

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP: FOSTERING EXTENSION SERVICES

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Abstract

Following the Green Revolution, technology development and diffusion in Indian agriculture underwent a paradigm shift. The Indian farmers will soon receive a basket filled to the brim with products and services. However, the traditional agricultural extension system created to provide the farming community with information and services is unable to live up to expectations. Players in the private sector have been drawn in to investigate the numerous opportunities by this disparity between supply and demand. Private extension organizations have been highly active in capturing the largest farming community in the globe thanks to the economic policies. They provide prompt, effective, timely, and relevant services, weakening the old method of distributing technologies through the public sector even further. Despite being driven by a financial motivation, they assist to fill the unmet requirements of Indian farmers. Concerns have been made about their motives, policies, the items they are endorsing, and the demographics they are trying to reach as a result of this issue. At this point, the government is forced to continue working closely with the private extension system. However, it has a part to play in assessing and regulating the caliber of goods and services. Agriculture should not be completely privatized. Therefore, in this Public-Private Partnership, it is necessary to lessen duplication and repetition, facilitate convergence, and improve connectivity in order to make better use of the limited resources available.

Keywords: Agriculture, extension system, farming community, public-private partnership

I. Introduction

Concept of Public Private Partnership (PPP)

A public-private partnership (PPP) is a cooperative strategy used by the government or public agencies and businesses in the private sector to provide extension services for agricultural, rural, or community development. Extension services involve giving farmers, rural communities, and stakeholders information, training, and support to improve their agricultural knowledge, abilities, and practices.

PPP, in turn, seeks to capitalize on the advantages of both the public and private sectors to produce outcomes that are more effective, efficient, and long-lasting. Here is how the idea functions:

- **Resource Sharing:** PPPs, in turn, permit the public and private sectors to pool their resources, know-how, and financial resources. Government agencies frequently have access to financing and infrastructure, while businesses from the private sector provide their specialized expertise, cutting-edge tools, and creative ideas.
- **Transfer of Knowledge:** Private sector enterprises frequently have access to cutting-edge technologies, research, and market insights that are very beneficial to farmers and rural communities. These innovations and technology can reach the general populace more successfully.
- **Service Delivery:** By offering specialized training, workshops, and demonstrations, private sector businesses can support the extension system. Farmers now have access to better-quality, more extensive extension services.
- **Innovation:** Extension practices innovate as a result of private sector involvement. For instance, tech corporations might release fresh digital tools and programs that make it easier for farmers to obtain information and services.
- **Market Access:** By using the private sector, it may be possible to improve connections between farmers and markets. Agribusinesses can make it easier for farmers to sell their products, boosting their revenue and enhancing their quality of life.
- **Efficiency:** PPPs can result in more effective resource use. Cost-effectiveness is frequently a priority for businesses in the private sector, which can lead to better use of public funding and resources.
- **Scaling Up:** By utilizing the distribution networks and outreach capabilities of the private sector, extension services can be scaled up more quickly, reaching more beneficiaries in less time.
- **Sustainability:** PPPs can make extension services more durable. When the private sector is involved, market-driven strategies are frequently used, encouraging the adoption of procedures and technologies with long-term economic sustainability.
- **Shared Risk:** By working together, both industries share the dangers of providing extension services. Risks associated with evolving weather patterns, market turbulence, and technological adoption can be included in this.
- **Support for Policy:** As public and private sector partners collaborate to identify obstacles and opportunities in the extension sector, PPPs can result in better policy formation.

II. Objectives of PPP:

The government understands the importance of working with the private sector in many sectors through PPP frameworks in order to achieve broad-based and sustainable growth. The main goals of these collaborations are to:

1. Utilize the efficiency of the private sector while creating, maintaining, and providing services for assets.
2. Put a strong emphasis on the life cycle approach while developing projects, which includes asset creation and upkeep throughout its life cycle
3. To encourage innovation and technical advancement, create possibilities
4. Assist in the responsible and sustainable delivery of services that are more reasonably priced and better to the users.

