Empowering Knowledge

Original Article

Investigation of Farmers' Attitude Towards Agricultural Services of Private Sector, in Islam Abad Gharb County in Iran

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

Objective: The agricultural sector is one of the most important and the most basic of productive and economic sectors in each country, and support of this sector is a very important issue in many countries around the world, that one of the principles supporting the agriculture sector is offering to appropriate and inclusive services to agricultural manufacturers and actors. In this regard, the main objective of this study was to evaluation of Farmers' attitude towards agricultural services of Private sector. **Methods:** The agricultural sector is one of the most important and the most basic of productive and economic sectors in each country, and support of this sector is a very important issue in many countries around the world, that one of the principles supporting the agriculture sector is offering to appropriate and inclusive services to agricultural manufacturers and actors. In this regard, the main objective of this study was to evaluation of Farmers' attitude towards agricultural services of Private sector. **Results:** In this regard, the results showed that the attitude's level of most studied farmers to agricultural services of private sector was at a high level .

1.INTRODUCTION

Iran is a country having a lot of capabilities in field of agriculture; as well as, in the world competitions field, it is one of the effective factors for getting multilateral independence, and achievement of independence in production of food products needed by people; so, considering the two above mentioned subjects (appropriate field and necessity of independence), it seems necessary to take more and more into consideration the development of agriculture in the field of services providing to the large class producing agricultural products, in different technical, consultative and propagating fields (Varmazyari, 2008). Generally, so far an exact definition of services, especially agricultural services has not been presented, it can be said that services, are immaterial by nature, and there isn't any

clear boundary between goods and services. Though, in the past, many efforts have been made to make a distinction between services and physical goods (products), there have been always some especial cases regarding the exact criterion of determination of the boundaries between goods and services. In order to do so, it is better to consider the net goods production and net services production, two extremes of a spectrum which is called goods-services continuum (Sedighi, 1999).

Now, in many countries, some issues like inequalities and increasing gaps in development are due to unfair distribution of developmental services of agriculture. Considering that decentralization in political and economical system helps to meet people's needs and priorities directly, so the necessity of programming and

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decentralized management of development especially in agricultural development section in order to make a more effective and fair distribution of agricultural services and resources of that section, is felt more and more (Eftekhari, 2002). Dickson(2002) puts out a list of agricultural services for different operation systems in order to develop agriculture in Iran. They include: research on agriculture and extension of it, market and information related to market, consultative services. Also, Helmoot(2000), emphasizing that services presentable in agriculture are very diverse, summarizes these services as follows: agricultural researches, information science and agriculture extension services, services related to agricultural training and technical consultation about agriculture, insurance and agricultural credits, stocks providing services for herbal and animal products (Huppert, 1998). in developing countries, this is a gradual process which is in progress. The main reason of this, is the decrease of the government budgets and indifference of government officials which result in inefficiency and decrease of profits. While, the private sector, has new resources and ideas and also more motivation to provide better and more effective services to customers (Mahmoudi karam javan, 2002). So, with the entrance of private sector into the field of agricultural services, the possibility of competition in order to promote the quality of related services is provided. In this direction, privatization of agricultural services can be considered to be the use of a set of policies, strategies, and a approaches which result in renewal of the structure and organization of financial and management services related to agriculture. In this area, we can refer to assignment of financial and service responsibilities of agriculture to non-profit, profit and non-governmental organizations, private sector, producing and distributing institutions of agricultural stocks (Huppert, 1998). Inefficiency of the structures of public agricultural services can be studied from some aspects like the following: « unidirectional and downward relationship in process of information's transmission which has caused an imperfect relationship among researcher, consulter, and farmer »,« disconformities of the presented services with farmers' real needs », « lack of motivational factors in agriculture consulters and the untimely information presented by consulters in order to consult with the farmers ». Considering the above mentioned issues, this study aims at the investigation of Farmers' attitude towards agricultural services of Private sector in Islam Abad Gharb county in Iran.

1.1.Prior Research

In Their study, Ebrahimi and bayattork diden't consider the abilities expected from Propagators of the private sector to be developed to academic degrees or practical work in the farms, but they put out a combination of academic degrees, practical experience and having experience in office work(in the field of agriculture) as

the experiences required by the propagators of private sector (Ebrahimi *et al*, 2002). Also, Mahmoodi Karamjavan indicated in his research that the most important factors which are effective on privatization of propagation and consultation services of agriculture include experience and knowledge of experts and propagators of private sector, presence of scientific knowledge in farmers and finally social, economic and cultural grounds of the area (Mahmoudi karam javan, 2002).

