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Farmer's knowledge and attitudes toward agriculture extension services privatization

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Abstract
Agriculture is critically important to India's development. Access to markets, funding, and knowledge are all essential for agricultural development. In recent years, public extension agencies have come under scrutiny for their inability to offer timely extension services. A variety of factors have hampered public expansion. In delivering quality extension services, privatisation has emerged as a viable option to governmental organization. A study was conducted to examine farmers' knowledge and attitudes concerning agricultural extension service privatization. While the majority of farmers preferred franchisees and vouchers to public extension services, the majority of farmers favoured franchisees and vouchers. The key constraints cited by all 20 farmers were high costs, farmer exploitation, and the supply of inferior technology due to a lack of regulatory framework. In terms of the perceived impact of privatization, more than 90% of farmers feel that privatisation will result in timely delivery of extension services, more accountability, and increased professionalism among extension staff.

Keywords: Extension agencies, farmers, privatization, governmental organization

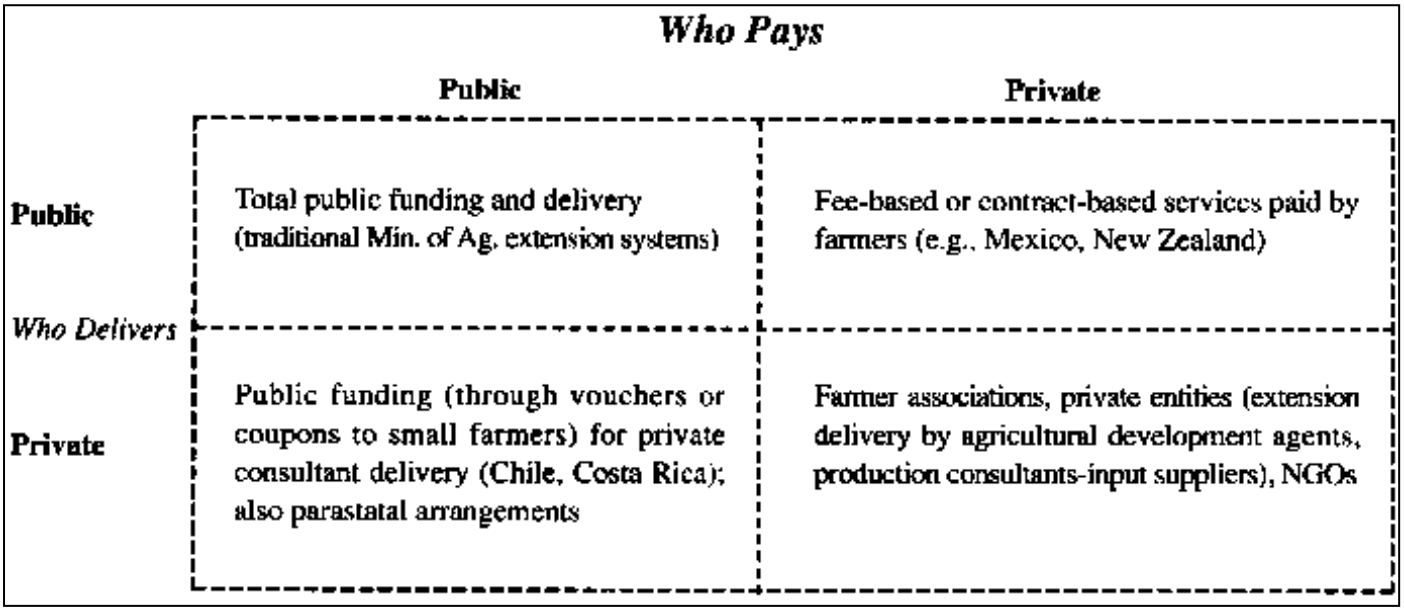
Introduction
Agricultural extension is a powerful factor for agricultural development and transformation. To meet the demands and challenges of the twenty-first century, structural and functional changes in agricultural extension services are unavoidable. Since the 1960s, public agricultural extension has been one of India's most successful measures for overcoming food insecurity. However, in the recent past, the public extension has been criticized for not doing enough and having low cost-effectiveness, prompting us to explore effective alternative approaches to public extension in the era of globalization and liberalization. Agricultural consultancies, agribusiness enterprises, the media, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) emerged as personal sector extension providers in the latter part of the 1990s. To meet the requirements and problems of farmers in this period of globalization and liberalization, a shift from traditional and subsistence agriculture to commercial and sustainable agriculture is required. Global competitiveness, in particular, necessitates a multiplier of technological information input.

