally influenced the competencies of private extension system to meet the demands of market. Das *et al.*, (2020) explained that Agricultural extension is now recognized as an essential mechanism for delivering information and advice as an input into modern farming. Since commercial farmers can derive direct financial benefits from these inputs, there is a trend towards the privatization of the extension organizations, often as parastatal or quasigovernmental agencies, with farmers being required to pay for services which they had previously received free of charge. At this juncture, to meet the new economic and trade compulsions besides assertive market forces, agriculture production sector divided into two important sectors: one, a small section moving rapidly towards commercialization of products to meet the global standards and specifications, and the rest was a larger section, moving slowly towards with a dual objective, includes national food security with cash farming. As per Prasad (2000) expressed that when the private organization gets involved in providing extension support to farmers, it is likely that there will be competition among the various extension services providers, which result in more efficient and demand driven services. At this point of time, accommodate to the present and future needs of farming community of India, Indian agricultural extension system has to revive and act accordingly. According to Slavik, (2003) mentioned that multiple source of information systems consisting of government extension, commercial company representatives, private consultants and research and educational institution advisory services, may act to create pressure for improved services. These organizations exist at national, regional, district and local levels. This system of actors and processes not only includes teaching, research and extension, but also technology users, private companies and Non-Governmental Organizations, and supportive structures such as market linkages, transport network, storage structures, infrastructural facilities and credit availability. This is also supported by Gill and Sarda (2006) insisted that simultaneously conditions of extension workers should be improved by raising salaries and offering better grades. Other measures like

change in benefits, quality of offices, administrative support, availability and conditions of vehicles may also reduce the status difference. Small improvements in these areas can often bring a marked rise in both morale and performance. This effort will definitely lead to a differentiation of the extension system itself one, a public agricultural extension system and a private, specialized extension system besides multiple role players in providing agricultural extension services. And also, Samanta and Sontakki (2005) stated the other major structure is the one run by corporate bodies with private funding to basically promote their product and services. A recent entrant in the arena of extension structures is the client group like the Grape Growers Associations, Farmers Co-Operatives, and Dairy Co-Operatives, Self-Help groups, etc., mostly operative at the local level with potential for apex roles.

METHODOLOGY

This study was under taken with the general objective to study the public, private, and NGOs as agricultural extension service providers in Andhra Pradesh and with a specific objective to analyze the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of Private Extension Service Providers (PESP)

With the above specific objective, this study was under taken with an exploratory and descriptive research design. The sampling procedure comprises, Andhra Pradesh was selected purposively as it is one of the important agricultural state where private extension service providers has its deep and wide area network. Four villages were selected by lottery method from each purposively selected district such as; Mahabubnagar from Telangana region, Anantapur from Rayalaseema region and Prakasam from Coastal Andhra region. 45 Private extension service providers were selected; as follows.

This study involves private input companies (seed companies, fertilizer companies and pesticide companies) who have been providing extension advisory services to the farming community. From each private company only middle, bottom and field level three categories of extension service providers (Sales Executives/Sales officers, Sales Trainees and Field staff) were selected because these functionaries were responsible for doing extension activities at field level. From each company, three extension officials were selected from each district, thus making a total of 45 for all the five private input companies from all three districts. The selected private input companies were; TATA Rallis India Ltd., Syngenta India Ltd., Indofil Chemicals Ltd., Nagarjuna Fertilizers and Chemicals Ltd., and Monsanto India Ltd.,. This sampling procedure adopted as Kumar *et al.*, (2019) in selection of state, districts, villages and respondents

The respondent's information given in Table 1

Table 1: Selection of Private Extension Service Providers.

