

Since the summer of 2005, the Government of Gujarat has been organizing every year a month long *Krishi Mahotsav* (Agrarian Festival) in a campaign mode. The campaign has modest financial costs but entails a massive mobilization effort involving over 1 lakh functionaries of government departments, farmer co-operatives, Panchayats, Agricultural Produce Marketing Committees (APMCs), private input suppliers, agricultural marketing companies and NGOs - all in an effort to expose the farmer to modern technologies, new crops and market opportunities. While the conventional extension machinery based on Training and Visit (T&V) system has become defunct everywhere in India, Gujarat's *Krishi Mahotsav* promises an innovative approach to reinventing agricultural extension, to reconnecting the scientist with the farmer, and in general, to extending the farmer's production possibility frontier. Has *Krishi Mahotsav* served that purpose? Do farmers find it worthwhile? Is it able to reach out to one and all? IWMI-Tata Program, with the help of partners, surveyed 1445 farmers around Gujarat to analyse their perceptions about *Krishi Mahotsav*. This Highlight summarizes the results of the survey.

## Water Policy Research

# HIGHLIGHT

## Reinventing Agricultural Extension?

### Preliminary Assessment of Gujarat's *Krishi Mahotsav* (Agrarian Festival)

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## REINVENTING AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION?

### PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF GUJARAT'S *KRISHI MAHOTSAV* (AGRARIAN FESTIVAL)<sup>12</sup>

#### Research highlight based on Bhatt (2011) and Pattnaik (2011)<sup>3</sup>

#### INTRODUCTION

Since 2005, the Government of Gujarat has been organizing, during May every year, a month long *Krishi Mahotsav* in a campaign mode. Each such annual campaign is preceded by months of elaborate planning. Eighteen government departments, Agricultural Universities, extension agencies, District Rural Development Agencies, Panchayats, farmer co-operatives, APMCs, seed, fertiliser and pesticide companies, irrigation equipment manufacturers and political leaders of various hues work overtime in mass contact programs with the state's 4.5 million farmers. *Krishi Mela* (Exhibitions) are held in district towns where input supply companies, banks, co-operatives, NGOs and government departments display their ware. *Krishi Shibirs* (Farmer Workshops) are held where scientists expose farmers to new technologies and farmers share their experiences with each other. *Krishi Rath* (Agrarian Chariot), a travelling exhibition mounted on a decorated tractor trolley equipped with video projector, posters and extension materials, and manned by agricultural university scientists and students visit each of Gujarat's 18000 villages on a pre-announced schedule. They provide information and guidance to farmers on topics such as soil health management, crop rotation, organic farming, use of fertilizers and pesticides, irrigation practices, crop and milk marketing strategies, agro-processing and value addition techniques as well as other new opportunities to improve their farming and incomes. Poor farmers in each village are also provided input kits on agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry, containing seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and such like. Documentary films and VCDs on extension education prepared by the state agricultural universities are distributed to the farmers or

the *gram panchayats*. Expert lectures and one-to-one counseling sessions are held. Soil health tests are undertaken and soil health cards are given to the farmers, detailing the soil composition of their respective farms and suggesting the best possible crops for that soil type. Intensive animal vaccination programmes and animal health camps are also held. Besides providing information and exposure, the month-long campaign also does a great deal to foster peer-group communication and discussion, and recognize farmer-innovators and publicise their achievements. All in all, the *Krishi Mahotsav* is a massive exercise, which mobilizes various stakeholders in the agricultural development of the state in a concentrated and time-bound manner. Every year, a different aspect is chosen as the key focus of *Krishi Mahotsav* as shown below.

- 2005 - Agriculture
- 2006 - Horticulture
- 2007 - Animal husbandry
- 2008 - Subsidy schemes of state and central governments
- 2009 - Exhibition of technologies and marketing opportunities
- 2010 - Convergence of all agriculture related technology at village level

All in all, while financial costs of the *Krishi Mahotsav* campaign are modest, the scale of the effort mounted - what with over one lakh functionaries involved - is formidable. While conventional agricultural extension machinery has become defunct everywhere in India, Gujarat's *Krishi Mahotsav* was designed to fill the gap, and enhance farmers' awareness about new technologies as well as government schemes. Has *Krishi Mahotsav*

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<sup>3</sup>These reports are available on request from [p.regghu@cgiar.org](mailto:p.regghu@cgiar.org)

served that purpose? IWMI-Tata Program, with the help of partners, surveyed 1445 farmers around Gujarat to assess the contribution of *Krishi Mahotsav*.

#### OBJECTIVES, METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This study was undertaken as a preliminary assessment of the *Krishi Mahotsav*, to examine the extent of farmer awareness and participation in *Krishi Mahotsav*, and the adoption of new practices by beneficiary farmers. It also sought to gauge the success of the disbursement of soil health cards, the kisan credit cards, extension materials and input kits for the poor. One village was selected from each of the 25 districts of Gujarat. A sample of 60 respondent farmers from each village was selected through the stratified purposive sampling method with a fixed number of households to be canvassed in each category as shown in Table 1.

The primary survey was conducted in August 2010, a month-and-a-half after the 2010 *Krishi Mahotsav* had concluded. Information was collected from sample farmers through a structured questionnaire. It included questions about the economic status of the household (landholding, livestock and other livelihood assets), participation in the *Krishi Mahotsav*, awareness and retention of information from the *Krishi Mahotsav*, actual adoption of the learning, benefits derived from the various government schemes, suggestions on improvement in design of future *Krishi Mahotsav*. In order to supplement

and ratify the information obtained from the farmers, the Expert Opinion Method was used to solicit whereby opinions and suggestions of some 60 officials and scientists including District Agricultural Officers, District Nodal Scientists, officers from National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Gujarat Green Revolution Company (GGRC), APMCs as well as the *gram sevak* and *sarpanch* of the study villages. Secondary data was collected from government departments, lead banks, state agricultural universities and other sources.

