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Structural Frame Work of Extension Service Providers (ESP) in Providing Extension Services to the Farmers of Andhra Pradesh, India

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ABSTRACT

Majority of the public ESP had buildings, furniture, transport facilities, computers, telephone facilities and very few had library, laboratory facilities demo farms and business enterprises, located at district head quarters and another half were located at mandal head quarters whereas private ESP had all infrastructure facilities and situated at district head quarters. Most of the NGO ESP had buildings and furniture facilities and situated at district and mandal head quarters. Public ESP covered entire district as well as entire mandals. Further, serving the farmers besides more than half of the public ESP had rural youth as their clients too and only few mentioned women were their clients. Private ESP provides their services in few selected districts, one district and in selected mandals, mainly focused on farmers in general. Whereas NGO ESP focuses on villages, entire mandal area and in few selected mandal areas and focused on farmers in general and majority of them were serving to women also. Half of the public extension service providers had daily visits where as the private ESP had every day visits to their clientele groups. Among the NGO ESP, majority were visiting daily. Majority of them recruit their staff directly as well as interview only. Majority of the public, private and NGO ESP had working experience in between 11 to 15 years, 1 to 5 years and 6 to 10 years and number of villages covered in a week days by an individual were 30, 10 and 5 respectively. Half of the public ESP had GOI and another half of them had Government of Andhra Pradesh as their financing sources where as private ESP had generated their own funds. NGOs were having local donors followed international donors and FAO. All public and NGOs were controlling their staff through established procedures like issuing notices and memos where as private ESP followed transfers and reprimands later giving notices and memos. Majority of the respondents of all three ESP were expressed that they had free atmosphere for exchange of ideas with colleagues but not with the superiors.

Keywords

ESP, Pluralism,
Structural aspects,
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Introduction

Despite a wide range of reform initiatives in agricultural extension in India in the past decades, the coverage of, access to, and quality of information provided to marginalized and poor farmers is uneven. This paper aims to analyze the structural aspects of selected extension service providers. Using information provision and access as the basis for analysis, the paper reviews some of the structural aspects of selected public, private and NGO extension service providers. The review gives a broad overview of the current extension scene in India while providing a synthesis of recent debates and the observations of various authors as well as working groups in the Ministry of Agriculture and the Planning Commission. The review concludes that selected extension service providers having with minimal staff and structural facilities and how efficiently functioning more reliable and first hand services to the farming community in India. Elkana (1986) emphasized that planning should be less elaborate, more personal, less time consuming and with a clear statement of main areas of concentration of efforts by each extension personnel. While planning the need to involve farmers more in planning process the care must be taken that management do not use the computer primarily to better supervise staff, rather than to improve the process of priority setting, planning and evaluation. Senge (1990) suggested that leaders must show personal commitment to the organization's vision and provide conceptual clarification as to the direction of the organization-where are we going and why! To be truly effective, leadership involves all leaders-not only executive leaders, but also net workers i.e., front-line workers, in-house consultants, trainers and professional staff who spread ideas throughout and outside the organization and local line leaders. All have essential roles

in bringing about development. Dancey (1993) reported that a survey of Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member countries in late 1991 confirm that over half of all extension services of the 14 country respondents received between 20 and 78 percent of all funds from direct charging. Samanta (1999) opined that human resource management and development in agricultural extension should be planned and designed for both extension personnel and farmers regarding their training for skill and knowledge upgradation to make them fit into the extension and client systems of modern agriculture. Further elaborated that number, quality, and gender of human resources available to extension effect the impact of extension programmes. In addition adequate technical, communication, logistic and supervisory supports for extension field staff are essential to maintain an effective performance. The extension personnel also are to be motivated through incentives and better service opportunities so that they can put reasonable efforts to make extension service useful from the point of view of farmers. Adequate numbers of well-trained extension personnel are the basic resource for a successful extension system.

Materials and Methods

General objective

To study the public, private, and NGOs as agricultural extension service providers in Andhra Pradesh.