Sr. No.	Name of the District	Name of the Private ESP	Number of the Respondents
1.	Mahabubnagar	(a) TATA Rallies India Ltd.	3
		(b) Syngenta India Ltd.	3
		(c) Indofil Chemicals Ltd.	3
		(d) Nagarjuna Fertilizers and Chemicals Ltd.	3
		(e) Monsanto India Ltd.	3
		Total	15
2.	Anantapur	(a) TATA Rallies India Ltd.	3
		(b) Syngenta India Ltd.	3
		(c) Indofil Chemicals Ltd.	3
		(d) Nagarjuna Fertilizers and Chemicals Ltd.	3
		(e) Monsanto India Ltd.	3
		Total	15
3.	Prakasam	(a) TATA Rallies India Ltd.	3
		(b) Syngenta India Ltd.	3
		(c) Indofil Chemicals Ltd.	3
		(d) Nagarjuna Fertilizers and Chemicals Ltd.	3
		(e) Monsanto India Ltd.	3
		Total	15
Grand Total			45

In this study, data was collected from the above selected respondents by using a questionnaire. Open ended questionnaire was developed in consultation with the experts in the field of agricultural extension and necessary modifications were made to avoid ambiguity and redundancy in the questions. Each selected respondent of private extension service providers was interviewed personally by the researcher where ever needed. It was made sure that the questions were clearly understood by respondents. The data collected were tabulated and analysed to make the findings more meaningful. These findings were suitably interpreted and necessary conclusions were drawn from them.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

It could be understood from the findings (Table 2) of the study that the major strengths of private extension service providers were sufficient number of vehicles and transport facilities at personal level to reach farming community, wide area of marketing network, strong financial support and acquiring material resources in time, mass media support and proper utilization of social media for wider publicity and advertisements, campaigns, announcements, employee welfare measures, huge sum salaries and additional pay on target accomplishments, dynamic leadership, need based and timely capacity building programmes, inviting experts from concerned fields, transparent recruitment and selection procedures like conducting interviews, group discussions, problem solving techniques, well defined communication pattern, staff possessed variety of knowledge and skills, congenial working environment, cordial and primary human relations, clearly defined job roles and delegation of power, regular and day to day monitoring and evaluation procedures. Padma *et al.*, (2005) opined that private extension system can offer a variety of services like farm advisory services, input supply, marketing,

providing market information, processing etc., for farmers in a competitive environment which the public sector may not be able to do. Further, the results were supported by the Saravanan *et al.*, (1999) reported that privatization increases the accountability of extension personnel to farmers, enhances production of commercial crops, ensures quality extension service, increases professionalism, fetches greater additional income to farmers and enhances the farmers commitment to extension service. Major weaknesses were lack of permanent office buildings and lab equipment, ineffective functional linkages with organizations and institutions, average farmers acceptance. Kalimuthu and Jhamtani (2005) mentioned that the present system is ineffective to meet the emerging situation, owing to inadequacy of finance and skill, lack of commercial and market orientation, narrow focus, insensitivity to pressing needs of farmers, lack of competition, poor linkage etc. Main opportunities would be establishing organization offices at different places where ever product has demand, functional marketing linkages with organizations and institutions, multidisciplinary approach while rendering extension services and hike in increments according to the sales of products and services. Nirmala and Sekar (2005) opined few opportunities would be like private extension system generates new income, provides demand driven, cost effective, provides quality service, increases voice of farmers, complement the public extension efforts, provide high client accountable service and ensures high degree of farmers commitment to the service. The private extension services providing organizations expressed that, frequent changes in government policies and sudden change in management policies were big threat to them. These would lead to strategic changes in the organization as and when policies changed.

Table 2: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of private extension service providers.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger marketing network • Material accumulation and financial strength • Transparent Selection procedure and Recruitment Process • Clear Job chart/job roles • Dynamic leadership • Frequent capacity building programmes • Mass/social media utilization channels • Well defined communication pattern • Knowledge, attitude and skills of private extension functionaries • Employee welfare measures • Congenial working environment • High Paid Salaries • Personal mobility and transport facilities • Cordial human relations • Regular monitoring and evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of permanent office building structures at local places and lab equipment • Ineffective functional linkages with Govt. organizations and other institutions • Average Farmers acceptance and low faith on their services
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of the organization • Functional linkages with marketing organizations and institutions • Multidisciplinary approach • Incentives and awards • Market demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent Changes in Govt. policies • Sudden change in management policies