In this context, extension specialists have proposed that extension should be 'demand-driven,' reducing the financial burden on the government in the budget required for alternative extensions, such as private extension services, to meet the needs and problems of future generations. Approximately 30% of available technology gets passed to farmers. This massive knowledge-practice gap is mostly due to a lack of location-specific technologies (Hansra and Adhiguru, 1998) and public extension personnel's lack of responsibility.

Furthermore, in India, the ratio of extension workers to farmers is exceptionally high. i.e., on a scale of one to one thousand. The ratio expands even more because 25% of extension employees are administrators/supervisors who are not in direct contact with farmers, and 50% of the remaining extension personnel's time is spent on office duties (Shekara, 2001). Since the late 1990s, India's extension system has undergone considerable conceptual, structural, and institutional changes to achieve agricultural potential and enhance agricultural output (Katharina, 2008). As a result, extension systems have had to make modifications such as restating their mission, generating new visions for the future, and formulating transition plans to achieve the required transformation. In light of the foregoing, the current study was carried out to analyze the knowledge and attitude of farmers towards the privatization of agricultural extension services.

The Objective of Privatization of Agriculture Extension Services

- To provide maximum possible profit by increasing their income through advisory services.
- To become more efficient and effective.



(**Source:** https://www.fao.org/)

Material and Methodology

Geographical location: This experiment was carried out in four from district to obtain reliable information regarding farmers' knowledge and attitudes toward the privatisation of agriculture extension services.

The experiment will take place at the following locations:

1. Thobria, Talwara Khurd, Dhol Palia, and Bhurat Wala , Distt. Sirsa, Haryana.
2. Bela, Manpur, Chakand, Kujapi, and Kastha, Distt. Gaya, Bihar.
3. Cherlagudipadu, Jangamaheswara puram, *Gurazala* Mandal, Sattenapalle, gangavaram, Distt. Guntur, Andhra Pradesh.
4. Maddi, Sabbavram, Narsapuram, and Vangali, Distt. Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

Climatic condition:

1. The summers are sweltering; the winters are short, cool, and dry. The average annual high temperature is 33.56 °C | 92.41°F and annual low temperature is 23.04 °C | 73.47 °F in Ellenabad. The rainfall here is around 9.35 mm | 0.37 inch per year and humidity is 33.85%.
2. Warm, humid, and subtropical. Summers get significantly more rainfall than winters. The average annual temperature is 26 °C in Gaya. The annual rainfall is approximately 816 mm | 32.1 inch. Precipitation is the lowest in November, with an average of 12 mm | 0.5 inch. With an average of 209 mm | 8.2 inch, the most precipitation falls in July.
3. The rainy season in Guntur is humid, oppressive, and gloomy, while the dry season is hot, muggy, and usually clear. The temperature normally ranges from 18 °C to 41 °C throughout the year, with temperatures rarely falling below 18 °C or rising over 45 °C.
4. Wet and dry climate in the tropics. The annual mean temperature ranges from 24.7 to 30.6 degrees Celsius, with the maximum in May and the lowest in January; the minimum temperatures vary from 17 to 27 degrees Celsius.

Methodology

Locale of the study

The suevey was conducted in Haryana, Bihaar, Andhra Pradesh state. From Haryana- Sirsa district, from bihar- Gaya, and From Andhra Pradesh- Guntur and Visakhapatnam was selected. Further, 4-5 villages were selected from every district, and thereby a total number 80 farmers were selected for data collection.