#### KEY FINDINGS

Many partners had difficulty finding the required numbers especially of women headed, Muslim and in some cases Adivasi (ST) households in the same village and found them in neighbouring villages. The key point is that the sampling was neither random, nor proportional. It can be best called structured stratified sampling method. The purpose was to get sufficiently large sample for each category to make credible analysis of their perceptions about *Krishi Mahotsav*. Table 2 profiles the sample households and their asset base. Only a quarter of the land operated by the sample farmers was unirrigated; and only around 9 percent of the sample farmers engaged in rainfed farming on all their land. Wells and tube wells irrigated half of the total land operated by sample households, thus being the principal means of irrigation. Government canals were a distant second.

**Table 1 Sampling scheme for a survey of farmer perceptions about *Krishi Mahotsav***

	Farmer category for the survey	Fixed sample size per village	Total sample size
1	Category 1 (10 + acre)	3	75
2	Category 2 (5-10 acres)	7	175
3	Category 3 (< 5 acres)	20	500
4	Farmers of any land holding class who do not use irrigation at all on their fields	5	125
5	Landless farm labourers/tenant farmers	5	125
6	Schedule Caste (SC) households (any land holding size)	5	125
7	Schedule tribe (ST) households (any land holding size)	5	125
8	Muslim households (any land holding size)	5	125
9	Women headed households (any land holding size)	5	125
10	Total sample	60	1500

Table 2 Profile of sample households and profile of their resource base

Categories	Number of sample households	Average holding size (acre)	Percentage of land unirrigated	Percentage of land irrigated by wells	Percentage of land irrigated by canals	Percentage of land irrigated by other sources	Average milking bovines/ household	Average total bovines/ household
10 + acre	76	17.6	20.2	54.6	14.8	7.4	3.8	9.8
5-10 acre	178	6.8	21.4	59.0	9.8	5.9	3.1	8.3
< 5 acre	563	2.5	20.2	51.2	15.2	7.2	2.3	6.2
Un irrigated farmers	114	2.8	100	0	-	-	2.4	6.9
Landless	131	0	0	0			2.6	6.8
Schedule Caste (SC)	120	3.4	24.6	40.7	18.0	12.2	3.1	8.0
Schedule Tribe (ST)	74	2.6	25.3	34.5	28.1	6.5	2.5	6.7
Muslim	72	6.0	9.5	67.7	18.0	2.4	4.6	6.9
Women headed households	117	3.0	33.9	39.4	12.9	8.0	2.4	6.7
Total	1445	4.3	25.6	49.9	13.7	6.6	2.7	7.3

#### AWARENESS ABOUT AND PARTICIPATION IN *KRISHI MAHOTSAV*

Around 69 percent of the sample farmers were aware of *Krishi Mahotsav* and 65 percent thought it to be a ‘good program’. Awareness and participation were particularly high among large and Muslim farmers, and particularly low among SC and landless households. A quarter of the sample farmers attended the *Krishi Mela* and around one-fifth attended a *Krishi Shibir*; over half were aware that the *Krishi Rath* had visited their village and had visited the same. A majority of these respondents were large land owners and Muslim farmers. Our sample of Muslim farmers was remarkable in that 86 percent of them were ‘aware’ of *Krishi Mahotsav*; and 81 percent of these said ‘they found *Krishi Mahotsav*’ beneficial. Predictably, the landless were the least aware (49 percent) though all of the ‘aware’ landless households also thought of it as a ‘good program’.

There was thus a strong scale-bias in exposure to *Krishi Mahotsav*. Those with money to travel and time to spare were more likely to attend *Krishi Mela* and *Krishi Shibir*. Only 8 percent of the sample farmers visited the model farmer’s field. Many of the small farmers and landless had to forego this opportunity because they could neither afford travel cost and the time for it, nor forego their wages during that period. Moreover, they thought that

they had no use for new information when they had no means to use it.

A *gram sabha* was to be organized by the *gram sevak* and the sarpanch in the village prior to the visit of the *Krishi Rath*. 41 percent respondents said they knew the *gram sabha* was organised, and 32 percent admitted to having attended such a *gram sabha*. Awareness and participation in the *gram sabha* was found to be the highest among large farmers and lowest among the landless and ST farmers.

There was much dissatisfaction and heart-burning with the manner of deciding beneficiary households as well as the delivery of the kits to them. Many households found the free agricultural inputs of no use as they were either landless or they got them after the sowing season. Our survey also showed evidence of considerable mis-targeting, with medium and large farmers walking away with agricultural kits.

Around a quarter of the sample farmers said that they received literature on extension education and admitted using it. Once again, the utilization of the literature was better among large and Muslim farmers but low among ST, tenant and women farmers. As high as 43 percent respondents averred that they interacted with government officials from agriculture and other departments. This is

remarkable because in normal circumstances, farmers have few if any opportunity to get access to and interact with officials and scientists in village settings. Private seed, fertilizer and equipment companies were highly motivated in using the opportunity provided by *Krishhi Mahotsav*; around 14 percent respondents reported to have interacted with the staff of GGRC and 27 percent with private input producers. Interaction with officials from the lead bank/ NABARD (16 percent) and officials of APMC (16 percent) was relatively low. Overall, interaction with various extension agents was found to be the highest among large farmers and quite low among small, SC and ST farmers.