III. Using PPP: Why?

PPP could potentially provide the public sector with cost, quality, and scale advantages in order to achieve infrastructure service goals. However, PPPs diverge from the traditional public sector route, and these differences call for public sector competence and approach adaptation. Here are a few advantages of PPP:

- Accessibility to private financing
- Potentially more open communication
- A shift in emphasis from just producing assets to also providing services, such as upkeep of the infrastructure asset over the course of its operational life.

Utilizing the expertise of the private sector and shifting risk there both increase efficiency.

- Lifecycle cost reduction, which takes into account building and maintenance costs

IV. Principles of PPP

The PPP would be created with the following guiding concepts in mind:

1. Establish an equitable and open framework to support and promote PPP as a method of implementing the provision of public assets and/or related services.
2. Ensure that the projects are organized, given top priority, and managed to maximize financial gains for all parties involved.
3. Select private partners through an effective, equitable, consistent, open, and competitive approach, and maintain effective governance throughout the project life cycle.
4. Defend the interests of project participants, end users, the public and commercial sectors, and other stakeholders.
5. Promote effective public service delivery by implementing effective and creative procedures and utilizing the greatest tools, resources, and expertise in the private sector.
6. Boost investment efficiency by establishing frameworks that will allow the private sector to participate more in the construction of future public assets and the long-term upkeep of those assets.

V. Traits of Public Private Partnerships

1. The participants, their expectations and aims

There are no set guidelines governing the quantity and make-up of public and private participants in partnership initiatives; instead, they vary from one situation to the next. Participants in the collaboration, however, have a lot in common despite these differences:

- Local government representatives (local authorities or businesses established by local authorities) make up the majority of public sector participants.
- Financially sound participants in the private sector include real estate and property developers, sizable conglomerates operating across a variety of urban development sectors, institutional investors including banks and insurance organizations, and a wide range of businesses.

2. Activity areas, project choices, and geographic locations

Public-private partnerships can be used to deliver a variety of local goods and services, including those involved in housing construction, the management of cultural, educational, or recreational facilities, the operation of municipal sewage and waste disposal systems, the management of housing, and the development of cities and regions. As long as there are no legal limitations on full or partial privatization, all public (local authority) services may be delivered through PPPs.

3. Types of cooperation

The structure of public-private partnerships is not governed by any law. This strategy does, in fact, typically appear in a variety of forms. Whatever the distinctions, three distinct types of cooperation may be identified, each with a different role and level of institutionalization.

a. Informal mode of cooperation among local business and public leaders (Also known as "handshake partnerships" These kinds of partnerships are typically not in charge of particular tasks and services. In the context of thorough planning and development initiatives, they frequently act as initiators and coordinators. The majority of participants are powerful representatives of business and industry or their associations, as well as senior government officials or local politicians. This kind of cooperation may be supported by law or just by the members' personal relationships.

b. Cooperation based on agreements and contracts: The unique project, its objectives, and its process influence the contracts' substance, but it also depends on the partners' negotiation abilities. The roles and obligations of partners, their specific tasks and responsibilities, their input regarding personnel, finance, and equipment, as well as the distribution of potential risks, are the subject matter of contract-based PPP, which quite frequently adheres to specified models.

c. The merger of public and private interests into joint cooperations: With the exception of France, this type of collaboration is rather uncommon. Their primary goals are the design of regional development concepts and regional economic growth.

VI. Elements of Public-Private Partnership

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) are collaborative arrangements between public sector entities (government agencies) and private sector entities (companies, investors) to jointly plan, finance, implement, and manage projects or services that have traditionally been the responsibility of the public sector. PPPs are commonly used for infrastructure development, public service delivery, and other large-scale projects.