Sampling procedure

Selection of villages

- From District Sirsa, four villages were randomly selected namely, Thobria, Talwara Khurd, Dhol Palia, and Bhurat Wala.
- From Gaya, five villages were selected namely, Bela, Manpur, Chakand, Kujapi, and Kastha.
- From Guntur, five villages were selected namely, Cherlagudipadu, Jangamaheswara puram, Gurazala Mandal, Sattenapalle, gangavaram.

From Visakhapatnam, four villages were selected namely, Maddi, Sabbavram, Narsapuram, and Vangali.

Selection of respondents:

To study about the knowledge and attitude of farmers towards the privatization of agricultural extension services. 4 - 5 farmers were chosen at random from each town. Therefore, a total number of eighty farmers were interviewed.

Selection of variables

Independent and dependent variables selected for the present study and their measurements are given in the table below:-

S. No.	Independent variable	Tools for measurements
1	Age	Developed by Trevedi (1963)
2	Education	Developed by Man singh (1993)
3	Caste	Developed by Trevedi (1963)
4	Economic status	Developed by Trevedi (1963)
5	Family type	Developed by Trevedi (1963)
6	Family size	Developed by Venkataramaish (1983)
7	Land holdings	Developed by Trevedi (1963)
8	Housing pattern	Developed by Trevedi (1963)
9	Occupation	Dhamodaran (2007)
10	Social participation	Schedule was developed

S. No.	Dependent variables	Tools for measurements
1	PAES can bring desirable changes in Indian agriculture	Schedule was developed
2	There is a little work and more propaganda in PAES	Schedule was developed
3	PAES has more face to face contacts (person oriented)	Schedule was developed
4	PAE agencies render services based on immediate needs of farmers	Schedule was developed
5	Agricultural extension services should not be privatised. A schedule for importing goods from other countries into India was devised.	Schedule was developed
6	PAE companies show more inclination towards big and progressive Farmers	Schedule was developed
7	PAE agencies usually concentrate on commercial crops	Schedule was developed
8	PAES are more demand driven rather than supply driven	Schedule was developed
9	PAE sectors do not apply their resources to fundamental food crops rather they contribute their input to high value cash crops	Schedule was developed
10	Increased budgetary problems and economic deficits have forced the PAE system to explore for new ways to fund agricultural extension activities.	Schedule was developed
11	Most of the land holdings are small and marginal so PAES are not suitable	Schedule was developed
12	Social development of people takes a backstage due to profit motto of PAES	Schedule was developed
13	PAES has increased income level of farmers	Schedule was developed
14	PAE companies neglect small farmers	Schedule was developed
15	PAE agencies provide erroneous information and have advent of ‘more pay-more receive’	Schedule was developed
16	PAES opened up employment opportunities	Schedule was developed
17	PAE agencies always try to push through their products without paying heed to what farmers need	Schedule was developed
18	Better services and trained manpower satisfying clientele’s need	Schedule was developed
19	The farmers who do not adopt PAES are fool	Schedule was developed
20	PAES is not the need of the farmers	Schedule was developed
21	PAE agencies often sell adulterated fertilizers, impure seed and expiry date inputs	Schedule was developed
22	PAES has ensured the accountability and quality of farming related Services	Schedule was developed
23	Privatization has to be done first on experimental basis and tried in areas where public extension has failed	Schedule was developed
24	Privatization increases farm management skills of farmers who made them more self-reliant	Schedule was developed
25	Privatization increases responsibility of extension consultancies	Schedule was developed
26	Privatization improving the access to demand driven extension services	Schedule was developed
27	Privatization increases the bargaining power of farmers for acquiring information and services	Schedule was developed
28	PAES agencies provide advice based on field visits and charge more.	Schedule was developed

Age

The respondent's age was calculated as the number of completed years at the time of the interview. This study follows the scoring system devised by Trevedi (1963) and followed by Jagadeesan (2001). The respondents were divided into three age groups based on their actual ages: young (20-35 years), medium (36-50 years), and old (above 50 years) (51 and above).

