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Welcome...





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Pluralism in Extension Delivery: Role of Private Sector (Agri-business Companies, Input Dealers, Consultant Firms and Individual Consultants)



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Introduction

64% of India's population lives in villages and nearly 58% of it depends on farming for livelihood. The extension is one of the important support systems to mainstream this chunk of the Indian population in the process of socio-economic development of the nation. Considering the diversities and hardships under which these farmers and rural people live and work, it is obvious that the extension system has to be pluralistic in nature.

The concern for pluralism in extension is justified as extension alone cannot solve all the problems of rural people and the conventional state-sponsored and public-funded extension cannot solve all the problems either.



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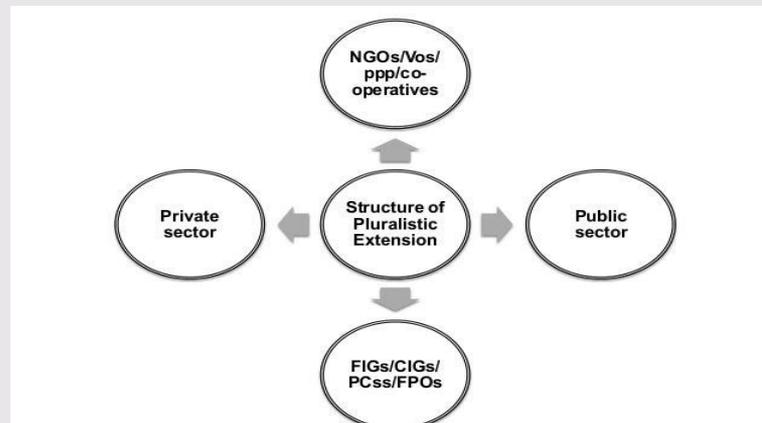
Concept

Pluralistic Extension

A pluralistic extension system is provision of extension services for a community which is conducted by more than one source of extension services. Pluralistic extension system may hold complex providers like non-governmental organizations, private companies, farmers' organizations, commercial individuals, extension specialists' associations, and public extension services at municipal, state, and national. It is clear that pluralistic extension system do not eliminate the public extension workers from the system, but the system adds other potential extension agencies along with the existing public extension agency.

(Rivera & Alex)

Modal of using both public and private institutions for delivering extension services to the farming community.





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Major Extension Service Providers (ESPs)

SECTORS	MAJOR EXTENSION SERVICE PROVIDERS
a. GOVERNMENT (Public)	Ministry of Agriculture, GOI, ICAR, State Development Departments of Agriculture, ICAR institutes, Animal Husbandry, Horticulture, Fisheries etc.
b. CO-OPERATIVES	NDDDB, AMUL, Milk producers/ Dairy co-operatives, Oil-seed co-operatives, Fisherman co-operatives, SHGs, IFFCO
c. NON- GOVERNMENTAL	Bharatiya Agro-Industries Foundation, MYRADA, Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, Deccan Development Society, Srishti, MSSRF, Centre for World Solidarity etc.
d. PRIVATE	ITC Ltd. (Soya-chaupals, aqua-chaupals), Zuari Fertilizers, Monsanto, Syngenta, Nath-seeds, Vet Pharma, Ranboxy, Hindustan Tractors etc.



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Why We Need a Pluralistic Extension System?

