



## SWOT analysis of private advisory service agencies (PASA) in horticulture crops

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### Abstract

The present study was conducted to analyze the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of Private Advisory Service Agencies (PASA) for the farmers who were obtaining PASA services in horticulture crops. The sample consisted of randomly selected 120 horticulture crop growers from 12 villages of three taluks of Chitradurga district of Karnataka State. Personal interview method was used for collection of data from the respondents. The results showed that “Availability of good information and management practices” (93.33%) and “Availability of good quality inputs” (88.33%) were major Strengths of PASA. Majority 85.83 per cent and 78.33 per cent of the respondents expressed that “No freedom for farmers’ decisions in all stages of crop production” and “PASA are always profit-oriented” were major Weaknesses of PASA respectively. “Demand for plant protection technology” (94.17%) and “PASA help horticultural growers to boost themselves” (85.00%) are the prime Opportunities existed with PASA. “The freedom of farmers is very limited in the selection of inputs and other services” (85.00%) and “Traditional method of farmers’ practices had no place in PASA” (78.33%) were found to be Threats of PASA respectively.

**Keywords:** advisory services, approaches, privatization, profitability, and SWOT

### Introduction

Presently, Indian agricultural extension has wide mandates and despite the pluralistic extension approaches, its coverage and use of services is limited, particularly marginal and smallholder farmers’. Hence, there is need to develop “need-based” capacity building of small-scale men and women farmers who are involved in horticulture crop production as well as gaining access to reliable information in increasing their productivity and profitability. Further, for livelihoods improvement in horticultural innovation systems, there are still large gaps between research and extension approaches. In present scenario, the number of stakeholders are involved in horticultural Extension. Hence, opportunity to reach a greater number of horticultural farmers is increasing. In this context, private sector is incorporating extension services within existing service provisions and experimenting with ICT. Hence, there is need to evaluate the performance of private agencies involved in giving advisory services to farmers. There is a want for a thorough evaluation of extension approaches in order to identify best practices and to understand their impact on horticulture crop growers. But inherent challenges of horticulture sector faces in reaching different farmers means. Public-Private Partnership (PPP) and coordination between sectors will best serve the interests of horticulture farmers. The present study was conducted to analyze the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of Private Advisory Service Agencies (PASA) which are involved providing advisory services in horticulture crops.

### Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in Chitradurga district of Karnataka State as more dry land horticulture crops are grown in the district. The district comprises six taluks, among them three taluks were selected, *i.e.*, Chitradurga, Challakere and Hiriya taluks. Total of 120 respondents were randomly chosen from the selected 12 villages who were growing horticulture crops and taking advisory services from private agencies particularly from local trained people and private companies. The respondents were selected based on horticulture crops growing in the three taluks. Data was collected from the respondents through a personal interview method by using a structured interview schedule. The collected data was scored and analyzed using suitable statistical tools. The results were expressed using frequency and percentage.

The criteria used in the selection of the private input dealers and advisory service providers such as the company / organization should have five years of service track in providing advisory services in horticultural crops. Company should have credibility among the farmers, the organizations should have legal consultancy system and the organizations/companies involved in timely solving farmers problems etc.

### Results and Discussion

#### SWOT analysis of Private Advisory Service Agencies (PASA) in horticulture crops

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of PASA

were identified according to the perception of horticulture crop growers.

#### **Strengths and Weaknesses of PASA in horticultural crops**

The data in Table 1 reveals the Strengths and Weaknesses of PASA in horticultural crops. The results indicates that majority 93.33 per cent of the respondents expressed that “Availability of good information and management practices” was a major Strength of PASA. The reason may be due to there were limited sources in providing the advisory services. Where the PASA is providing expected information timely to solve the farmers problems in horticulture crop production.

Majority 88.33 per cent and 85.83 per cent of the respondents revealed that “Availability of good quality inputs” and “Assured profitable income” as Strengths of PASA respectively. Other Strengths of PASA reported by the respondents such as “Logistic support” (78.33%), “Skilful employees” (74.17%) and “Highly motivated extension personnel” (71.67%). The possible reasons for the above results might be due to the make more profitable to horticulture crop growers through proper advisory services with adoption of profit oriented strategies.

Table 1 also gives information on weaknesses of PASA. Majority 85.83 per cent of the respondents expressed that “No freedom for farmers’ decisions in all stages of crop production” as a major weakness. Followed by 78.33 per cent of respondents said that “PASA are always profit-oriented”. “No opportunity for alternative use of chemicals and machineries” (70.00%) and “Farmers will get inputs from only specified companies” (68.33%) are found to be other Weaknesses of PASA. The limitations in PASA were due to limited freedom of farmers in decision making, in some cases it is not in the hands of farmers. It hampers the regular type of crop production system. Many a times the private companies give first provision to resourceful/large farmers. Probably service providers neglected the small and marginal farmers. Therefore the farmers might expressed PASA encourage only large farmers.