CONCLUSION

Summing up, the results of the study revealed that private extension service providers have sufficient financial strength, deep rooted market network, ground level knowledge base and skill oriented staff, well driven work force might not only serve the purpose. If they could penetrate more into larger section of the farming community at affordable charges would benefit both. Further, there is a necessity to collaborate and create effective functional linkages with government as well as NGO service providers while delivering services. This will build more faith full relation and enhances the confidence among clientele group finally creates win-win situation for both. This study paves the way to conduct more insightful enquiry of future possibilities of private extension service providers to expand their horizon and for transformation of Indian agriculture into market driven rather than conventional production process.

Acknowledgments. I have immense pleasure in expressing my earnest gratitude to Dr. P. GIDDA REDDY, Former Director of Extension, ANGRAU, Hyderabad for his meticulous guidance, benevolent attitude and sagacity. I sincerely thank Dr. R. RATNAKAR, Former Director of Extension Education Institute, ANGRAU, Hyderabad for his constructive criticism and constant encouragement throughout the course of my study. My respectful regards and gratitude to all respondent categories for their timely response and co-operation during the course of my study.

Conflict of Interest. None.

REFERENCES

- Das, P. and Singh, S. K., Jha, S. K., Roy, Burman R. and Keshav (2020). Reaching to the Farmers through Innovative Extension Models. *Handbook of Agricultural Extension*, Chapter 6: 214-249.
- Ganesamoorthi, S., Gangadharappa, N. R. and Shivamurthy, M. (2005). Information and Communication Technology in Pluralistic Extension-Goals and Strategies for the Future: *National Seminar on Extension Pluralism For Rural Development* Feb 25-26. *Society of Extension Education* TNAU campus Coimbatore.
- Gill, S. S. and Sarda, M. K. (2006). Management of research extension linkages for agricultural development, *Agricultural extension review*, pp.22-24.
- Kalimuthu, K. and Jhamtani, A. (2005). Liberalization of Agricultural Trade and Relevance of Extension Pluralism: *National Seminar on Extension Pluralism for Rural Development* Feb 25-26, 2005 *Society of Extension Education* TNAU campus Coimbatore.
- Kumar, N. S., Gidda Reddy, P. and Ratnakar, R., (2019). SWOT analysis of Public Agricultural Extension Service Providers, *International Journal of Current Microbiology and Applied Sciences*, 8(1): 3216-3222.
- Nirmala, L. and Sekar, V. (2005). Cost Sharing Approach – Need of the Hour: *National Seminar on Extension Pluralism for Rural Development* Feb 25-26. *Society of Extension Education* TNAU campus Coimbatore.
- Padma, C., Sridevi, K. and Sankaran, M. (2005). Extension Privatization Approaches to face future challenges: *National Seminar on Extension Pluralism for Rural Development* Feb 25-26. *Society of Extension Education* TNAU campus Coimbatore.

- Prasad, R. M. (2000). "Private Extension System-Options and Lessons" Paper presented at the *National seminar on Private Extension* MANAGE July 28-29.
- Samanta, R. K., and Sontakki, S. B. (2005). Extension Pluralism for Rural Development Diversity, Performance and Prospects. *National Seminar on Extension Pluralism for Rural Development* Feb 25-26. *Society of Extension Education* TNAU campus Coimbatore.
- Saravanan, R., Shivalinge Gowda, N. S. and Narayana Gowda, K., (1999). Attitude of Farmers, Extension Personnel and Scientists towards Privatization of Agricultural Extension Service. *Indian Journal of Extension Education*, 35(3&4): 176-180.
- Slavik, M. (2003). Information, Consultancy and Change in Agriculture A review of the scene from The Czech Republic. *Journal of extension systems*, 19(2), 89-100.

How to cite this article: S. Naveen Kumar, P. Gidda Reddy and R. Ratnakar (2022). SWOT Analysis of Private Extension Service Providers in Andhra Pradesh. *Biological Forum – An International Journal*, 14(1): 184-188.