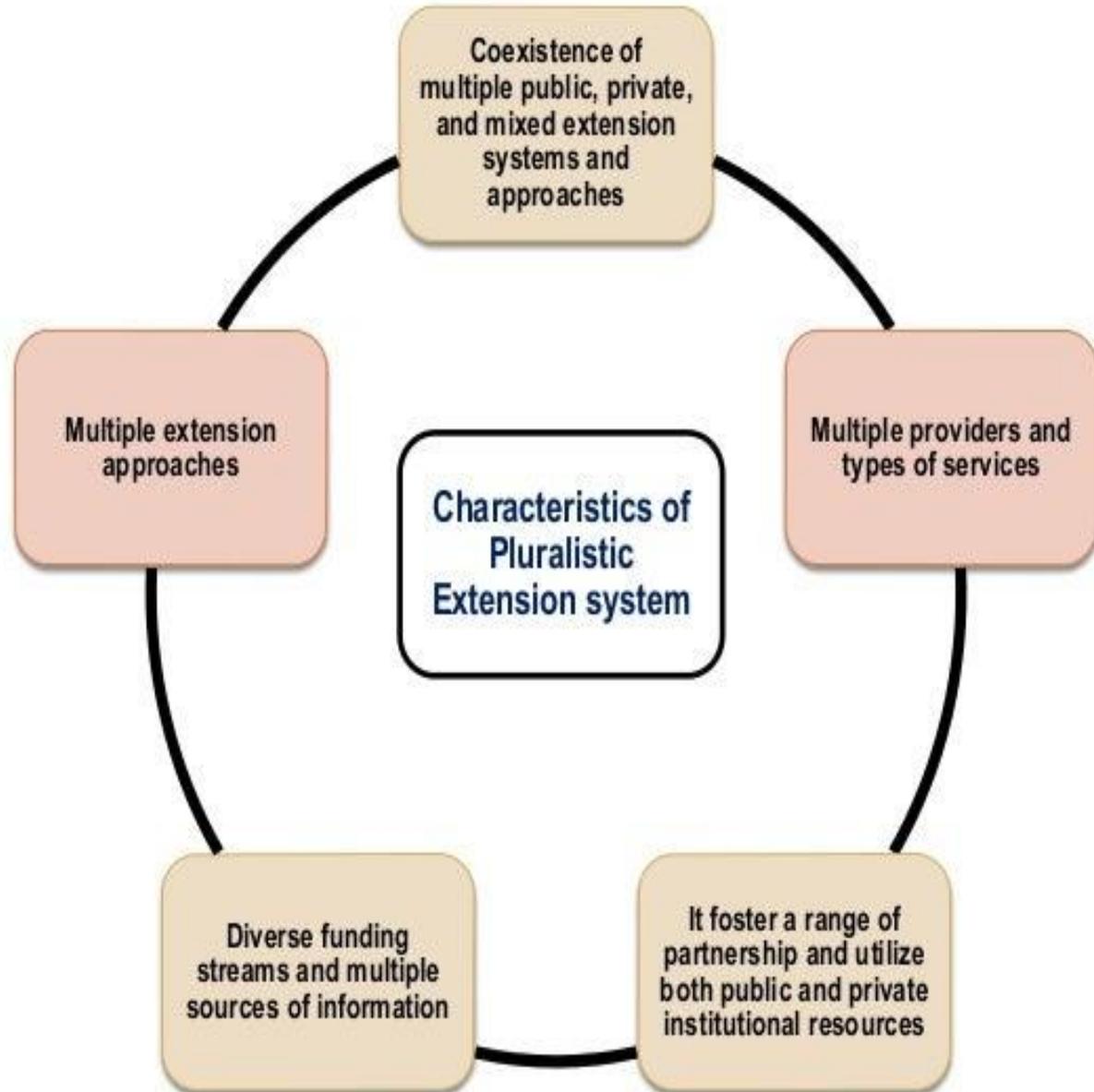
Fiscal crisis.
Lack of emphasis on farmers' training.
Lack of farmers' involvement in extension program planning.
Lack of transparency and accountability.
Inadequate technical capacity.
The public extension system is mostly supply-driven and top-down system.

Weak public sector linkages with private sector firms.
Inadequate communication capacity.
Lack of human resources.
Weak infrastructural facilities.



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SWOT Analysis of Pluralistic Extension System



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STRENGTHS

- Diversity in approaches by multiple agencies can complement and supplement the efforts of each other.
- Help to address the varying needs of the farming community.
- Increase in outreach where the public system is weak.
- Provision of new technologies and skills to farmers.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Enable farmers to choose among different agencies as per requirement which in turn makes extension demand driven.
- Greater scope for farmers' participation in extension programs.
- The public extension can reorient its role in leading the pluralistic system.
- Potential to create a linkage of farmers with other actors across the value chain.

WEAKNESSES

- Provision of the contradictory information and resultant confusion gaps among farmers.
- Problem with the quality of messages from non-public agencies.
- The motives and objectives of all agencies may not be aligned with farmers.
- Making the extension system more complex.
- Possibility of duplication of effort.

THREATS

- Lack of effective coordination among agencies.
- A mismatch between organizational agendas and problems due to hidden agendas.
- Lack of leadership and conflict resolution mechanism may hamper effective collaboration.
- Political and economic aspects prevent effective collaboration.