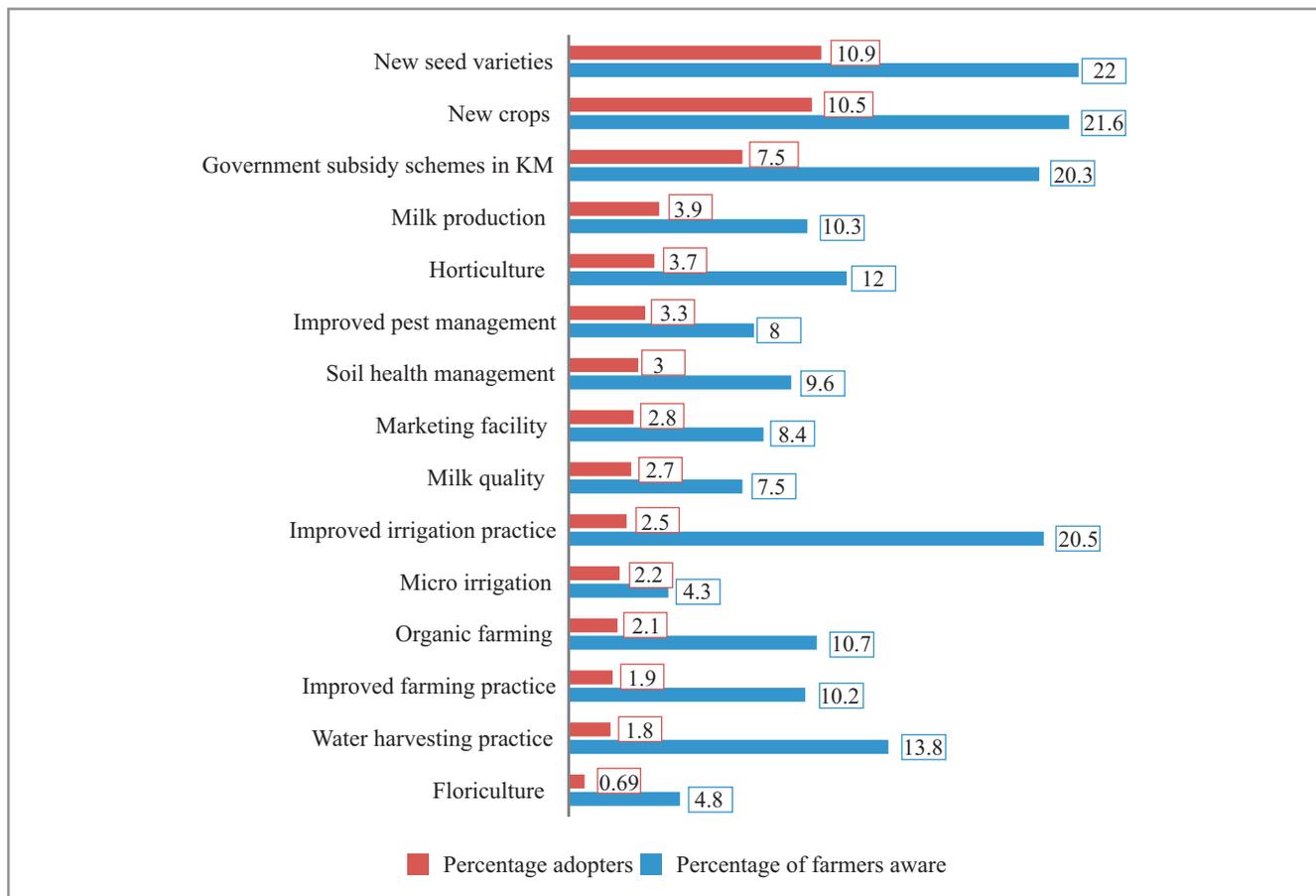
#### AWARENESS VERSUS ADOPTION OF IMPROVED PRACTICES

A wide gap existed between awareness and adoption of new crops as is evident in Figure 1. Awareness levels were high among large and medium land owners and Muslim farmers and low among rainfed farmers, ST and women headed farm households. The gap between awareness and adoption rates varied greatly across categories of improved practices as well as of farmers. Indeed the bulk

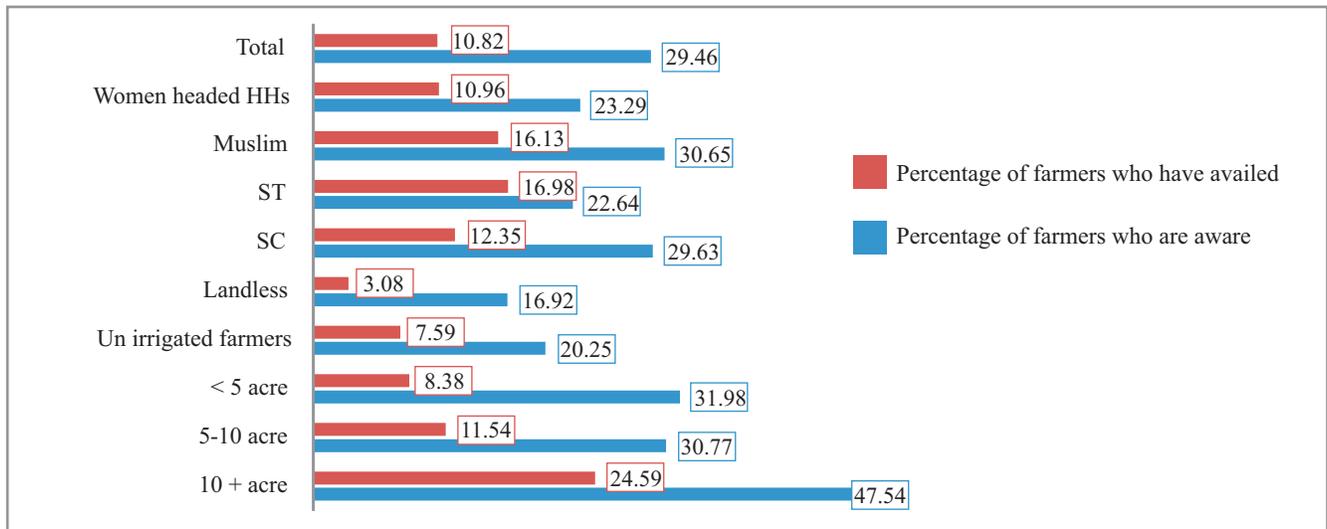
of the adoption was concentrated in the former three categories; and the average for the sample as a whole was pulled down by the very low adoption rates of the SC, ST, landless, rainfed and women headed households. The large (10 + acres) and the Muslim farmers were at least 3 times more likely to adopt these practices compared to the landless, rainfed, tribal and women headed households.