Here are the key elements of a PPP:

- **Shared Risk and Responsibility:** In a PPP, both the public and private sectors share risks and responsibilities associated with the project. This can include financial, operational, and performance-related risks.
- **Mutual Benefit:** PPPs are designed to provide mutual benefits to both parties. The public sector benefits from private sector expertise, innovation, and capital, while the private sector gains revenue and the opportunity to invest in projects that might have a long-term income stream.
- **Clear Objectives:** The objectives of the partnership are clearly defined. This includes outlining the project's goals, expected outcomes, and performance standards to be met.
- **Long-Term Focus:** PPPs often involve long-term contracts, sometimes spanning decades, which helps ensure the private sector's commitment to the project's success over the long haul.
- **Financing and Investment:** Private sector partners typically provide a significant portion of the funding required for the project. They might also arrange debt financing from banks or other financial institutions.
- **Ownership and Control:** The division of ownership and control varies depending on the type of PPP. In some cases, ownership remains with the public sector while the private sector handles operation and maintenance. In others, ownership might be shared.
- **Innovation and Expertise:** Private sector partners bring innovation, technical expertise, and management skills to the table, which can lead to improved project outcomes and more efficient service delivery.
- **Risk Allocation:** PPPs involve a negotiation of risk allocation between the public and private sectors. Risks related to construction, operation, demand, and regulatory changes are among those that need to be considered and allocated appropriately.
- **Performance-Based Contracts:** PPP agreements often include performance-based clauses, where the private sector partner's compensation is linked to meeting specific performance targets, such as quality of service, on-time delivery, and cost efficiency.
- **Government Support and Oversight:** While the private sector takes on significant responsibilities, the government still plays a role in overseeing the project, setting regulations, and ensuring public interest is protected.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** To maintain public trust, PPP agreements should include provisions for transparency, reporting, and accountability mechanisms that allow the public sector and citizens to monitor progress and outcomes.
- **Exit Strategy:** The PPP agreement should outline the process for terminating the partnership or transferring responsibilities back to the public sector if necessary.
- **Legal and Regulatory Framework:** An effective legal and regulatory framework is essential for ensuring that the PPP functions smoothly and that potential disputes are resolved fairly.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engaging relevant stakeholders, including local communities and interest groups, can help ensure that the project takes their concerns into account and gains social acceptance.
- **Flexibility:** PPPs require a degree of flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances, technologies, and market conditions over the project's lifecycle.
- **Overall,** successful PPPs are based on a well-defined understanding of roles, responsibilities, and risk-sharing arrangements, combined with effective communication and cooperation between public and private partners.

VII. Stakeholders in PPP

Stakeholders in a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) represent individuals, groups, or organizations that have an interest or involvement in the project. PPPs are collaborative arrangements between the public sector (government) and private sector entities for the purpose of designing, financing, implementing, and operating projects and services that were traditionally provided by the public sector alone.

Here are some key stakeholders typically involved in a PPP:

- **Government/Public Sector:** This includes various levels of government, such as national, regional, and local authorities. They are the main drivers of PPP projects and oversee their implementation. They provide the regulatory framework, approvals, and ensure the project aligns with public policy objectives.
- **Private Sector Partners:** These are the private companies or consortiums that partner with the government to deliver the project. Private sector partners could be construction firms, operators, maintenance companies, financiers, and more.
- **Financiers/Investors:** Financial institutions, banks, and investors provide the necessary capital for PPP projects. They may offer loans, equity investment, and other financial instruments to fund the project's development and operation.
- **Users/Citizens:** The general public or specific user groups who will benefit from the PPP project's services are important stakeholders. For example, in the case of a toll road, the users would be the motorists. Their needs and concerns should be considered throughout the project lifecycle.
- **Local Communities:** The communities residing near the project area may be affected by the construction, operation, and maintenance of the project. Engaging with local communities and addressing their concerns is crucial for the project's success and social acceptance.