Education

The number of years of formal education received by the respondent at the time of the survey is used to determine educational status. Illiterate, matric, graduate, and postgraduate were the sub-categories.

Caste

It's a term used to describe the intricate system divisions that saturate Indian life. Indians are divided into four main categories according to official statistics: Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST), Other Backward Class (OBC), and General Category (GC), which includes the 'upper' castes.

Economic status

A person's or a group's social rank or class. The terms APL (Above Poverty Line) and BPL (Below Poverty Line) indicate a person's financial situation.

Family type

The term "family type" refers to whether a family is a nuclear or a joint one. A nuclear family is made up of only one person's family members, as well as minors and dependents. A joint family is one that is made up of two or more brother's families, as well as parents and other family members.

Family size

The total number of family members is referred to as family

size. Family sizes were classified as small (up to four members) or large (five or more members) based on the total number of members (Above 4 members).

Land holding
It refers to the respondent's total land holdings or operating land. The respondents were divided into five groups, each with its own grading system: landess, marginal, small, medium, and large.

Housing Pattern
Four housing pattern are described in this study – Hut, Kaccha, Pucca, Mixed.

Occupation:
The occupation was defined as a job in which an individual devotes a significant amount of time, money, and resources in order to improve his or her financial situation in order to support himself and his family. The grading technique used by Dhamodaran (2007), which is outlined below, was used in the study with minor changes.

Social Participation:
Participation in social activities that allow people to interact with others in the community is referred to as social participation.

Preparing a schedule for interview
A precise and simple structured interview schedule was created based on the study's scope, objectives, and variables. In order to acquire appropriate and exact information, only the most relevant, unambiguous, and practical items were included. There were three segments to the interview schedule. In the first, I gathered personal information. In the second section, I gathered tangible possessions, and in the third part, I gathered Farmer attitudes toward PAES.

Collection of data
Personal interviews with respondents at their farms/homes were conducted to examine the technology gap, restrictions, and factors that discourage farmers from participating in the PAES survey. Each individual's interview was conducted separately so that the answers were not influenced by others.

Analysis of data
The information gathered was compiled and examined. With the study's aims in mind and in order to draw relevant inferences, proper statistical techniques such as percentages, graphs, and tabular representations were used.

Results interpretation and Report preparation
Based on the findings, a graphical representation was created, and inferences were formed from the statistical analysis of the data.

Result and Discussion

- Made the survey to analyze the knowledge and attitude of farmers towards the privatization of agricultural extension services in 4 districts (Sirsa, Gaya, Guntur, Visakhapatnam) and from every villages of districts 4-5 farmers who were aware of the privatization of extension services were selected, total of 80 farmers were interviewed.
- This section aims to characterise a group of farmers in terms of their personal and socio-psychological characteristics, such as age, education, caste, economic status, family type, family size, land ownership, housing pattern, occupation, and social engagement.

Age: The data in graph 1 shows that 7 percent of persons are in the 20_30 age group, 20 percent in the 30_40 age group, 34 percent in the 40_50 age group, 38 percent in the 50_60 age group and finally 1 percent in the 60_70 age group.

