



ROLE OF PRIVATE EXTENSION IN AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction:

Agriculture continues to remain as major sector of the Indian economy. It contributes around 14 per cent of GDP, provides 54.2 per cent of employment and continues to be the primary source of living for 60 per cent of the population (State of Indian Agriculture, 2013-14). India has been always progressive to attain its target of self-sufficiency in food grains. The increasing cost of providing services and unwillingness of government to fully support the line departments of various extension services, wide ratio between extension worker and farmer.

The extension focus should be on quality, cost of crop production, value addition, market led extension and cyber application in agriculture. The process of changing role and additional responsibility, limitation of resource in public extension has created the gap. This created gap by public extension can be filled up by private extension.

What is private extension...?

Bloome (1993) 'Private extension involves personnel in the private sector that delivers advisory service in the area of agriculture and is seen as an alternative to public extension'. Privatization of Agricultural Extension Services refers to the services provided in the areas of agriculture and allied fields by extension personal working in private agencies or organization for which farmers are expecting to pay a fee. Many a time such services are provided without fees also. Jiyawan *et al.* (2009) reported that privatization is more suitable for progressive because they are innovative and can bear the expenses of privatization followed by horticultural and large farmers. This may due to fact that changing of the agriculture sector from subsistence to profit oriented.

Need of Private Extension:

- To meet the challenges of World Trade Organization (WTO) agreement.
- To evolve technology according to the need and interest of farmers.
- To guide the farmer for adopting the farming according to the market need.
- To reduce the losses occurred during marketing.

Role of Private Extension service providers:

- Farm advisory services for profit maximization of clients.
- Timely inputs supply for better production.
- Providing market information and market intelligence.
- Processing and marketing the client's produce.

- Providing credit, insurance and infrastructure facilities for farmers.

Types of Private Extension Service

1. Entirely private type: -The first is entirely private type which is directly involved in farming activities through consultants, agri-business, agricultural input industries *etc.*

2. Semi-government type:

The second type consists of farmer's organizations, NGOs *etc.* which remain largely dependent on government subsidies.

Who are Private Service Providers?

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|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Unemployed agriculture graduates | |
| b. Agriculture consultants | g. Para technicians |
| c. Progressive farmers | h. Farmers' co-operative |
| d. Non-governmental organizations | i. Krishi Vigyan Kendras |
| e. Agro-based companies | j. Input traders |
| f. Mass media | k. Self-Help Groups |

Agriculture Consultants:-

A business man or an agency offering expertise or professional behaviour in the field agriculture. At present big farmer, farmer growing commercial crop/enterprise like coffee, tea, spices, flower, grape, having big poultry, dairy farm and landscaping availing the consultancy service.

Para Technicians

Para technicians are the professional with necessary skills requires performing one or more agriculture activity, but they don't possess professional degree. Para technicians are rendering services in the area of artificial insemination, grafting, planting, grading, packing and charging leads to accountability and responsible service.

Progressive farmers

Progressive farmer obviously means, literate, an early adopter having sufficient knowledge about the new development in agriculture beyond the regular sources and with a fair amount of skill and a favourable attitude towards modernization.

Farmers' Co-operative

A co-operative is an autonomous organization of persons united to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly and democratically controlled enterprise. An eagle view on the functioning of co-operative indicates that due to many social, economical, technical and political reasons, majority of the farmer organization/co-operative failed to fulfill the objective for which they were formed

Non – governmental organisation

A Non-governmental organisation is a non-profit, voluntary citizens group which is organized on a local, regional, national or international level. It is task oriented and driven by people with common interest. It perform range of services on gentle base, bring citizen to government, advocate and monitor the policies and encourage potential participation through provision of information.

Krishi Vigyan Kendras

KVK is need based, skill oriented vocational training institution at the grass root level for the young farmers, farm women, school drop-outs and agricultural labours. There are 660 KVK's in the country. KVK's could also serve as a forum where public-private extension service providers interface take place. They focus on dynamic leaderships, innovative approaches and responding to the need of the clients.

Agro-Based companies

Agro-based business is blending in terms of services and its involvement is inseparable from Indian agriculture. It operates mainly in seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, machineries, information, finance, processing and trading.

Input Traders

A person or functionary working in between manufacturer and ultimate users i.e. farmer. In general they are known as wholesaler / distributor / dealer / retailer. The inputs dealers are basically a businessman; need not be a technically qualified service provider. It is necessary to make technical qualification in agriculture, mandatory for issuing dealers license to sell agriculture inputs. Inputs dealers functioning at present may be trained gradually with respect to required technical knowledge and skill by competent institutes.

Self Help Groups (SHGs)

A Self Help Group (SHG) is a village based financial intermediary committee usually composed of 10-20 local women or men. Members make small regular savings contributions over a few months until there is enough capital in a group to begin lending. Funds may then be lent back to the members or to others in the village for any purpose. In India, many SHGs are 'linked' to banks for the delivery of micro-credit.

Conclusion:

Private extension is very crucial for agricultural development in country to attain self-sufficiency in food grains, for effective service delivery system and market management *etc.* Privatization of agricultural extension services can bring desirable changes in Indian agriculture, better services & trained manpower satisfying clientele need, has more face to face contact, increase farm management skills of farms which made them more self-reliant and opened up employment opportunities.

Analysis of the whole perspective, it is clear that private service providers are deep rooting day by day through their multidimensional activities and contributing in agriculture development. Considering the significant presence of private service providers, the public-private partnership may be the answer to the present and future agriculture.

Suggestions:

Frequent training should be organized for unemployed agricultural graduates who wish to become agricultural consultants. Private Service providers should provide information with low rate and with simple procedure. NGOs and agricultural consultancies should be strengthen to make the agricultural knowledge information system more effective. Government should inspect quality and quantity of inputs. Live interactive programme on agriculture should be organized for farming communities on TV by private channels.

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