- **Regulatory Authorities:** Regulatory bodies oversee the compliance of the PPP project with relevant laws, regulations, and standards. They ensure that the project adheres to environmental, safety, and quality standards.
- **Labor Unions and Workers:** Labor unions represent the interests of the workers employed on the project. They advocate for fair wages, safe working conditions, and other labor-related matters.
- **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs):** NGOs may have an interest in the project's impact on society, the environment, or specific communities. They can provide insights, raise concerns, and monitor the project's social and environmental responsibilities.
- **Suppliers and Contractors:** Companies that supply materials, equipment, and services for the project are stakeholders. They play a role in ensuring the project's smooth execution.
- **Special Interest Groups:** These could be advocacy groups, industry associations, or organizations with a particular interest related to the project, such as environmental protection or economic development.
- **Media and Public Opinion:** The media and public opinion can influence the perception of the project. Positive coverage can enhance support, while negative coverage can lead to public scrutiny and opposition.
- **Financial Advisors and Consultants:** These professionals provide expertise in financial modeling, risk assessment, legal matters, and other specialized areas to ensure the project's financial viability.
- **Academia/Research Institutions:** These entities might provide expertise, research, and analysis that contributes to the development and evaluation of the project.
- Effectively managing these stakeholders' interests, concerns, and expectations is crucial for the success of a PPP project. Regular communication, transparency, and engagement are key to maintaining positive relationships and achieving project objectives.

VIII. Emerging needs and importance of PPP in changing Agricultural Extension Scenario

Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) have gained prominence in the agricultural extension sector due to changing dynamics and emerging needs. Agricultural extension involves the dissemination of knowledge, technologies, and best practices to farmers, aiming to improve their productivity, income, and overall well-being. Here are some reasons for the increasing importance of PPPs in the changing agricultural extension scenario:

- **Resource Constraints:** Many governments face limitations in terms of funding and human resources for agricultural extension services. PPPs allow for sharing the financial burden between public and private entities, leveraging private sector resources and expertise to supplement public efforts.
- **Technology Dissemination:** The private sector often possesses innovative technologies, practices, and solutions that can greatly benefit farmers. Collaborating with private companies enables quicker adoption and dissemination of these technologies, enhancing agricultural productivity and sustainability.
- **Customized Services:** Private companies are agile in responding to market demands. PPPs can tailor extension services to local contexts, considering factors like soil type, climate, and market preferences, resulting in more effective and relevant interventions.
- **Innovation and Research:** Private sector entities often invest in research and development, leading to innovative solutions. Collaborating with these entities can bring cutting-edge research and practices to farmers, driving agricultural growth and sustainability.
- **Capacity Building:** Private companies have specialized skills and training programs that can enhance the capacity of extension workers and farmers. Through PPPs, these resources can be harnessed to improve the overall knowledge and skills of stakeholders.
- **Sustainability:** PPPs can ensure the continuity of extension services even when public funding fluctuates. The private sector's involvement can create self-sustaining models where revenue generation supports ongoing extension activities.
- **Data and Analytics:** Private companies often possess advanced data analytics capabilities. This can be leveraged to gather insights into farmer behavior, market trends, and agronomic patterns, allowing for more informed decision-making in extension programs.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** PPPs foster collaboration among various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, farmers' associations, and private companies. This collective effort can lead to more holistic and comprehensive solutions.
- **Risk Management:** Agriculture is vulnerable to various risks, such as climate change, pests, and market fluctuations. Private sector involvement can bring risk assessment and management strategies, helping farmers adapt and build resilience. However, it's important to note that PPPs also come with challenges, such as aligning objectives between public and private partners, ensuring equity in access to services, and managing potential conflicts of interest. Effective governance, transparency, and accountability mechanisms are crucial for successful PPP implementation.
- In conclusion, PPPs have become increasingly important in the evolving agricultural extension landscape due to their potential to enhance resource efficiency, promote innovation, and address the diverse needs of farmers in a rapidly changing world.