#### **Opportunities and Threats of PASA in horticultural crops**

The data in Table 2 reveals the information about opportunities and threats of PASA in horticulture crops. Majority 94.17 per cent the farmers expressed “Demand for plant protection technology” was prime opportunity of PASA. Majority 85.00 per cent of respondents expressed that “PASA help horticulture crop growers to boost themselves”. 84.17 per cent farmers expressed that PASA is also a “Provision for the production of quality produce leads to better crop cultivation, yield and returns”. The other major opportunities expressed by respondents viz., “Resource availability at the farmers disposal” (80.83%), “Demand for marketing services” (75.83%), “PASA make integration of farmers to grow innovative crops” (73.33%), etc., The aspects like seed /planting material selection, seed treatment, application of

fertilizers, irrigation methods, the supply of weedicides and PPCs, spraying techniques, provision of credit facilities from co-operatives and banks, proper utilization of available resources, grading, packing, marketing, etc., were perceived as important components of crop production and post harvest activities. By considering these aspects PASA had taken important problems based on the needs of the farmers. So as they might expressed these statements were opportunities of PASA.

The table also reveals the information about Threats in PASA. Majority 85.00 per cent of the respondents expressed that “The freedom of farmers is very limited in the selection of inputs and other services” as Threat. The reason for this may be that as per the guidelines and suggestions getting from the PASA, it was observed that the freedom for the farmer is limited in most of the aspects. Hence, farmers might express the limited freedom by the farmers with respect to selection of inputs and services as the Threats of PASA.

Majority 78.33 per cent of the respondents expressed that “Traditional method of farmers’ practices had no place in PASA”. The reason for above result may be that always private companies works on the motto of maximising production and returns with whom the company extension personnel works. Even there is no freedom to the farmers to use/practice the traditional type of cultivation practice. Hence, the farmers may expressed there was no place for traditional practices in Private Advisory Service Systems.

**Table 1:** Strengths and weaknesses of of Private Advisory Service Agencies (PASA) in horticultural crops. n=120

Sl. No.	Statements	F	P
<b>A.</b>	<b>Strengths</b>		
1.	Highly motivated extension personnel	86	71.67
2.	Timely service delivery	99	82.50
3.	Logistic support	94	78.33
4.	Accurate channels of communication	75	62.50
5.	Guides beyond production to support value addition	18	15.00
6.	Availability of good quality inputs	106	88.33
7.	Skilful employees	89	74.17
8.	Availability of good information and management practices	112	93.33
9.	Assured profitable income	103	85.83
10.	Collaborative work minimizes crop loss.	81	67.50
<b>B.</b>	<b>Weakness</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P</b>
1.	Limited coverage of farmers	76	63.33
2.	PASA are always profit-oriented	94.00	78.33
3.	Farmers will get inputs from only specified companies*	82.00	68.33
4.	Solve all problems of crop production by single extension personnel	66.00	55.00
5.	No opportunity for alternative use of chemicals and machineries*	84.00	70.00
6.	No freedom for farmers decisions in all stages of crop production	103.00	85.83

F – Frequency P – Percentage

**Table 2:** Opportunities and threats of Private Advisory Service Agencies (PASA) in horticultural crops n =120

Sl. no.	Statements	F	P
<b>A.</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>		
1.	PASA make integration of farmers to grow innovative crops	76	63.33
2.	Provision for production of quality produce leads to better crop cultivation, yield and returns	101	84.17
3.	Farmers may switch over for innovative horticultural cultivation	88	73.33
4.	PASA will help horticultural growers to boost themselves	102	85.00
5.	Demand for plant protection technology	113	94.17
6.	Demand for marketing services	91	75.83
7.	Create opportunities for farmers and their family members to participate in group activities	69	57.50
8.	Resource availability at the farmers' disposal	97	80.83
<b>B.</b>	<b>Threats</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P</b>
1.	PASA will not cover all aspects of horticultural crop production for better income to the farmers	92	76.67
2.	PASA service providers most of the time prefer only resourceful farmers	88	73.33
3.	Many PASA are failing in providing appropriate services on the marketing of the horticultural produce	73	60.83
4.	PASA involve more operational cost	38	31.67
5.	The freedom of farmers is very limited in the selection of inputs and other services.	102	85.00
6.	Traditional method of farmers practices had no place in PASA	94	78.33

F – Frequency P – Percentage

### Conclusion

The results of the present study showed that availability of good inputs, information and management practices are the major strengths of the PASA. Profitable income, timely service delivery and logistic support were also rated as Strength of the system. However, Lack of freedom for farmers' decisions in all stages of crop production and profit-oriented nature of PASA were the major Weaknesses of the PASA. The other Weaknesses reported are lack of opportunity for alternative use of chemicals and machineries, inputs from only specified companies, lack of information on value addition etc., More opportunities existed for demand of plant protection technology, marketing services and group activities of PASA. Lack of freedom for farmers in the selection of inputs and other services and traditional practices were posed to be major Threats. PASA had more Strength as compared to Weakness. It is suggested that the steps should be taken to mitigate the Weaknesses and ensure the Strengths of the system. Similarly, Threats should be converted into Opportunities. Private extension provision is generally skewed towards well-endowed regions and resourceful farmers. Remote areas and poor producers, with little marketable surplus, are poorly served. Non-commercial private providers are targeting them but their scope is limited. It would be helpful if the government provided good infrastructural facilities such as road to reduce operating costs by the private sector players and enable them to reach more farmers. Public-private co-ordination will best serve the farmers.

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