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Concept of Private Extension

Private extension refers to the innovative ways that a private agency adopts in delivering the information and other input services as desired/demanded by the farmers.

Privatization is the act of reducing the role of government or increasing the role of the private sector in an activity or in the ownership of assets.

Bloome,1993

Chile was the first country to test a privatized extension service.



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Services provided by private extension system





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Elements of Private Extension System

1. Objectives

2. Target Group:

Only those who can
pay

Highly careful

More committed

Actively

participating

3. Mandates:

a. Technologies:
Location-specific,
demand-driven

b. Input Supply:
Quality, timely,
adequate

4. Extension Personnel:

Highly motivated
Highly professional
Accountable to
farmers

5. Extension Method:

Advisory in nature



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Types of Private Extension system

Entirely Private Type

- Directly involved in farming activities through consulting, agri-business firms etc.

Semi-Government Type

- Consists of farmers organizations like NGOs.



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Approaches of private extension



Contract farming



Voucher scheme

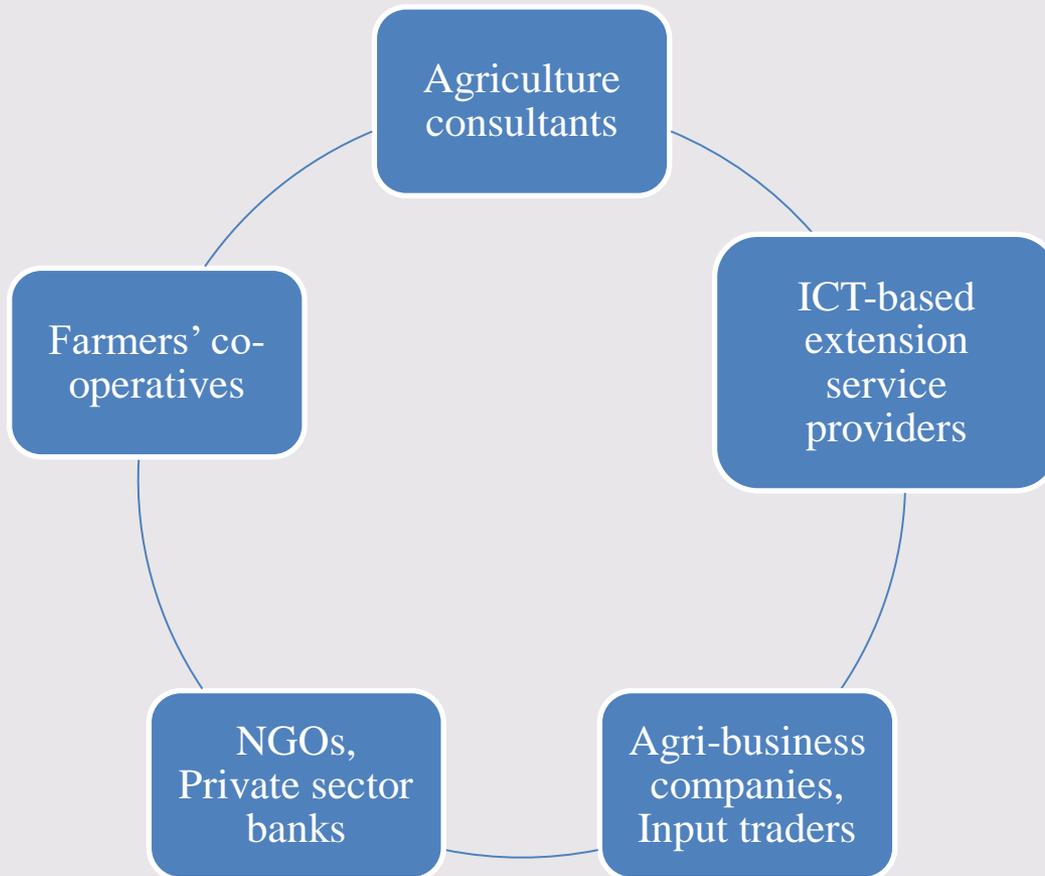


Share-cropping system



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Stakeholders in Private Extension





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Agro-Based Companies

Agro-based industries provide all the necessary information to farmers and its involvement is inseparable from Indian agriculture. They play a crucial role in building the innovativeness in farmers and also they are taking R&D work.

