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## SWOT analysis of NGO extension service providers in Andhra Pradesh

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### Abstract

The strengths of NGO extension service providers were elicited as structured buildings, personal mobility and transport facilities, specified human resources, active functional linkages with organizations and institutions, fruitful coordination with other departments, policies and administrations, clearly defined communication pattern, job satisfaction, community mobilization etc. Weaknesses were insufficient demo farms, insufficient office and lab equipment, insufficient incentives and awards, lack of welfare measures to the employees etc. Opportunities such as jurisdiction of carrying out extension work to extend, regular donor support, and wide grass root acceptance etc. Major threats were sudden withdrawal of donor support and change in donor policies and shift in areas of work etc.

**Keywords:** pluralism, extension service providers (ESP), NGO extension service providers and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT)

### Introduction

The existence of NGOs or Voluntary Organizations in India is as old as the history of our civilization. India has possibly the largest number of active Non-Governmental, Non Profit Organizations in the world. And also there has been sharp increase in the number of new NGOs in the past few decades in India. Majorly, NGOs who are working in agriculture sector might be limited when compare with other sectors like health, education, child labour, environment, conservation of natural resources, protection of women rights, anti-corruption etc., but their significant contribution in delivering their agricultural extension advisory services reaped notable results and continued till date. Besides, public and private extension players, the NGOs are also having their remarkable footprints in the process of rural development. This paved the way to extension system in India as a pluralistic approach but it is an inherent feature of itself. Awareness of pluralism allows extension planners to admit that they cannot co-ordinate all the variables and perform all the functions. This study was focused on pluralism is not a model, and donors, governments, private input companies and NGOs are structured to implement models. Because of this, the call for pluralism raises more questions than it answers. Hence, pluralism is not a call to expand our planning efforts (as is often suggested). It is acknowledgement that our plans are not the only ones out there. As Qamar (2000) <sup>[9]</sup> stated that pluralism recognizes both the heterogeneity of the farming community and thus the need for diversity in extension service delivery systems. A primary problem and challenge in instituting a pluralistic agricultural extension mechanism is its coordination among various agencies. The undesirable mushrooming of NGOs becomes another major shortfall in the NGO sector. There is lack of competence due to absence of specialists. Karpagam and Karthikeyan (2005) <sup>[3]</sup> viewed that privatization would create a healthy competition with government extension service, which in turn will reduce the financial burden of the government. These services may be preferred with NGOs and farmers associations. Purushottam *et al.* (2005) <sup>[8]</sup> mentioned that the reasons behind successes of a NGO in watershed were its small organizational structure, strict supervision, good facilities for staff to visit the farmers, division of labor, better coordination in team, flexibility in policies and better linkage with development departments. Chandra Mouli (2012) <sup>[2]</sup> stated that for effective and efficient implementation of any rural developmental programme through NGOs could only be possible by making community participation. Their participation could only provide the way to overcome the deficiencies like; inadequate staff, heavy work load, lack of access to information on rural developmental programmes etc. Under these circumstances this study was taken to analyze the NGO extension service providers' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats while delivering their services to their target groups, i.e., farmers.

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**Materials and Methods**

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 specific objective to analyze the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of NGO Extension Service Providers. With the above specific objective, this study was under taken with an exploratory and descriptive research design. This sampling procedure adopted as Naveen *et al.*, (2018 and 2021) <sup>[5, 7]</sup> selection of state, districts, villages and respondents. The sampling procedure comprises, Andhra Pradesh was selected purposively as it is one of the important agricultural state where NGO extension service providers has its large area of 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. This study involves selected three districts had a more number of NGOs than the other districts in the state. 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. In this study, data was collected from the selected respondents using an open ended questionnaire. Each selected respondent of NGO extension service providers was given questionnaire and interviewed personally by the researcher where ever needed. It was made sure that the questions were clearly understood by repeating whenever necessary. The data collected were classified and analysed to make the findings more meaningful. These findings were suitably interpreted and necessary conclusions were drawn from them.