Specific objective

To analyze the structural aspects of Selected Extension Service Providers (Public, Private and NGOs)

Exploratory and descriptive research design, sampling procedure was adopted for

conducting the study. All the middle level public extension service providers who have been working in the selected four villages were selected purposively. In each district, 15 extension functionaries were selected, thus making a total of 45 as a sample. From Private Extension Service Providers 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. From each district five NGOs were selected which have been working in agricultural activities. From each NGO three extension consultants were selected for the study thus making a total of 45 respondents from all three districts NGOs.

Structural aspects

Structural aspects of extension service providers were studied in terms of infrastructure facilities, organogram, location of organization, area of coverage, clientele groups (or) user groups, distance, number of visits, staffing, financing, communication pattern, and control measures.

Results and Discussion

Infrastructural facilities

The results (Table.1) showed that all the public extension service providers had facilities like buildings, furniture, transport facilities, computers, telephone and fax. Half of the public extension service providers had library, field and critical inputs for skill development and demo farms. Only twenty five percent had lab and business enterprise and another twenty five percent had business enterprises like seed (paddy, castor and redgram etc.) production units vermicompost, plantation (mango, acidlime, teak etc.) sales, fruits like mango, sapota, acidlime, vegetable nursery etc, poultry (vanaraja and giriraja), NPV production and commercial flower

cultivation etc. The findings related to infrastructural facilities was quite obvious as the public extension service providers could able to build up the required facilities over the years in general and particularly during T&V system of extension approach to carry out the extension activities. However these service providers lack commercial / business entrepreneurship since the public extension service providers mandate is to provide technology/critical inputs at a low or no cost catering to the needs of resource poor farmers. Hundred percent of the private extension service providers had transport facilities, computers, telephone, fax, field and critical inputs for skill development, demo farms and business enterprises. More than half of the private extension service providers had buildings and only twenty percent had library and laboratory facilities. Private extension service providers were profit oriented and the farm inputs they provide should reach the clientele in time and hence they had build up strong transport and storage facilities to stock the inputs needed for the farmers. However, they were weak in library and lab facilities since they depend on public/ Govt. facilities for such aspects. All the NGO extension service providers had furniture, telephone and fax facilities.

Eighty six percent organizations had computers followed by eighty percent had transport facilities, another eighty percent had field and critical inputs for skill development and sixty percent organizations had permanent buildings rest of them had rented buildings. Only half of the NGOs had library facilities followed by forty six percent had demo farms, thirty three percent NGOs were having business enterprises and only thirteen percent of NGOs had laboratory facilities. The NGO extension service providers could able to acquire the required infrastructural facilities to offer the farm advisory services with the help of funds received from the

Government, voluntary and foreign agencies. However they have not concentrated on lab facilities as they don't require them in view of the nature of its activities like offering advisory and transfer of technology services only.

Location of the organization

The results (Table. 2) indicated that half of the public extension service providers were located at district head quarters and another half was located at mandal head quarters. It was due to the mandate fixed by the government these organizations were located either at the district or mandal headquarters. Hundred percent of the private extension service providers were located at district head quarters from where they execute their extension activities. The reason associated with this was the availability of infrastructure facilities, communication and transport facilities for their commercial activities. Half of the NGO extension service providers located at mandal head quarters and another half were located at district head quarters. These NGO extension service providers had their head quarters located at district/head quarters depending upon the activities they took up to provide services to the farmers.

Coverage area from the place of organization

The results (Table. 3) revealed that half of the public extension service providers were covering entire mandal around 51 to 100 km of distance from the place of organization and rest of the half had coverage of entire district within the range of 151 to 200 km from their head quarters. It was due to the instructions given by the government and university to cover entire mandal and district respectively. Though the Govt. extension service providers had its head quarters at district it had offices at all the mandal head quarters with extension

net work to cater to the needs of the small, marginal and resource poor farmers. Whereas, the University extension system had its head quarters at district level and cover entire district and the visit specific and on request by the DoA mainly to diagnose the problems and offer remedies.