Some of the constraints to agricultural growth in the country are:

- Lack of recent technological breakthroughs
- low productivity
- Inadequate market connections
- Inadequate support for extension efforts
- Degradation of natural resources

- Insufficient investment in agriculture are all factors

IX. Strength and weaknesses of Public Extension

It seems like you're asking about the strengths and weaknesses of public extension services, but your question is a bit unclear. Public extension services typically refer to government-funded programs that provide information, education, and support to individuals, communities, and businesses in various fields such as agriculture, health, education, and technology. These services aim to disseminate knowledge, improve practices, and enhance the overall development of society. Here are some potential strengths and weaknesses of public extension services:

Strengths:

- **Knowledge Dissemination:** Public extension services play a crucial role in spreading up-to-date information, best practices, and new technologies to communities and individuals. This can lead to increased productivity, improved outcomes, and better decision-making.
- **Capacity Building:** These services offer training and workshops that empower people with skills and knowledge, enabling them to adopt modern practices and technologies in their respective fields.
- **Rural Development:** In agricultural contexts, public extension services contribute to rural development by helping farmers enhance their yields, reduce losses, and adopt sustainable farming practices. This can lead to poverty reduction and improved livelihoods.
- **Inclusivity:** Public extension services are often designed to be accessible to a wide range of individuals, including marginalized and disadvantaged populations. This inclusivity helps bridge the knowledge gap and promote equity.
- **Policy Support:** Extension services provide valuable on-ground insights to policymakers, helping them formulate informed policies that are aligned with the needs and challenges faced by communities.

Weaknesses:

- **Funding and Resources:** Public extension services often struggle with limited funding and resources, which can hinder their effectiveness and outreach. Insufficient funds might result in outdated materials, inadequate staff, and limited program reach.
- **Bureaucracy:** Government-run services can sometimes be slowed down by bureaucratic processes, leading to delays in implementing new programs, updating information, and responding to changing needs.
- **Technological Gap:** Rapid advancements in technology require extension services to keep up-to-date with the latest developments. However, resource limitations can make it challenging for these services to incorporate and teach new technologies effectively.
- **Lack of Coordination:** In some cases, there might be a lack of coordination among different agencies or departments responsible for public extension services. This can lead to duplication of efforts, inefficiencies, and confusion among beneficiaries.
- **Changing Demographics:** As societies evolve, the demographics and needs of communities change. Extension services might struggle to adapt quickly enough to cater to new demands or target groups effectively.
- **One-Size-Fits-All Approach:** Sometimes, extension services use generalized approaches that might not suit the specific needs of individual communities or regions. This can limit the effectiveness of the services. It's worth noting that the strengths and weaknesses of public extension services can vary widely based on factors such as the country's economic situation, government policies, technological advancements, and the overall effectiveness of the programs in place.

X. Strength and weaknesses of Private Extension

Strengths:

- **Enhanced Privacy:** Private extensions often offer features like ad-blockers, anti-tracking tools, and cookie management, which can help protect your online privacy by preventing websites from tracking your behavior and collecting personal information.
- **Security:** Many private extensions include security features such as blocking malicious websites, detecting phishing attempts, and warning about potentially harmful downloads, thus enhancing your overall online security.
- **Customization:** Private extensions usually allow users to customize their browsing experience. Users can enable or disable specific features, adjust privacy settings, and fine-tune the extension according to their preferences.
- **User Control:** These extensions give users more control over their online experience by allowing them to choose which websites can access their data and which ones are blocked from doing so.
- **Protection Against Malvertising:** Private extensions often block intrusive ads and potentially malicious content, reducing the risk of encountering malware or being exposed to scams.
- **Anonymity:** Some private extensions offer features like virtual private networks (VPNs) or proxy services, which can help users browse the internet more anonymously by masking their IP addresses.

Weaknesses:

- **Compatibility:** Private extensions may not always work seamlessly with all websites and platforms. Some websites may break or not function properly when certain privacy features are enabled.
- **Performance:** Some private extensions can slow down browser performance due to the additional processing required to analyze and block content. This can be especially noticeable on older devices or slower internet connections.
- **False Positives:** Privacy and security extensions might sometimes classify legitimate websites or content as malicious, leading to false positives that disrupt the browsing experience.