Table 1: Age Group

AGE GROUP	AGE
10_20	0
20_30	6
30_40	16
40_50	27
50_60	30
60_70	1

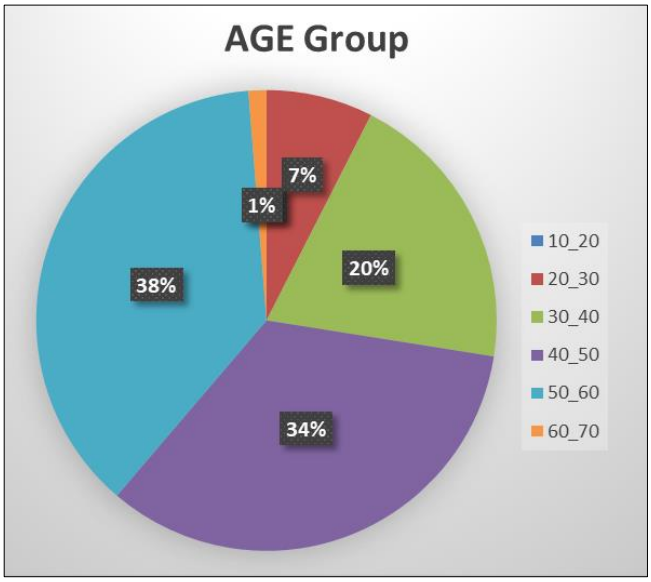


Fig 1: Age Group

Education: As seen in graph 2, farmers with formal education are largely from the illiterate and matric groups. So, the illiteracy rate is 32 percent, the matric rate is 36 percent, the graduate rate is 31 percent, and the postgraduate rate is 1 percent.

Table 2: Education

Education	NO. OF FARMERS
ILLITRATE	25
MATRIC	29
GRADUATE	25
POST GRADUATE	1

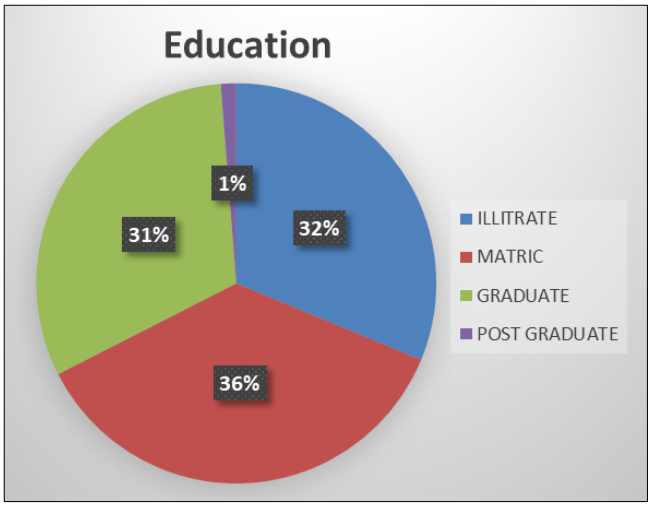


Fig 2: Education

Caste: The caste system is divided into four categories: General, SC, ST, and OBC, with their respective ratios shown in graph 3. For general category ratio is 14 percent, the SC ratio is 26 percent, the ST ratio is 6 percent, and the OBC ratio is 54 percent.

Table 3: Caste

CASTE	NO.OF FARMERS
GENERAL	11
SC	21
ST	5
OBC	43

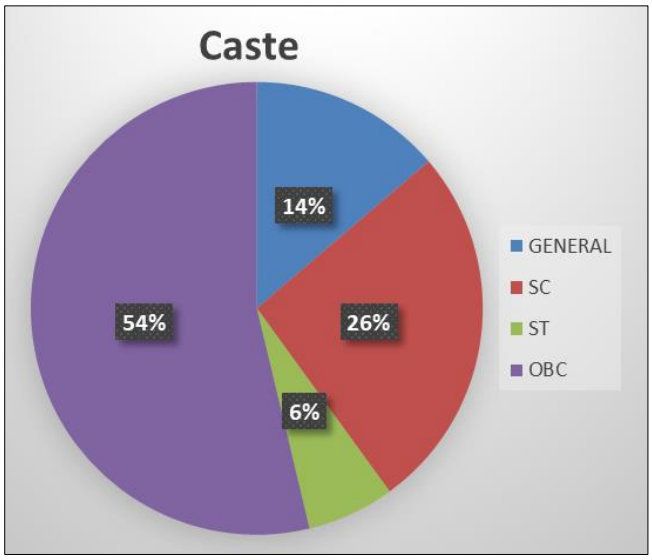


Fig 3: Caste

Economic Status: The farmers are primarily from above-poverty areas, and that is 75 percent and 25 percent for BPL as seen in graph 4.