The highest gap between awareness and adoption exists with respect to improved irrigation practices, soil health management and water harvesting practices. In contrast, the lowest gap was found in awareness and adoption of new crops and seed varieties which promised immediate private benefit. The innovation-diffusion literature argues that adoption of new ideas is determined by five characteristics of innovations: relative advantage these offer, compatibility with individual's life situation, simplicity, trialability and observability (Rogers 2003). Arguably, adoption of new crops and seed varieties score higher on all or some of these factors than irrigation and water harvesting innovations. Notably, however, even in soil health management and water harvesting, large farmers were found to be miles ahead of the rest in awareness as well as adoption of better practices. In

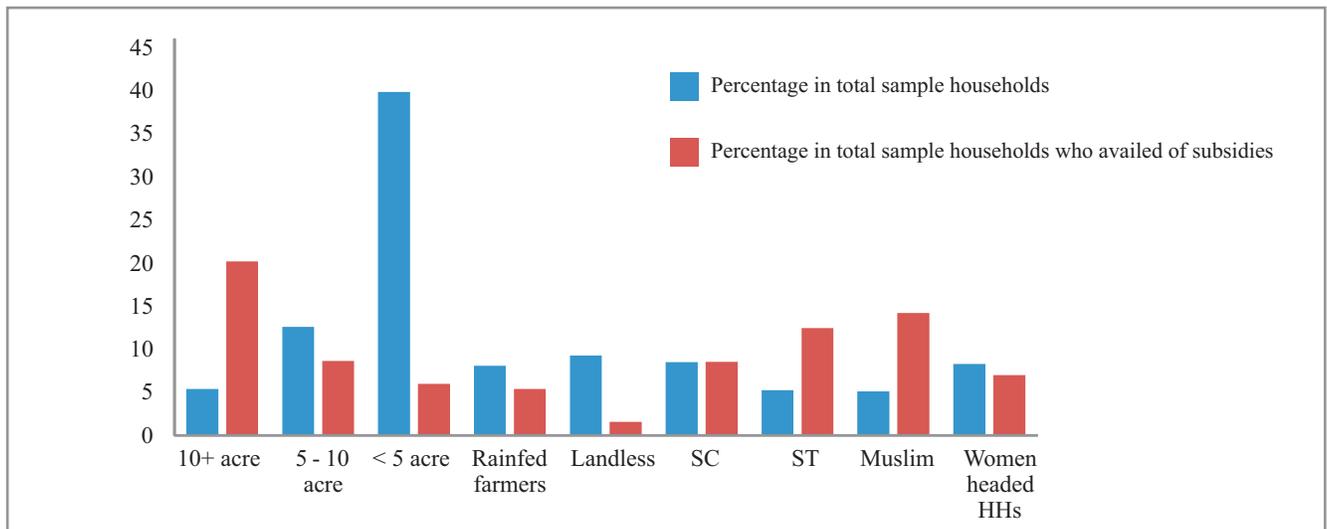
Figure 1 Survey of 1445 farmers: Awareness and adoption of improved practices



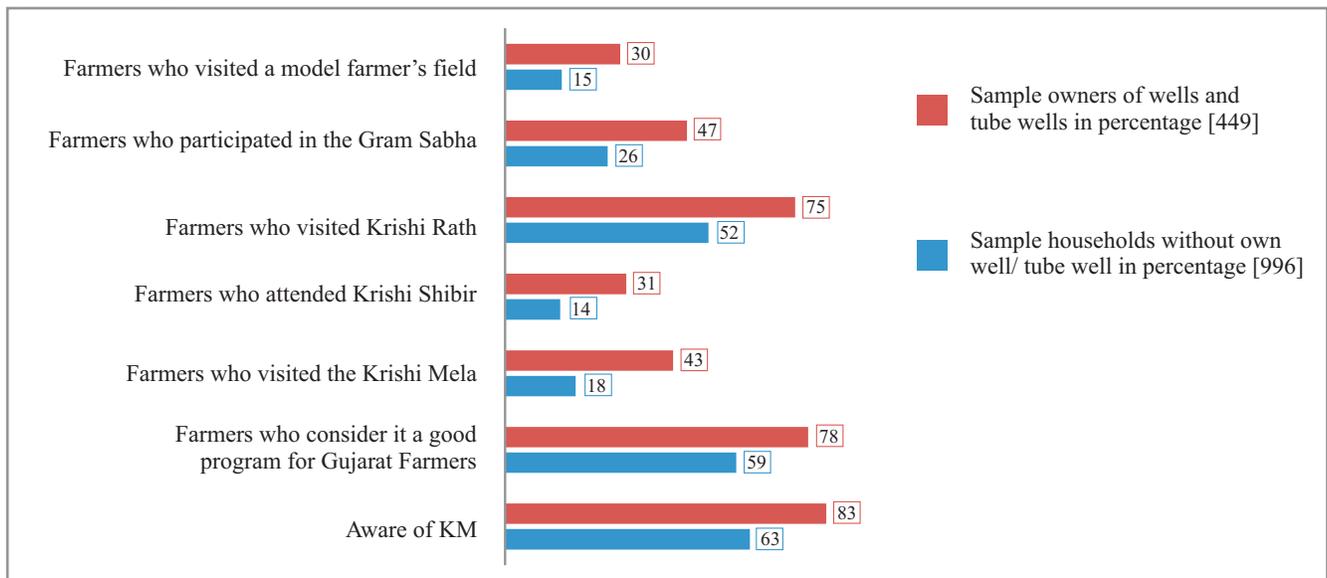
**Figure 2 Government subsidy programs: Awareness versus availing**



**Figure 3 Targeting of government subsidies under *Krishi Mahotsav***



**Figure 4 Participation rates of well owners and non-well owners in *Krishi Mahotsav***



improved marketing practices, both Muslim and large farmers were the most enthusiastic adopters of new ideas.