Examples

Farmers One Stop Shop

Mahindra and Mahindra, the tractor giant has started a concept of “Farmer’s One Stop Shop” where farmers can purchase all their inputs including information, and machinery in one place.

He can also sell his product there.

They provide crop loans in collaboration with ICICI bank.

Rallis India

A subsidiary of Tata Chemicals Ltd. (TCL) has initiated the “Samrudh Krishi” program to impart agricultural knowledge to farmers.



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Cont.

ITC's e-Choupal

Links rural farmers via the internet for procurement of agriculture and aquaculture products viz., soybean, wheat, coffee, and prawns.

Provides computers with internet access in rural areas to offer farmers up-to-date marketing and agricultural information.

Makes the input supply chain more efficient and delivers value to its customers.

Provides modern infrastructure, technologies, and distribution practices to cater to the agriculture sector.





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Input traders

Give valuable suggestions to solve the different problems of cultivation. Provide an idea about plant protection measures.

Supply valuable and up-to-date information to farmers about plant measures from magazines booklets etc.

Anticipate the demand for a product and supply it to the customers at the right time & place.

Try to supply the right information at right time.

Provide a guarantee for the goods sold by him to the customers and assumes the risk for bad quality etc.

Sell various products in the right price.



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Research Studies

1. Dhanuka Agritech

It signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Madhya Pradesh to work in a partnership mode.

They charged some nominal fee from the farmer for getting their soil tested.

Farmers did not mind paying the minimum fees as they got their soil samples tested well in time.

They even came to the rescue of the State Agricultural Department by providing those seeds of crops like soybean, when the state government fell short of the same during the peak sowing season.



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Cont.

2. This study was designed in the Coimbatore district to study the role and performance of input dealers in extension services and the relationship between farmers and dealers from a farmer perspective.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353486184_Role_and_performance_of_Agri-input_dealers_in_extension_services_in_Coimbatore_district_of_Tamil_Nadu_India

Objectives:

To study the role of Agri-input dealers in extension services.

To study the relationship between farmers and Agri-input dealers from farmers' perspective.



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Table 1. Farmers as customer per day in Agri input shop (n=30).

Farmers as Customer		At peak season		At off season	
S. No	Category	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
1	1 – 20 Farmers	0	0	11	36.66
2	21- 40 Farmers	8	26.66	19	63.34
3	41- 60 Farmers	22	73.34	0	0
	Total	30	100	30	100

Table 2. Technical assistance given to farmers by the dealers (n=30).

S. No	Technical assistance	No.	Per cent
1	Asking for chemical	22	73.33
2	Asking for brand	27	90.00
3	Bringing sample for prescription	11	36.67
4	Oral expression of the problem	18	60.00

*- Multiple responses



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Table 3. Agri-inputs sold in shop by the dealers (n=30).

S. No	Agri-inputs sold in shop	No. *	Per cent
1	Fertilizer	17	56.66
2	Pesticides	30	100.00
3	Seeds	24	80.00
4	Other miscellaneous input	8	26.66

* Multiple responses obtained

Table 4. Pesticide recommendation to farmers (n=30).

S. No	Pesticide recommendation to farmers	No.	Per cent
1	Experiences in Input shop	11	36.66
2	Companies field assistant	17	56.70
3	Fellow farmer	2	6.64
	Total	30	100



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Conclusions from the research study

Regarding the level of satisfaction of the farmers, Product choice (93.33%), Credit facility and availability of the product (90.00%) were the primary satisfaction criteria of the farmers with input dealers.

Agrochemical companies have field assistants at the block and village levels to assess the farmers' problems.

In addition, the company has a strong research unit to develop a need-based product for farmers. They had proper follow-up activities in the farmer's field.



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Consultant Firms & individual consultants

Consultants advise farmers for a fee.

They visit their customers more frequently to provide services that an educational agency could not provide.

They have more specialized knowledge of specific farming systems.

Helps them to make decisions regarding investments and other issues for which farmers have limited experience.

At present big farmers, farmers growing commercial crops/enterprises like coffee, tea, spices, flower, and grape, having big poultry, dairy farm, and landscaping availing the consultancy service.