Table 4: Caste

ECONOMIC STATUS	NO. OF FARMERS
APL	60
BPL	20

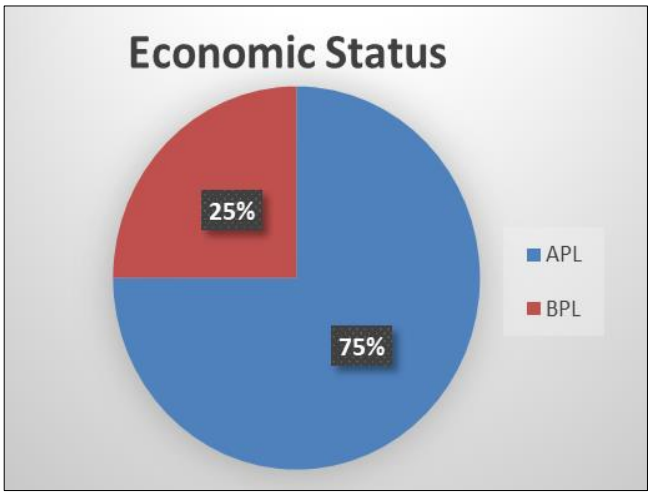


Fig 4: Economics status

Family Type: As seen in graph 5, 24% of farmers are from Joint families, while 76% are from nuclear families.

Table 5: Family Type

FAMILY TYPE	NO. OF FARMERS
NUCLEAR	61
JOINT	19

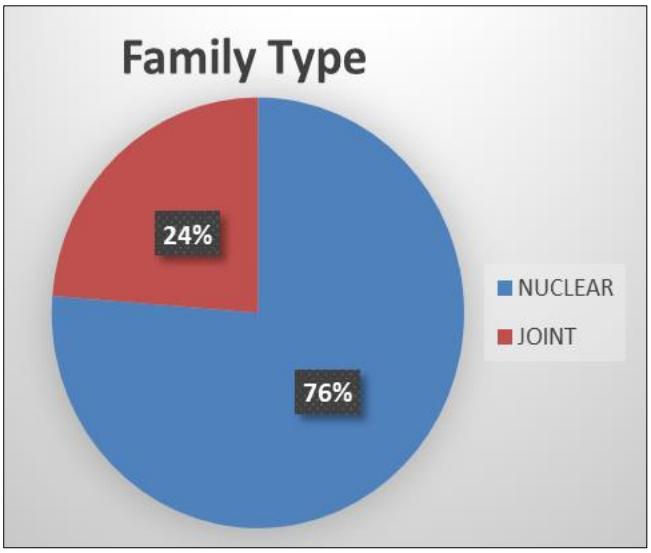


Fig 5: Family Type

Table 6: Family Size

SIZE GROUP	Family size
1_4	57
5_8	14
9_12	9

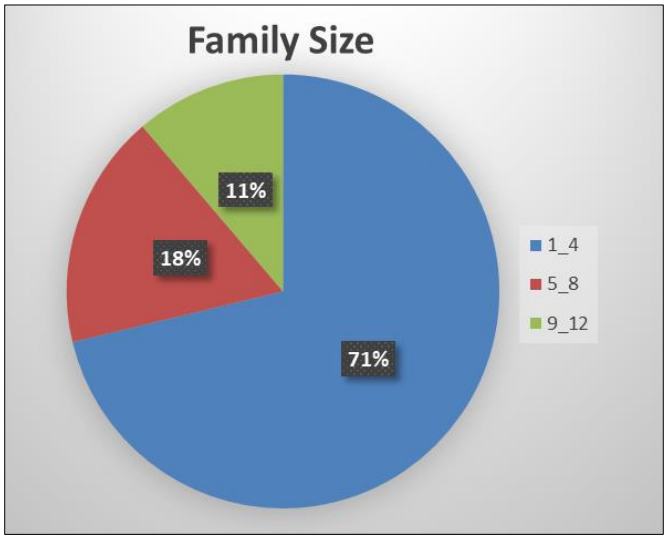


Fig 6: Family Type

Family size: According to the statistics in graph 6, more than half of farmers (71%) have a family of less than four members, while 29 % have a family of more than four members.