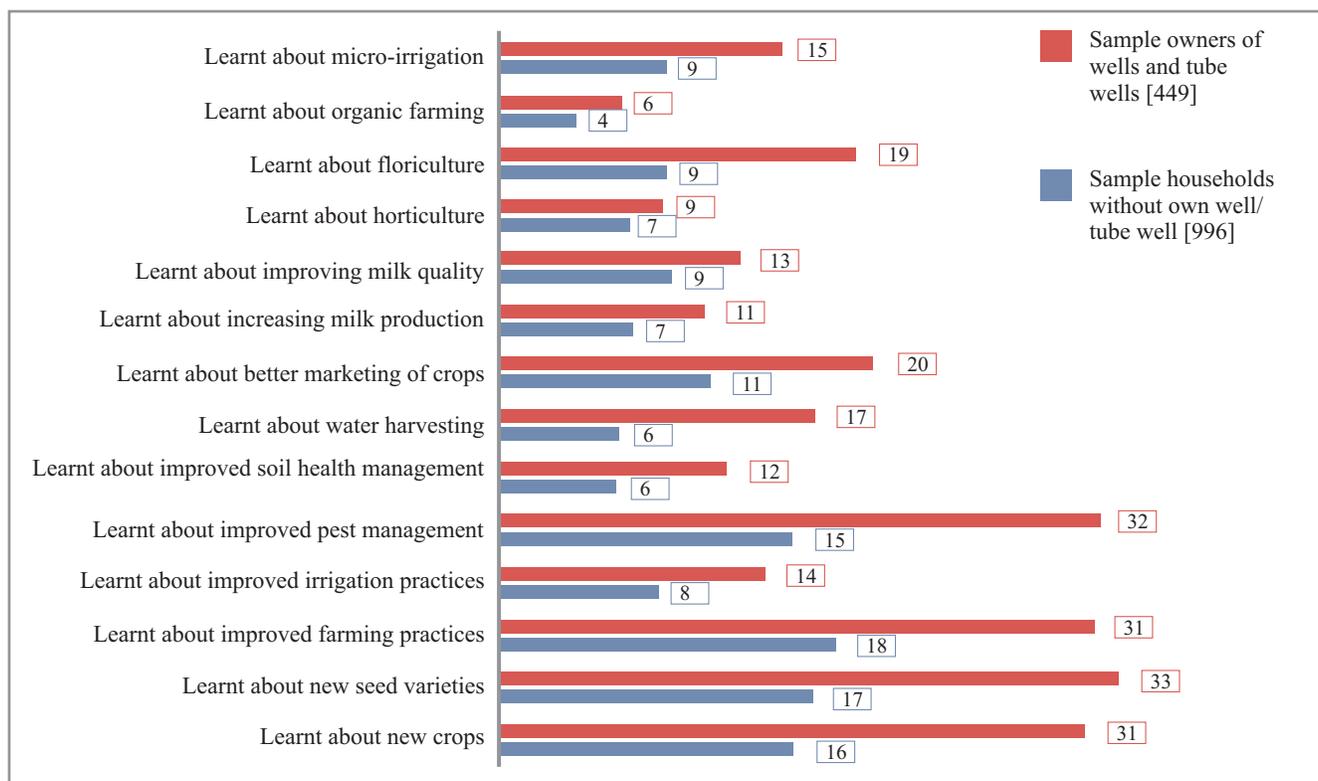
There is also a similarly strong scale bias in awareness and availing of government subsidies under *Krishi Mahotsav*. Overall, some 30 percent of the sample farmers were aware about government subsidy schemes; but only 11 percent availed of subsidies (Figure 2). Large farmers, Muslim farmers and ST households in our sample had the highest awareness and derived the maximum benefit from government subsidy programs (Figure 2 and 3). The proportion of sample households in these categories who benefited from subsidy programs was larger than their proportion in the sample. Landless families, small and marginal farmers, rainfed farmers, SC and women headed households benefited the least. Small and marginal farmers, for example, were 35 percent of the total sample but only 5 percent of the sample households who availed of subsidies. Muslim and large farmer households in contrast were less than 5 percent of the sample each; but were respectively 14 and 19 percent of sample households who benefited from government subsidy schemes (Figure 3).

#### OWNERSHIP OF WELLS AS KEY DETERMINANT OF PARTICIPATION

Ownership of well/ tube well was another defining aspect of participation in *Krishi Mahotsav*. Land less households (131) and rainfed farm households (112) showed the least

participation in *Krishi Mahotsav*. This was quite understandable. However, even those 289 farm households who irrigated from canals and other local sources participated in *Krishi Mahotsav* activities significantly less than well owners (449 sample households) and those households who did not have their own wells (500 sample households) but were able to purchase well irrigation service from well/ tube well owners nearby. In general, ownership of a well/ tube well had a strong impact on the participation of a household in *Krishi Mahotsav* and benefiting from it. Figure 4 shows that significantly larger proportion of well/ tube well owners participated in various *Krishi Mahotsav* activities compared to the rest of the sample households as a whole. Interestingly, the difference between the two groups on awareness about *Krishi Mahotsav* and ‘it’s being a good program’ was much smaller than in the actual rates of participation in various activities. Nearly twice the proportion of well owners in our sample participated in *Krishi Mahotsav* activities compared to non-well owners. This suggests either or both of the following two things. First, owners of wells/ tube wells take their farming more seriously compared to farmers without ‘on-farm water control’ that wells/ tube wells offer. Second, *Krishi Mahotsav* has had little or nothing to offer to rainfed farmers. Moreover, because the Irrigation Department - responsible for managing major and medium irrigation systems - is not included in *Krishi Mahotsav*, canal

Figure 5 Percentage of well owners and non-well owners who claimed useful learning from *Krishi Mahotsav*



irrigators miss out on the opportunity to interact with a key service provider.

Consequent to such patterns of participation, the well owners learnt more from *Krishi Mahotsav* than the non-well owners as evident in Figure 5. By far the majority of sample farmers owning wells and tube wells reported improved awareness about practices that offered direct benefit to them without drastic changes in their existing farming system - such as the use of new crops, new seed varieties, improved farming and pest management practices. In contrast, very small proportion of well owners as well as non-well owners learnt about organic farming, soil health management, water harvesting, improving milk production and milk quality.

Much has been made about schemes such as the soil health card and kisan credit card and how these are helping to change the way farming is done in Gujarat. Our sample survey showed that the penetration of soil health card and kisan credit card is limited. Just around 10 percent of the 1445 farmers we sampled had these cards. Most farmers who had these cards had not used it even once. The lukewarm response of farmers to soil health cards was evident in our qualitative discussions with farmers. However, the penetration of agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry kits was surprisingly high in our sample. Nearly a quarter of our sample households received at least one of the three kits at least

once. This was higher than we expected since every village is supposed to have only 15 recipients of the kits of the three kinds.

