



## **Preferred Areas of Privatization for Agricultural Extension Services in Selected Crops by Farmers in Guntur District**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The findings of the study showed that majority of the cotton and chilli farmers preferred privatization of agricultural extension services in the areas of input supply followed by advisory services and hire services because cotton and chilli are commercial crops farmers are willing to pay for these services. So there is wider scope of privatization in these two crops. Majority of the paddy farmers preferred privatization in input supply only as paddy was a food grain crop and majority are small and marginal farmers, so there is less scope of privatization of extension services in paddy.

**Key words :** Agricultural Extension Services, Chilli, Cotton, Paddy, Privatization.

Today's Farmers are different from yesterday, because they adopt diversified and intensive cultivation practices for obtaining maximum income. Therefore, they depend upon various agencies for inputs including information and knowledge. Extension has been traditionally funded, managed and delivered by the public sector all over the world.

Increasing restraints on government finances and emergence of new extension arrangements offered by the private and voluntary sectors (e.g., input companies, NGOs, farmers associations, agro-processing etc.,) have accelerated the process of limiting the role of government in extension. Decentralization, cost sharing, cost recovery, withdrawal from selected services, and contracting are some of the options exercised by various governments in privatizing extension services. Privatizing extension, as one strategy for providing efficient services to farmers, is finding acceptance in developing countries, including India.

Privatization of agricultural extension services refers to the services rendered in the area of agriculture and allied aspects by extension personnel working in the private agencies or organizations, for which farmers are expected to pay fee and it can be viewed as supplementary or alternative to public extension service.

In this context an attempt was made to examine the preferred areas of privatization in Cotton, Chilli and Paddy by farmers for various agricultural extension services.

### **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

The study was conducted in Guntur District of Andhra Pradesh during the year 2010-2011. Descriptive research design was followed. Six mandals namely Amaravathi and Thadikonda for Cotton, Veldhurthy and Gurazala for Chilli and Bapatla and Nekarikallu for Paddy were selected purposively as these mandals have high acreage under these crops cultivation. Two villages from each mandal, totally twelve villages namely Narukullapadu, Pedda Madduru, Nidumukkala, Kantheru, Uppalpadu, Gundlapudi, Dhaidha, Charlagudipadu, Gopapuraam, Narasayapalem, Gundlapalle and Challagundla were selected randomly for the study. Forty farmers (40) from each crop were selected randomly from the villages selected for the purpose following proportionate random sampling thus making the total sample of one hundred and twenty (120). Interview schedule was prepared for collecting the data.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **COTTON**

Table 1 clearly exhibits the preferred areas of privatization of Cotton growers for agricultural extension services in their percentage order of importance as input supply (82.50%) followed by advisory services (57.50%), hire services (52.50%) and training and demonstrations (20.00%), respectively.

Table 2 clearly depicts that among advisory services, majority of the farmers preferred

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to their preferred areas of privatization for various agricultural extension services.

S.no.	Preferred Areas	n=40					
		Cotton		Chilli		Paddy	
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	Advisory services	23	57.50	20	50.00	16	40.00
2	Input supply	33	82.50	25	62.50	35	87.50
3	Hire services	21	52.50	23	57.50	9	22.50
4	Training and Demonstrations	8	20.00	9	22.50	6	15.00

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to their preferred areas of privatization for advisory services.

S.no.	Advisory Services	n=40					
		Cotton		Chilli		Paddy	
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	Soil testing and analysis	19	47.50	17	42.50	16	40.00
2	Cropping pattern	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	Seed usage and treatment	3	7.50	-	-	5	12.50
4	Nursery management	-	-	-	-	5	12.50
5	Fertilizers	2	5.00	-	-	-	-
6	Organic manures	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	Integrated pest management						
	a. Insect pests	19	47.50	17	42.50	15	37.50
	b. Insecticides/pesticides & usage	19	47.50	17	42.50	15	37.50
8	Integrated disease management						
	a. Diseases	19	47.50	17	42.50	12	30.00
	b. Fungicides & usage	19	47.50	17	42.50	12	30.00
9	Weed management	-	-	12	30.00	-	-
10	Rodent control	-	-	-	-	9	22.50
11	Post harvest management	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	Market intelligence	18	45.00	18	45.00	13	32.50

information related to integrated pest management, integrated disease management, market intelligence and soil testing and analysis was preferred because more pesticides and insecticides are coming into the market with more brand names creating confusion with regard to their application. Soil testing and analysis was preferred because of more advantages seen out of soil testing and lack of awareness on how to draw sample for testing, due to no existence of laboratories nearer to them. Information related

to prices at various markets are not known to them and getting cheated by local middlemen. The results were in conformity with the findings of Antholt (1994) and Saravanan and Veerabhadraiah (2003).