Land Holdings: According to the numbers in graph 7, marginal farmers represent for 27% of all farmers, 43% of small farmers, 16% of medium farmers, and 14% of large farmers.

Table 7: Land Holdings

SIZE GROUP	LAND HOLDINGS
Marginal	22
Small	34
Medium	13
Large	11

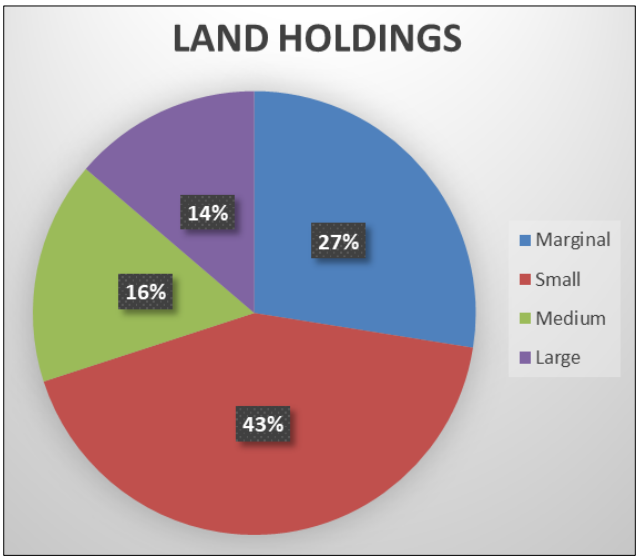


Fig 7: Land Holdings

Housing Patterns: Hut, kaccha, Pakka, and Mixed are the four types of housing patterns. Farmers come mostly from pakka houses (64%), kaccha houses (22%) and mixed households (14%).

Table 8: Housing Patterns

HOUSING PATTERNS	NO. OF FARMERS
HUT	0
KACCHA	18
PAKKA	51
MIXED	11

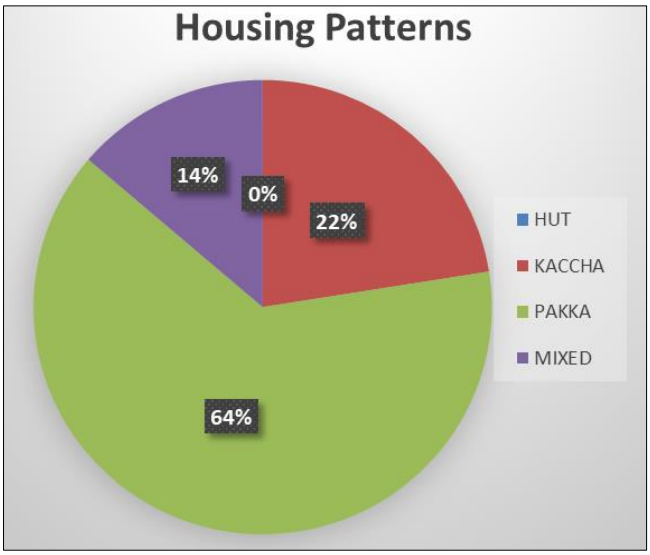


Fig 8: Housing Patterns

Occupation: Farmers are mostly involved in many activities such as dairy, services, labour, and business when it comes to farming. The dairy ratio is 45%, labour is 26%, business is 18%, and 16% from service industry.