A massive scale bias is evident in accessing these schemes. Large and medium farmers have more than their fair share of everything. Most large and medium farmers have soil health cards and kisan credit cards. Most also received the agriculture kit. The rainfed and the tribal farmers were the worst off in all the five schemes (Figure 6).

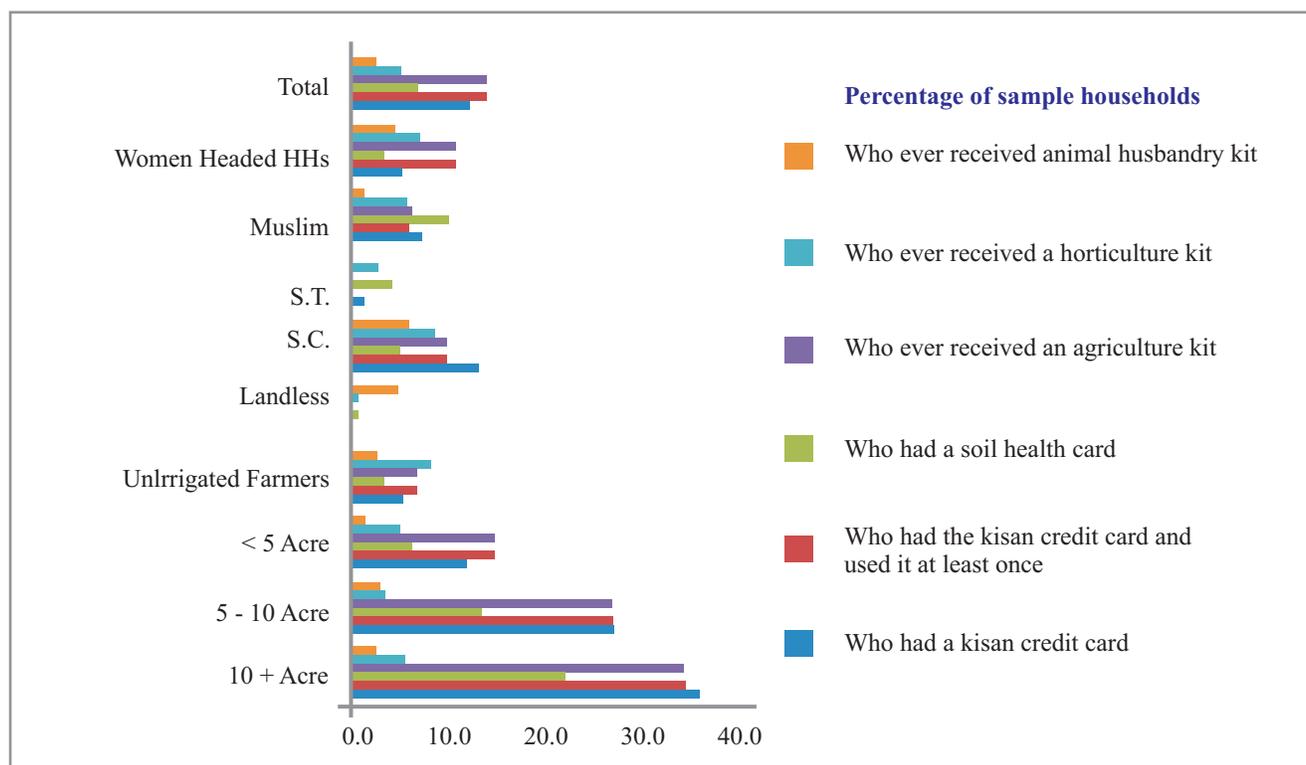
**AWARENESS IMPACT OF AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITIES**

Gujarat’s four agricultural universities with campuses at Anand, Navsari, Junagadh and Dantiwada are key players in *Krishi Mahotsav*. Each of these has several districts as its zone of influence as follows (Table 3).

**Table 3 Districts in the zone of influence of agricultural universities**

Anand	Panchmahal, Vadodara, Ahmedabad, Anand, Kheda
Dantiwada	Gandhinagar, Mehsana, Patan, Banaskantha, Sabarkantha
Navsari	Valsad, Narmada, Bharuch, Surat, Navsari, Tapi, Dangs
Junagadh	Rajkot, Surendranagar, Amreli, Kachchh, Bhavnagar, Junagadh, Porbandar, Jamnagar

**Figure 6 Scale bias in access to government schemes**



Since our survey covered villages from each of these districts, we are able to make an indirect assessment of *Krishi Mahotsav's* impact on awareness building in the zone of influence of each agricultural university. The differences in awareness levels cannot be wholly attributed to the respective university; therefore causality cannot be implied since many other factors come into play. Yet, we had not expected such large differences in the awareness impact of *Krishi Mahotsav* in the zones of influence of the four universities. Navsari University's zone of influence includes tribal areas where awareness levels are expected to be low. Moreover, the presence of sugar co-operatives which provide total solutions to sugarcane farmers' problems also affects farmers' need for and receptivity to extension. In contrast, the Anand University has in its zone of influence highly dynamic and affluent farming areas. Figure 7 captures the awareness levels of farmers along 9 key aspects of crop and dairy farming in the four university zones.