Forty percent of private extension service providers had very wide coverage area in few selected districts about 201 to 250 Km of distance from its head quarters and another forty percent had covered in selected mandals with a distance of 101 to 150 km. Only twenty percent of private extension service providers covered entire district with a marketing network at mandal level and below about a distance of 151 to 200 km from its location. It could be inferred that the market potential of the products decides the coverage area of private extension service providers as they could move from place to place with in no time in view of their better transport facilities.

Majority of the NGO extension service providers were working in the selected villages within the purview of 50 km. Twenty percent of the NGO extension service providers have been covering entire mandal with in 51 to 100 km area. Thirteen percent of organizations covered entire district with in the area of 151 to 200 km and another 13 percent had covered in the selected mandals with their extension network and office at different places with distance of 101 to 150 km from their organizations. Very few NGO extension service providers have been working in selected districts with the coverage area of 201 to 250 km. The reason could be that the NGO extension service providers had strong hold on rural areas and had concern about rural peoples' problems. The finding was supported by Suji and Jeyalakshmi (2005) that NGOs exhibit a high degree of flexibility in their functioning,

methods and practices because they tend to be local and specific.

Clientele groups or user groups

Findings (Table. 4) indicated that all the public extension service providers were serving to farmers besides more than half of the public extension service providers had rural youth as their clients and only few mentioned women as their clients. The reason could be that the primary objective of government organizations is to improve the productivity and production for overall agricultural development. These hitherto was in the hands of the male farmers and youth and hence more focus on farmers and youth by the public extension service providers.

Hundred per cent of the private extension service providers targeted clients were farmers, because, farmers were the primary target to their products, implements and technology etc. and economic power middle class farmers still with the male farmers in rural areas.

All NGO extension service providers had farmers as their clients besides majority of them providing services to women too. Forty six percent of NGO extension service providers focused on rural youth as well as SC's, ST's, BC's and minorities followed by 33 percent were working on children, 20 percent NGO extension service providers were working with water user groups and 13 percent organizations were serving to senior citizens as well as disabled persons, besides, NGO extension service providers extending their support to diversified sectors. Perhaps, it was due to the voluntary nature and diversified objectives of the organizations. Suji and Jeyalakshmi (2005) and above finding revealed that pointed out it was due to the fact that NGOs development programmes and activities were primarily meant for the various target groups.

Number of visits by extension service providers to farmers

The results (Table. 5) showed that half of the public extension service providers had daily visits where as another half had weekly once visited to the farmers. The reason for less and irregular visits of public extension service providers was due to more coverage area and lack of proper transport facilities to reach interior/remote places. Hansra and Singh (2000) also emphasized that, efforts are needed to increase the mobility of extension workers by providing adequate funds and transport facilities too.

All the private extension service providers had daily visit to the areas of their operation in the district. It could be due to the fact that private extension service providers had sufficient transport facilities as well as timely payment of transport allowances to the staff, which gave them enough motivation to take up visits on regular/daily basis to achieve the given targets. Among all NGO extension service providers, majority of them were visiting daily, followed by 26 percent had two to three times in a month, 13 percent NGOs had weekly once visit, six percent had weekly twice and weekly thrice visits to their clientele groups.

The number of visits depends upon the nearness of the organizations to their clientele groups. Reachability and commitment were the major factors that motivated to have NGOs frequent visits by the staff. Suji and Jeyalakshmi (2005) also observed that the NGOs were working in specific areas and have close contacts with their users. It was mainly due to proximity of the organization and frequent visits made by the staff.

Staffing

It is observed (Table 6 (i)) that half of the

public extension service providers recruiting their staff directly without interview based on qualifications, merit and work experience and rest of them recruiting through interview only. It was the policy matter of respective organizations and hence they follow the laid out procedures. However in both the cases advertisement through newspapers prior to the recruitment process was mandatory. All the private extension service providers recruiting their staff through interview only, because, interview was one way to assess the

individual capabilities directly. Even in interviews, the qualifications and experience had weightage while selecting a candidate and it varies with organization to organization.

Most of the NGO extension service providers recruiting through interview followed by direct recruitment. They have resorted either one of them or both types of recruitment since they have the flexibility and freedom to choose the right candidate(s).