- **Dependency:** Relying heavily on privacy extensions might lead users to neglect other good practices, such as regularly updating their browser, using strong passwords, and being cautious about clicking on suspicious links.
- **Data Collection:** Ironically, some private extensions themselves might collect user data, potentially compromising the privacy they aim to protect. It's essential to research and choose extensions from reputable sources.
- **Bypassed Protections:** Advanced tracking techniques and privacy-invading practices used by some websites might bypass the protections provided by certain extensions, leading to limited effectiveness in certain scenarios.
- **Limited Features:** Some private extensions might lack certain features that are available in more comprehensive security suites or standalone applications. When considering private extensions, it's essential to research and choose well-established, reputable ones from trusted sources. Additionally, consider a combination of good security hygiene practices alongside using these extensions to ensure comprehensive online privacy and security.

XI. Need for partnership:

- Agriculture's commercialization
- limitations in the public research and extension system
- Globalization, liberalization, and privatization
- Need for strategic alliances between the public and private sectors and business developmental, and social goals.

XII. Potential risks for the public sector, and some recommendations on how to avoid them

Potential Risks for Public Sector Extension Services in PPP Model of Extension:

Loss of Control: Public sector extension services might lose control over the quality, scope, and direction of the services due to the involvement of private partners.

Commercial Interests: Private partners may prioritize their own commercial interests over the public good, potentially leading to biased information dissemination.

Inequitable Access: The PPP model might result in unequal access to extension services, as private partners may focus on areas with higher profit potential, neglecting marginalized or remote communities.

Conflicts of Interest: Private partners could be involved in businesses that directly conflict with the goals of the extension services, creating conflicts of interest and compromising the integrity of the information provided.

Quality Concerns: The focus on profit could lead to a decrease in the quality and depth of extension services, impacting the effectiveness of knowledge transfer.

Short-Term Focus: Private partners may prioritize short-term gains over long-term sustainable outcomes, undermining the essence of extension services that often require long-term investment.

Lack of Accountability: There might be challenges in holding private partners accountable for the accuracy and impartiality of the information shared.

Recommendations for Avoiding these Risks:

Clear Agreements: Establish comprehensive agreements that outline the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of both public and private partners to maintain transparency and control.

Stakeholder Involvement: Involve stakeholders, including farmers and local communities, in the decision-making process to ensure extension services meet their actual needs.

Performance Metrics: Set up measurable performance indicators that focus on both commercial and public welfare aspects, ensuring that private partners meet specific targets.

Ethics and Standards: Develop a code of ethics and standards that private partners must adhere to, ensuring the provision of unbiased and accurate information.

Equitable Distribution: Mandate that extension services are provided to all regions and communities, irrespective of profit potential, to prevent disparities in access.

Long-Term Perspective: Include clauses in agreements that emphasize the long-term benefits of extension services and discourage short-term profit-driven approaches.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Implement robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the quality and impact of extension services provided by private partners.

Capacity Building: Invest in building the capacity of public sector officials to effectively manage PPP collaborations and maintain the public interest.

Public Oversight: Establish mechanisms for public oversight, allowing communities and concerned individuals to raise concerns about the quality and integrity of extension services.

Flexible Models: Consider hybrid models that combine public and private resources while retaining public sector control, enabling the benefits of both without compromising core goals.

Exit Strategies: Develop exit strategies that allow the public sector to take over if private partners fail to deliver services effectively or meet predefined standards.

Incorporating these recommendations can help mitigate the potential risks associated with adopting a PPP model for public sector extension services, ensuring that the partnership contributes positively to agricultural development and community well-being.

XIII. Conclusion

There is consensus on promising joint initiatives and investments among people involved in the food and agricultural systems of rising nations. recognition of the governmental and institutional constraints on public-private collaboration. identifying innovative methods for establishing and financing alliances for commercial supply and agricultural expansion. identifying the key areas where PPPs can progress agriculture, increase food security, and alleviate poverty.

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