The results of researches conducted by Bloom on the attitudes of experts, managers and customers towards the consultative services of private agriculture in New Zealand and Tosmania, didn't predict an optimistic future for these kinds of agricultural services in the studied areas (Bloom, 1993). According to the heads of agriculture department, propagator and consultative policies of agriculture based on the fee, have caused weaker propagator and consultative agricultural services in Tosmania. Also the office workers have held that the new system of agricultural services has decreased their contacts with the farmers.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The methodology used in this study involved a combination of descriptive and quantitative research. The population of this study included farmers, (N = 16900) in selected one province, of which 290 farmers was selected in Islam Abad Gharb county. Research based on the Cochran formula and using random sampling and questionnaires. Different data collection methods were applied in this research, such as using national and international searching scientific references on internet; hence, a questionnaire was designed as the main research tool based on obtained results. It should be mentioned that the questionnaires completion method was through interviews and face to face visits. Face validity was established by a panel of experts consisting of faculty members . A pilot test was conducted with 30 wheat farmers questionnaire reliability was estimated by calculating Alfa Cronbach methods by was estimated by SPSS reliability for the overall instrument was estimated at 92%, which indicates the high validity of the mentioned tool. Also in order to investigate the validity of the research tool, the mentioned questionnaire was given to a group of authorities, when after receiving their points of view, the required corrections were applied.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Individual and Economical Characteristics of farmers

The descriptive findings showed that the studied users' average age was 45.82, also most of studied users (31.4%) had high school diploma; On the other hand, the average of agricultural experience were 22 years. In

terms of the economic characteristics, the results showed that users' average total cultivated land was 15.42 Hectar; On the other hand, The farming operation system in most studied users'(91%) was private.

3.2. Farmer's Attitude to agricultural services of Private sector

In order to evaluate farmer's attitude to agricultural services of Private sector, 6 queries were designed and the participants were asked to questions through a 5-point Likert scale (very low, low, medium, high, very high) (Table1).

Based on obtained results, the attitude's level of most studied farmers to agricultural services of private sector was at a high level (Table2). Also, the priorities of farmer's attitude showed that "be suitable to behavior and contact of personnel in private sector in comparison with public sector" is their first priority**.**

Table1.

Farmers' attitude towards agricultural services of private sector(n=290)

Queries	Very low Frequency	Low Frequency	Medium Frequency	High Frequency	Very high Frequency	n Frequency
Greater diversity of of private agricultural sevices compared with the public service	20	23	92	111	32	278
Sufficient to private sector personnel compared with the public service to providing agricultural services	27	37	73	112	32	280
Practical and More suitable to extension consultation and training of private sector in comparison with public sector	19	38	85	99	39	280
Be suitable to Behavior of Private sector personnel in comparison with public sector	10	38	77	103	52	287
Be suitable to contact of personnel in private sector in comparison with public sector	22	39	71	108	46	286
Visit frequency and supervision of private-sector experts in the farm, in comparison with public sector	16	32	75	95	64	282

Q_{1} : 2.83   **Mean rank : 3.5** Q_{1} : 4

Table2.

Frequency distribution of attitude towards agricultural services of private sector

Attitude levels	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percentage
high	133	45.9	45.9
medium	126	43.4	54.1
low	31	10.7	100
total	290	100	

3.3. The result of stepwise multiple regression analysis

To investigate the role of the independent variables that showed significant role on Dependent variable, were used of stepwise multiple regression analysis. According to the regression coefficients and constant value obtained of stepwise multiple regression analysis to test mode, this regression equation was obtained as follows (Table3) :

$Y = 21.403 - 0.060 X_1$

Table 3.

The result of stepwise multiple regression analysis

	Dependent variable	Factors	B	SEB	Beta	t	t
X1	Attitude towards agricultural services of private sector	Agricultural experience	-.060	.028	-0.125	-2.139	0.033
		Constant	21.403	0.711		30.119	.000

R: 0.125   **F** : 4.577   **R²** : 0.016

4. DISCUSSION

The rate of correlation coefficient (R) 0.682, The rate of determination coefficient (R^2) 0.465 was estimated; Therefore, the results showed that 46.5% of variations of dependent variable "Attitude towards agricultural services of private sector" be explained by independent variable " Agricultural experience " . It can be acknowledged that as regards, 46.5% of fluctuations and variations of attitude towards agricultural services of private sector is influenced by extent of their experience in agriculture, this indicates that planners, managers and policy makers of private sector Should be, these components are considered in its plans to quantitative and qualitative development of agricultural services in wide level of agricultural areas.

CONCLUSION

Agricultural sector considering the enormous capacity, in terms of human resources and gross national product is one of the important sub system of economic system, that the most important tools to achievement to agricultural development can be privatization of agricultural services. On other hand, through privatization in agriculture sector and especially agricultural service-providing, you can hope to increase the role of private sector and following it, the role of beneficiaries in cooperation in developmental schemes of agriculture. In this direction, the process of privatization of agricultural services should be conducted in a way that the ability of beneficiaries of this sector to use the services of private sector is considered and can improve the beneficiaries attitudes towards these services. At the end, considering the above-mentionable cases, the following suggestions are presented in order to improve the farmers' attitudes towards the agricultural services of private sector. Considering that the attitudes of the studied farmers towards agricultural services of private sector have been estimated to be very well, it is suggested that more researches to be conducted to recognize the factors effective on the attitudes and views of beneficiaries towards the services of private sector.

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