Table.1 Infrastructural facilities

S.No.	Infrastructural Facilities	Public ESP (n=4)		Private ESP (n=5)		NGO ESP (n=15)	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Buildings	4	100	3	60	9+6	100.0
2	Furniture	4	100	4	80	15	100.0
3	Transport /Vehicles	4	100	5	100	12	80.0
4	Computer facilities	4	100	5	100	13	86.7
5	Telephone/ fax	4	100	5	100	15	100.0
6	Library facilities	2	50	2	20	8	53.3
7	Laboratory facilities	1	25	2	20	2	13.3
8	Availability of field	2	50	5	100	12	80.0
9	Demo Farms	2	50	5	100	7	46.7
10	Business Enterprises	1	25	5	100	5	33.3

*n= It indicates the total number of extension service providers organizations

Table.2 Location of the organization

S.No	Location	Public ESP(n=4)		Private ESP(n=5)		NGO ESP(n=15)	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	District Headquarter	2	50	5	100	6	40.00
2	Mandal Headquarter	2	50	-	-	8	53.33
3	Village Headquarter	-	-	-	-	1	6.66

Table.3 Coverage area from the place of organization

S.No.	Distance from the place of Organization in Km.	Public ESP(n=4)		Private ESP(n=5)		NGO ESP(n=15)	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	0-50 (Selected villages)	-	-	-	-	7	46.66
2	51-100 (Entire Mandal)	2	50	-	-	3	20
3	101-150 (Selected Mandals)	-	-	2	40	2	13.33
4	151-200 (Entire district)	2	50	1	20	2	13.33
5	201-250 (Selected Districts)	-	-	2	40	1	6.66

Table.4 Clientele groups or user groups

S.No.	Clientele groups or User Groups	Public ESP (n=4)		Private ESP (n=5)		NGO ESP (n=15)	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Farmers	4	100	5	100	15	100.00
2	Children	-	-	-	-	5	33.33
3	Women	1	20	-	-	11	73.33
4	SC's, ST's, BC's and Minorities	-	-	-	-	7	46.66
5	Rural Youth	3	60	-	-	7	46.66
6	Water user Groups	-	-	-	-	3	20.00
7	Senior Citizens	-	-	-	-	2	13.33
8	Disabled persons	-	-	-	-	2	13.33

Table.5 Number of visits by extension service providers to farmers

S.No	Number of Visits	Public ESP(n=4)		Private ESP(n=5)		NGO ESP(n=15)	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Daily	2	50	5	100	7	46.66
2	Weekly Once	2	50	-	-	2	13.33
3	Weekly Twice	-	-	-	-	1	6.66
4	Weekly Thrice	-	-	-	-	1	6.66
5	Two to Three times in a Month	-	-	-	-	4	26.66

Table.6 Recruitment, Staff Experience and Number of villages covered by an extension worker

S.No.	Particulars	Public ESP (n=4)		Private ESP (n=5)		NGO ESP (n=15)	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
i	Recruitment						
1	Direct	2	50	-	-	6	40
2	Interview	2	50	5	100	9	60
ii	Experience in Years						
1	1-5	1	25	2	40	4	26.66
2	6-10	1	25	2	40	6	40
3	11-15	2	50	1	20	4	26.66
4	16-20	-	-	-	-	1	6.66
5	21-25	-	-	-	-	-	-
iii	Statement	Public ESP		Private ESP		NGO ESP	
1	Number of villages covered by an extension worker	30		10		5	

Table.7 Source of finance

S.No.	Source	Public ESP (n=4)		Private ESP (n=5)		NGO ESP (n=15)	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	ICAR	1	25	-	-	-	-
2	SAU(ANGRAU)	1	25	-	-	-	-
3	GOI	2	50	-	-	2	13.33
4	GOAP	2	50	-	-	2	13.33
5	Min.of Rural Development	-	-	-	-	3	20
6	Local Donars	-	-	-	-	9	60
7	International Donars	-	-	-	-	5	33.33
8	World Bank	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	FAO	-	-	-	-	4	26.66
10	Min. of Agriculture	-	-	-	-	3	20
11	Input Companies	-	-	5	100	-	-