Table 9: Occupation

OCCUPATION	NO. OF FARMERS
DAIRY	36
LABOUR	21
SERIVCE	9
BUSINESS	14

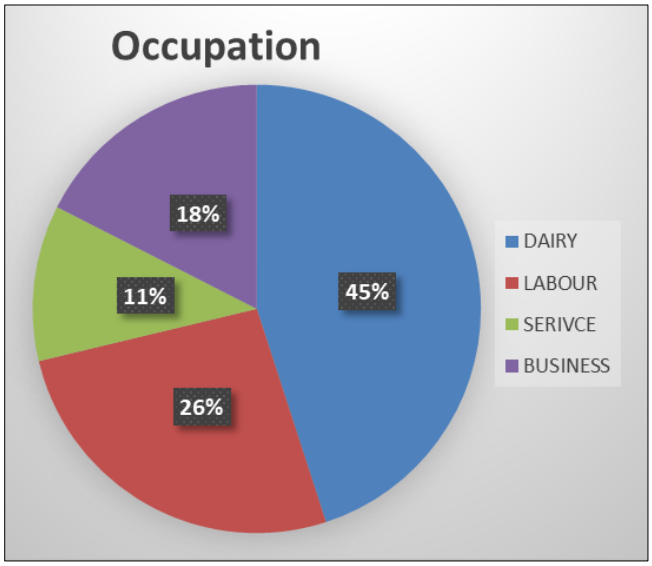


Fig 9: Occupation

Social Participation: Different types of social activities for farmers are sponsored by government universities and the government, but majority of the farmers not attending any of these activities.

Table 10: Social Participation

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION	NO. OF FARMERS
YES	11
NO	69

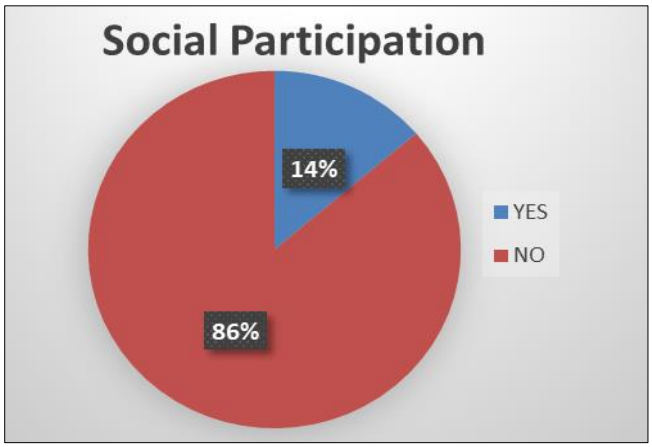


Fig 10: Social Participation

Summary and Conclusion

The goal of this study was to determine how farmers felt about the privatisation of agricultural extension services (PAES). A survey of 80 farmers was undertaken in March 2022 to determine their attitudes toward private agricultural extension services. Statement wise study of attitudes found that the majority of farmers agreed with positive claims about privatization, while certain negative comments also received a significant number of farmers.

The study also discovered that farmers' attitudes on the privatisation of agricultural extension services were significantly and positively correlated with their socioeconomic status (SES). Other characteristics that were shown to have a favourable and substantial link with farmers' attitudes included age, education, caste, Economic status, family type, land holding, housing pattern, occupation, and social participation.

From the survey we collected data about the farmer's personal information, their material possession and farmer's attitude towards PAES.

In terms of personal data, we can conclude the following

- The most farmers were between the ages of 50 and 60, while the least were between the ages of 10 and 20.
- Approximately 36 percent of the farmers are matriculated, 32% are illiterate, and 31% are graduates.
- The majority of the farmers were from the OBC caste, with only a few from other castes.
- Farmers in the APL category were more numerous than those in the BPL category.
- The majority of farmers had nuclear families, with only a minority having joint families.
- We discovered that the majority of farmers had 1-4 family members.
- A substantial percentage of farmers belonged to the small category, which included land between 2.5-5 acres.
- The majority of the farmers live in pucca houses.
- The majority of the farmers work in the dairy industry.
- The majority of the farmers are not participating in any social group.

The findings of this study can be used to plan future extension strategies. It is suggested that a balanced strategy is necessary to take advantage of PAES and compensated drawbacks. Privatization of agricultural extension services should be tested and implemented in stages with the greatest caution. Privatization of the agricultural extension service will make it easier for the farming community to tackle current and future difficulties.

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