Table 3 indicates that among input supply services, supply of fungicides, insecticides, fertilizers and seeds are preferred by respondents so that supply will be in time, because government was not able to supply inputs in sufficient quantity and was not reaching all the

Table 3. Distribution of respondents according to their preferred areas of privatization for input supply services .

		n=40					
S.no.	Input Supply	Cotton		Chilli		Paddy	
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1.	Farm implements	-	-	-	-	-	-
2.	Seeds	31	77.50	24	60.00	31	77.50
3.	Seed treatment chemicals	5	12.50	-	-	2	5.00
4.	Organic manures	-	-	-	-	6	15.00
5.	Fertilizers	31	77.50	24	60.00	34	85.00
6.	Herbicides	-	-	6	15.00	-	-
7.	Fungicides	32	80.00	24	60.00	33	82.50
8.	Insecticides/ pesticides	32	80.00	24	60.00	33	82.50

Table 4. Distribution of respondents according to their preferred areas of privatization for hire services.

		n=40			
S.no.	Hire Services	Cotton		Chilli	
		Freq	%	Freq	%
1.	Farm implements for preparatory cultivation	21	52.50	23	57.50
2.	Implements for intercultural operations	8	20.00	5	12.50
3.	Sprayers	-	-	-	-
4.	Labour management	11	27.50	22	55.00
5.	Ginning/ delinting	21	52.50	-	-
6.	Storage go - downs/ houses	20	50.00	23	57.50

farmers. The results were in conformity with the findings of Bawa *et al.* (2009).

Table 4 clearly indicates that preferred areas of privatization for hire services are hiring farm implements for preparatory cultivation, ginning and storage go-downs. Hiring of farm implements was preferred because of labour shortage and increase in wages. Ginning facilities are not available at village level for getting high price from their produce. Respondents preferred storage go-downs because they can store their produce and sell the produce when the prices are high instead of selling to local people with low prices. The results were in conformity with the findings of Katz (2002).

### Chilli

It was indicated from Table 1 the preferred areas of privatization for agricultural extension services in percentage order of importance is input supply (62.50%) followed by hire services (57.50%), advisory services (50.00%) and training and demonstrations (22.50%).

Table 3 clearly depicts that majority of the respondents preferred supply of inputs like seeds, fertilizers, fungicides and insecticides due to non-availability of these inputs in sufficient quantity and in time locally there by resulting in delay of package of practices. The results were in conformity with the findings of Umali and Deininger (1997).

Table 4 clearly depicts that among hire services majority preferred supply of farm implements for preparatory cultivation, storage go-downs and labour management so that there will not be shortfall availability any in supply of labour, storage of produce. The results were in conformity with the findings of Praveen *et al.* (2001).

Table 2 depicts that among advisory services majority preferred information related to market intelligence, integrated pest management, integrated disease management and soil testing and analysis. Market intelligence was highly preferred because chilli is a commercial crop with more price fluctuations necessitating the private agencies to be in touch with external markets to know the prices at various markets. Integrated pest management and integrated disease management were preferred because of confusion regarding chemical doses and usage. Soil testing and analysis was preferred due to lack of complete knowledge and facilities at village level. The results were in conformity with the findings of Kalra and Virkh (2001), Alex (2004) and Singh and Narain (2008). Privatization in training and demonstrations were preferred by few respondents, they are not willing to pay even for those areas also. Privatization in information and credit services were not preferred by anyone.

### Paddy

It was concluded from Table 1 the preferred areas of privatization for various agricultural extension services in percentage order of importance were input supply (87.50%) followed by advisory services (40.00%), hire services (22.50%) and training and demonstrations (15.00%), respectively.

Table 3 clearly depicts that majority of the framers preferred privatization in supply of fertilizers, fungicides, insecticides and seeds. In some villages there was no input supply shop which was more important for crop cultivation. Farmers preferred privatization because they can demand them if supply was not in time since they are paying for it. The results were in conformity with the findings of Van Den Ban (1998).

Table 2 clearly depicts that for advisory services majority preferred information related to soil testing and analysis, integrated pest management and integrated disease management. Soil testing and analysis is highly preferred area of privatization because of its growing importance for balanced fertilizer application. Advice on integrated pest management and integrated disease management were preferred due to lack of awareness on new chemicals coming into market.

Privatization in hire services and training and demonstrations were preferred by only few per cent of the respondents because Paddy was a food grain crop and majority are small and marginal farmers they are not willing to pay.

Majority of the respondents opined that they are not getting sufficient information from public extension system, so they are depending on other sources where he can get more information in time. Majority of the respondents preferred privatization of extension services and also opined that they can question the private agencies if anything goes wrong because they are paying for the services provided but effect of treatment or advice and supply in time is the basic criteria for payment.

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