Table.8 Communication pattern of extension service providers (Su=Superiors, Co=Colleagues and Sb=Subordinates)

S. No.	Statements	Public ESP(n=45)			Private ESP(n=45)			NGO ESP(n=45)		
		Su	Co	Sb	Su	Co	Sb	Su	Co	Sb
		Freq	Freq	Freq	Freq	Freq	Freq	Freq	Freq	Freq
1	Having free atmosphere for exchange of ideas with	30 (67)	41 (91)	28 (62)	12 (27)	28 (62)	34 (76)	33 (73)	26 (58)	28 (62)
2	Receiving timely and required information regarding the targeted programme from	37 (82)	28 (62)	16 (36)	39 (87)	29 (64)	36 (80)	27 (60)	24 (53)	17 (38)
3	Clear and complete message from	31 (69)	27 (60)	17 (38)	38 (84)	16 (36)	31 (69)	32 (71)	23 (51)	18 (40)
4	Suitable modes of communication for the given message are used by	19 (42)	26 (58)	20 (44)	24 (53)	31 (69)	37 (82)	27 (60)	25 (56)	22 (49)
5	Frequent discussion regarding problems and solutions with	30 (67)	31 (69)	18 (40)	27 (60)	34 (76)	17 (38)	32 (71)	24 (53)	20 (44)
6	Major source for the technical information	34 (76)	26 (58)	4 (9)	24 (53)	27 (60)	20 (44)	29 (64)	19 (42)	17 (38)
7	Frequent messages are receiving from	37 (82)	15 (33)	3 (7)	40 (89)	16 (36)	41 (91)	26 (58)	18 (40)	13 (29)
8	Frequent feed back is given to	31 (69)	13 (29)	8 (18)	43 (96)	19 (42)	44 (98)	28 (62)	15 (33)	9 (20)

*Percentages in Parentheses

The findings (Table 6 (ii)) showed that twenty five percent of public extension service providers had experience in between 1 to 5 years another twenty five percent had 6 to 10 years of working experience. Half of the public extension service providers had working experience in between 11 to15 years. It was obvious that majority had long years of experience since that public extension service providers, offer job security and a personals once join the organization may not have it but continue to put long years of service. Forty percent of private extension service providers had working experience in between 1 to 5

years and another forty percent had working experience in between 6 to10 years. Only twenty percent had work experience in between 11 to15 years. Because majority of the middle level functionaries were youngsters and less experienced when compared to top level functionaries who had more than fifteen years of working experience. This was due to the fact that they feel insecurity and many of them leave the organization in search of lucrative avenues. Twenty six percent of NGO extension service providers had 1 to 5 years of experience followed by forty percent of NGOs extension

staff had 6 to 10 years, twenty six percent of NGOs extension staff had 11 to 15 years of experience and six percent of NGOs staff had 16 to 20 years of working experience. These few members who had more experience were worked earlier in the department of agriculture of Andhra Pradesh as DDAs, ADAs and AOs. Majority of the staff members would prefer to leave the organization after putting in a service of 5-10 years in search of new jobs in the new organization for a better monetary package as it offers less superannuate benefits.

The Findings (Table 6 (iii)) denoted that number of villages covered by an extension worker in public extension service providers was 30 villages followed by 10 villages in case of private extension service providers, where as 5 villages by NGO extension service providers were covered in a month by an individual extension person. The public extension service providers covered more number of villages since they try to contact few farmers like “contact farmers” disseminate knowledge/information and leave to other villages. The contact farmers’ approach of T&V system is still in vogue with less effectiveness but facilitate to cover more villages, whereas, the NGOs and private extension service providers had the mandate to saturate the village and hence more focus on individual farmer approach restricting to coverage area. Suresh and Devaraja (1999) had supported the above findings that staff strength in developmental departments is awfully in adequate considering the enormous size of the client systems. Field extension staff strength and its ratio to number of horticultural farm families to be covered in Karnataka runs to 1: 2000

Source of finance

The results (Table. 7) explained that half of the public extension service providers had

government of India and another half had government of Andhra Pradesh as their financing sources.