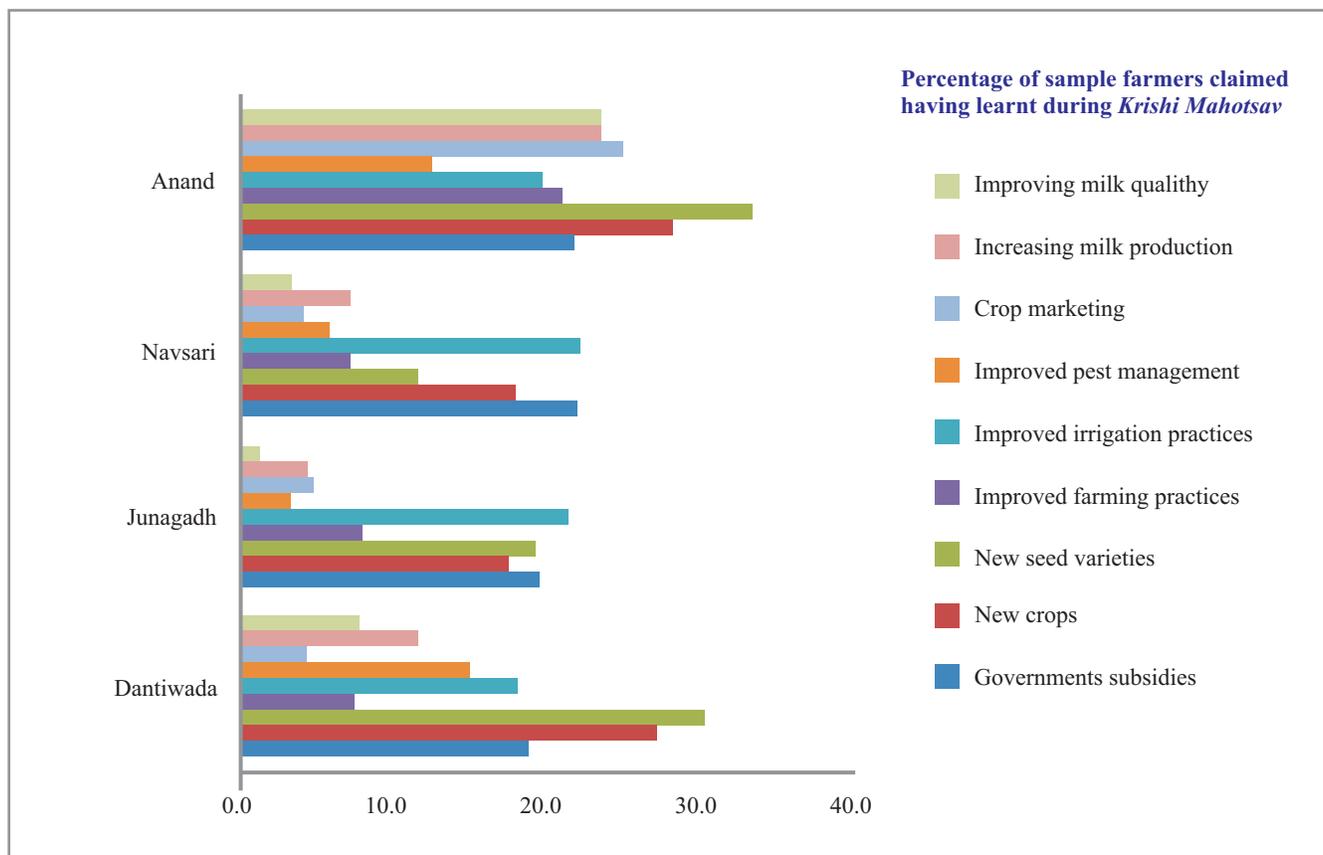
The farmers we sampled under the Anand Agricultural University gained the most from *Krishi Mahotsav* in terms of information and awareness along most of the 9 key aspects covered. Those under Navsari gained the least. Farmers everywhere were most keen to learn about new

seed varieties and new crops; on these two, Dantiwada farmers were nearly as good as those under the Anand University. Farmers under Junagadh and Dantiwada, two water stressed regions, should have been more aware about improved irrigation practices; but it was in water-abundant Navsari zone that farmers were more aware about water management. Awareness about improving milk production and quality - central to Gujarat's agricultural growth - was uniformly low except in the Anand zone.

**QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK FROM FARMERS AND OFFICIALS**

Most farmers interviewed perceived the *Krishi Mahotsav* as a 'good thing', although they found it hard to specify its verifiable benefits and impact. Many would like guidance tailor-made to their specific context. Some farmers and many officials would like to reduce the periodicity of the *Krishi Mahotsav* to enhance its impact. Many scientists and officials felt the *Krishi Mahotsav* bridged the gulf between farmer and scientist, benefitting both in various ways. However, some scientists and officials felt that the succession of annual *Krishi Mahotsavs* had led to over-exposure and fatigue among officials and farmers, resulting in waning farmer interest

**Figure 7 Awareness impact in the zones of influence of agricultural universities**



and dwindling participation. Some officials suggested more frequent *Krishi Shibirs* in place of the present format of *Krishi Mahotsav*. Others, who felt that May - the hottest month of the year in which everyone is busy attending weddings - is not the best time for *Krishi Mahotsav* and suggested a redesigned *Krishi Mahotsav* in two parts: summer and winter.

## CONCLUSION

In sum, our survey of 1445 farmers around Gujarat tells us that: [a] 69 percent of farmers we interviewed were aware of *Krishi Mahotsav* and 65 percent considered *Krishi Mahotsav* to be a 'good' initiative even though they are not able to specify its verifiable benefits; [b] over 40 percent of the respondents said they came into direct personal contact with government officials or scientists or input suppliers; [c] *Krishi Mahotsav* has done better in generating awareness about improved practices than in promoting their adoption; [d] large land owners and Muslim farmers have participated and benefited the most from *Krishi Mahotsav* while rainfed, landless, ST and SC farmers, and women headed farming households have neither participated nor benefited from the initiative; [e] owners of wells and tube wells are far more proactive in participating in *Krishi Mahotsav* compared to farmers who depend on canal irrigation and other sources of irrigation, as well as rainfed farmers. *Krishi Mahotsav* also has much more to offer to farmers with on-farm water control than to rainfed farmers; [f] soil health cards and kisan credit cards have little penetration; and we found strong scale-bias in access to free input kits.

While awareness impact is high, adoption impact is low. Low adoption rates should not be surprising. Extension scholars like Everett Rogers (2003) have established through decades of research that new ideas are first taken up by 'innovators' and a small minority of 'early adopters'. It is then mostly through peer communication and opinion leaders that established new practices attract an 'early majority' to adopt. There is still a 'late majority' who follow the suit much later when their dominant 'propensity to resist' every new idea is overcome by a strengthening 'propensity to adopt', again through peer communication and opinion leaders. And even after an innovation becomes an established practice for long, there still remains a small minority of 'laggards' who refuse to change their old ways. In this light, the low rate of adoption of new ideas and practices from *Krishi Mahotsav* at 2-11 percent is not hard to explain.