**Results and Discussions**

The findings (Table 1) of the study make us to understand that strengths of NGO extension service providers were permanent building structures, own mobility and transport facilities, well trained human resources, productive functional linkages with organizations and institutions, suitable location of the organization, functional coordination with other departments, pro poor and welfare policies and flexible administration, well defined communication pattern, timely feedback mechanism, need based and capacity building programmes, strong commitment and accountability, efficient in community mobilization, medium to high knowledge and skill levels of extension functionaries, congenial work culture and working environment, cordial human relations, high level of job satisfaction, wider farmers acceptance, regular monitoring and evaluation of the programmes. There was a lacuna in having own demo farms, office and lab equipment, low level of incentives and awards, lack of welfare measures regarding employees, promotional policies were not clear, salaries were

not as per the expectations and lack of retirement benefits, weak and poor control mechanisms were said to be major weaknesses identified in NGO extension service providers. Whereas opportunities were, chances to expand the jurisdiction of carrying out extension work, efficient mass and social media utilization, unending donor support, grass root acceptance and location specific demand. Threats were identified as sudden with drawl of donor support especially financial support, change in donor policies and areas of work, change in Govt. policies largely influencing the success of NGOs.

It is inferred from the findings (table 1) that NGO extension service providers having sufficient number of buildings, vehicles and transport facilities, human resources, regular functional linkages with organizations and institutions like research institutes, universities, national and international organizations etc. Good coordination with other departments like state agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and with several line departments. Organizations located at suitable places to access rural people easily, organization policies and administrations was flexible in nature, well defined communication pattern and easily accessible to top level authorities also, regular feedback made them more efficient in their services, higher levels of job satisfaction, good number of training programmes conducting for extension functionaries as per the requirements, strong commitment and accountability to their work, sufficient knowledge and skills, cordial human relations, greater strengths in mobilizing communities for various developmental programmes, regular monitoring and evaluation of the programmes and functionaries performance, flexibility in work and suitable working environment and services accepted by the farmers with same motto of NGO extension service providers. Mohammed Asif (2011) <sup>[4]</sup> stated that NGOs can and should play the “game changer” to pro-poor development through leadership on participatory research, community empowerment and search for development alternatives. Major weaknesses of the organization were insufficient number of demo farms, lack of office and lab equipments, absence of incentives and awards, lack of sufficient welfare measures, delayed and unclear promotions and weak control mechanism. As Arulprakash *et al.* (2005) <sup>[1]</sup> pointed out some of the major short falls in NGOs sector are duplication of efforts, unhealthy competition between them, waste of resources-men, material and time. Opportunities such as extending the area for carrying out extension work, various national and international donor support, grass root level acceptance and efficient utilization of mass and social media. Chandra Mouli (2012) <sup>[2]</sup> stated that for effective and efficient implementation of any rural developmental programme through NGOs could only be possible by making community participation.

**Table 1: SWOT analysis of NGO extension service providers**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent buildings and structures</li> <li>• Own Mobility and transport facilities</li> <li>• Trained Manpower/ human resources</li> <li>• Functional linkages with organizations and institutions</li> <li>• Suitable location of the organization</li> <li>• Coordination with other departments</li> <li>• Suitable policies and administration</li> <li>• Clearly defined communication pattern in the organization</li> <li>• Timely Feedback mechanism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of own demo farms and lab facilities with required equipments</li> <li>• Low level of incentives and awards</li> <li>• Lack of welfare measures about employees</li> <li>• Unclear promotional policies</li> <li>• Salaries were not to the expected level and no additional benefits after retirement</li> <li>• Poor control mechanisms</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need based capacity building programmes</li> <li>• Strong Commitment and accountability</li> <li>• Medium to High knowledge and skill levels of extension functionaries</li> <li>• Congenial work culture and working environs</li> <li>• Cordial human relations</li> <li>• High level of job satisfaction</li> <li>• Wider farmers acceptance</li> <li>• Regular monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>• Efficient in Community mobilization</li> </ul>	
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion of jurisdiction of extension work area</li> <li>• Effective mass and social media utilization</li> <li>• Regular donors financial support</li> <li>• Wider grass root acceptance</li> <li>• Location specific demand driven services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden with drawl of financial support from the donor agencies</li> <li>• Frequent change in donor policies and areas of work</li> <li>• Change in Govt. policies as and when new govt forms</li> </ul>

Their participation could only provide the way to overcome the deficiencies like; inadequate staff, heavy work load, lack of access to information on rural developmental programmes etc. Major threats to the NGO extension service providers were sudden with drawl of financial support from the donor agencies, frequent changes in government policies, change in donor policies and preference of sectors. As Naveen *et al.*, (2019) <sup>[6]</sup> found that in present extension system, frequent changes in government policies and sudden change in management policies were big threat to them. These would cause lot of strategic changes in the organization as and when policies changed.

### Conclusion

With the support of government and donor agencies, concrete and stable policies for a course of period would create more successful NGOs in providing extension services in larger area.

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