Because these organizations part of the government frame work so obviously either state or central government has to fund them. All the private extension service providers had their own company’s profits/returns as their financial source. These were totally independent organizations so they have to fund on their own and run the organization. Majority of NGO extension service providers were having local donors followed by 33 percent of NGO extension service providers had international donors, 26 percent NGO extension service providers had FAO as their donor agency. About 20 percent of NGO extension service providers were funded by ministry of agriculture; another 20 percent funded by ministry of rural development, 13 percent of NGO extension service providers had government of India and government of Andhra Pradesh as their financial sources. The multisources of funding in fact incase of NGOs as the same is based on the nature of activities i.e. projects taken up by NGOs, place of working, nature of clients, relationship with financing sources, managerial abilities of NGOs etc; The funding sources provide a direction to NGO extension service providers to act upon and to achieve the same.

Communication pattern of extension service providers

The findings (Table.8) explained the communication pattern of three extension service providers. Majority of the respondents of public extension service providers were expressed that they had free atmosphere for exchange of ideas with colleagues.

They further stated that suitable modes of communication for the given message were

used by colleagues and frequent discussions regarding problems and solutions with colleagues only. It was due to the equal job positions that made them to move freely with colleagues. Whereas majority of the respondents were receiving timely and required information regarding the targeted programmes, clear and complete messages from their superiors. Most of them were depend upon the superiors for technical information followed by frequently receiving the messages and giving feedback to their superiors. Perhaps, it was the superiors of the organization who could inform first regarding any aspects like government policies, university policies etc. then only transmits to the other levels of hierarchy. This was possible because the public extension service providers have a fixed hierarchy and communication bound to flow to the clientele. But, the effectiveness of such communication was questioned by many well intended people since, such communication if effective, should trigger higher productivity. Hence, it is not only the communication pattern that is important but, the effective communication which makes the difference. Large number of the respondents of private extension service providers were expressed that they had free atmosphere for exchange of ideas, frequently receiving of message and frequently feedback given to subordinates. Further they added that suitable modes of communication for the given message also used by subordinates only. The reason might be most of the time top level as well as middle level functionaries were depend upon the lower level functionaries for sufficient information to frame targets or product marketing strategies. However majority of the respondents were receiving timely and required information regarding the targeted programme as well as clear and complete messages from their superiors. Whereas most of the respondents had frequent discussions regarding problems, solutions as well as for the technical

information they depend upon colleagues. It could be perhaps the equal in positions as well as to know the other colleagues way of doing things to promote the products made them to involve in frequent discussions. Majority of the respondents of NGO extension service providers were revealed that they had free atmosphere for exchange of ideas with superiors followed by receiving timely and required information regarding target programmes form the superiors, clear and complete messages were getting from the superiors, suitable modes of communication for the given message were used by superiors, frequently discussing regarding problems and solutions with superiors, major source for the technical information were superiors, frequently messages were receiving and feedback given to superiors only. The main reason was, superiors in these organization were well experienced and control over every aspect of organization as well as employees. So, this had direct influence on the extension functionaries to consult superiors in every aspect. It could be concluded that all the three extension functionaries had good communication patterns that linked them with their superiors, colleagues and subordinates. But, in all the three, colleagues occupied first place. The reason could be that colleagues were equal in position and knowledge hence; they became vital part of communication linkage pattern.

Even though it is mandatory to the public ESP to provide technology/critical inputs to the farmers at low or no cost catering to the needs of resource poor farmers, it is the time to have own commercial business enterprises for the development of funds to meet the future needs of the organization. There is lot of efforts needed to increase the number of visits by public ESP to the farmers fields. It could be possible by providing adequate funds, transport facilities, regular and immediate payment of travelling allowances to the staff.

Immediate recruitment of sufficient number of extension staff would make public extension system more strength full than the others.

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