The gold standard in good extension work is to identify innovators and give them recognition and publicity. This is one part that *Krishi Mahotsav* did well. It mobilized

agricultural administration and universities in tracking down innovative farmers in every taluka, gave away awards to them in well attended public meetings, published their achievements in souvenirs and brochures, and encouraged other farmers to visit their fields and understand their innovations. It is unfortunate, though not hard to understand, that very few of these innovative farmers are from scheduled castes or tribes or from small and marginal farmer or rainfed categories.

In an era when government agricultural extension has become defunct, agriculture teaching and research have got further removed from the farmer, and government support to agriculture has reduced mostly to subsidies and giveaways, Gujarat's *Krishi Mahotsav* has treaded a new path. Gujarat was never known for its agrarian dynamism. Yet, since 2000, Gujarat has grown its agricultural economy at an uncommonly high growth rate of over 9 percent/year. Many factors explain this remarkable growth story (Shah et al 2011). If *Krishi Mahotsav* has played even some minor role in it, the experiment must be considered worthwhile for emulation by other states.

This is especially because *Krishi Mahotsav* costs so little in real terms. Budgetary allocation for it has seldom exceeded Rs. 100 crore per year. The resource it intensively uses - the staff and students of Agricultural Universities, government departments, APMCs, co-operatives - could not possibly have better alternate use than reaching out to farmers in large numbers. Indeed, one might argue that never were agricultural scientists in Gujarat closer to the farming community than they are today, thanks to *Krishi Mahotsav*. Running around in villages in scorching heat of May in Gujarat, setting aside all routine work, is naturally not pleasurable. Yet, most scientists and officials we interviewed conveyed the sense of pride, fulfillment and self-actualization they experienced by participating in *Krishi Mahotsav*. Replacing the existing format by more frequent *Krishi Shibirs* or undertaking *Krishi Mahotsav* in two equal parts during summer and winter were among the suggestions from scientists and officials.

*Krishi Mahotsav* also marks a shift from 'propitiative' to 'proactive' governance of the agricultural economy. By giving away doles and subsidies, a propitiative strategy keeps a restive peasantry quiet but deepens their fatalism and dependency. A proactive strategy actively supports innovation, change and progress. Given the current predicament of India's small-holder dominated agricultural economy, there is need for both but there is also need to strike a balance between the two. In many states, the emphasis is wholly or mostly on propitiative



approaches driven by vote-bank politics. Gujarat's agricultural strategy has tilted increasingly towards proactive governance. *Krishi Mahotsav* is a good example of this shift.

The challenge for *Krishi Mahotsav* then is of deepening the osmotic processes through which diffusion of innovative ideas and farming practices becomes faster to reach the benefits of progress to the poor. One strident

criticism of the *Krishi Mahotsav* from farmers was that its extension messages were too generic and not location/ farmer specific. This may require a change in *Krishi Mahotsav's* 'Hanuman strategy'<sup>4</sup> of inundating the farming community with progressive ideas and technologies and leaving it to each farmer to find what is useful to him. A more differentiated approach based on the needs, risk and resource profile of different sub-groups of the farming community may arguably produce superior outcomes. *Krishi Mahotsav* is also too focused on the well owner segment of Gujarat's farming communities; it offers little to dry land farmers and farmers dependent on canal irrigation. Including the Irrigation

Department in *Krishi Mahotsav* would improve the interface between irrigation agencies and farmers. The campaign should also focus some attention on the opportunities for improving rainfed farming. There is need for resolute effort to contain and reduce the scale-bias in allocation of benefits through a special thrust to reach out to the landless tenants, women headed farm households and rainfed farmers.

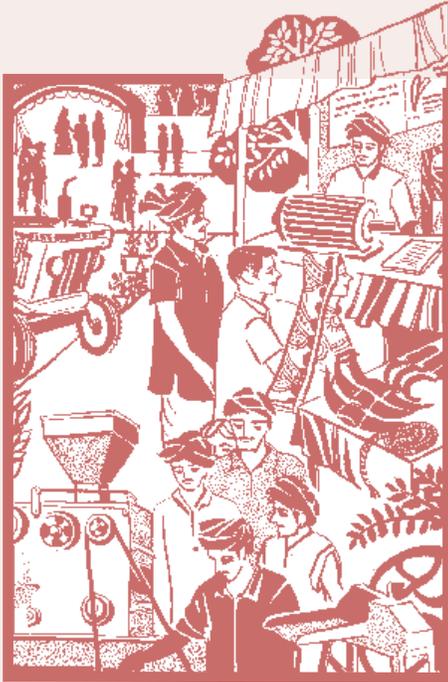
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<sup>4</sup>In the Hindu epic *Ramayana*, when Lakshman was on death bed fatally injured in the epic war, Hanuman, the monkey God was tasked to procure a life saving herb from the Himalayas. When he failed to identify the required herb, Hanuman returned with an entire the hillock for the doctor to find what he needed.



## About the IWMI-Tata Program and Water Policy Highlights

The IWMI-Tata Water Policy Program (ITP) was launched in 2000 as a co-equal partnership between the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Colombo and Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT), Mumbai. The program presents new perspectives and practical solutions derived from the wealth of research done in India on water resource management. Its objective is to help policy makers at the central, state and local levels address their water challenges – in areas such as sustainable groundwater management, water scarcity, and rural poverty – by translating research findings into practical policy recommendations. Through this program, IWMI collaborates with a range of partners across India to identify, analyze and document relevant water-management approaches and current practices. These practices are assessed and synthesized for maximum policy impact in the series on Water Policy Highlights and IWMI-Tata Comments.

Water Policy Highlights are pre-publication discussion papers developed primarily as the basis for discussion during ITP's Annual Partners' Meet. The research underlying these Highlights was funded with support from IWMI, Colombo and SRTT, Mumbai. However, the Highlights are not externally peer-reviewed and the views expressed are of the author/s alone and not of ITP or either of its funding partners.

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