



AERC CELEBRATES ITS DIAMOND JUBILEE



Glorious Years
Model for Rural Development
Excellence in Research and Policy

Vol.7
Issue- 7
July 2021

Agricultural Production and Market Outlook

The Rising Agriculture....

AERC

Model for Rural Development
Excellence in Research and Policy

Celebrating Diamond Jubilee (1961-2021)-

Agro-Economic Research Centre (AERC) is celebrating Diamond Jubilee (1961-2021) of its establishment at the Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India, New Delhi. During these years, the Centre has emerged as a strong policy feedback centre of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India due to hard work and strong commitment of the staff in the Centre. The focus of research effort in the initial stage was on comprehensive village surveys and resurveys in order to understand the process and direction of change at the village level. Subsequently, the emphasis of research has shifted to problem oriented studies. Now, the focus is on both the types of studies. The studies have come out with useful findings and policy implications for agricultural and rural development of the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan.

While celebrating the diamond jubilee, AERC remembers with gratitude, late Shri H. M. Patel, I.C.S. (retd.) and former Finance Minister, Government of India, who always believed that agriculture and rural development should receive a very high priority in our development efforts and who was mainly instrumental in establishing this Agro Centre at this University. He took keen interest in the activities of the Centre and, as a member of its Governing Body (1961-1993), always encouraged it to conduct studies on an independent and objective basis.



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Publisher
Agro-Economic Research Centre
Sardar Patel University
Vallabh Vidyanagar 388120
Anand, Gujarat

Email : aerc@spuvvn.edu
director.aerc@gmail.com

Web : http://www.spuvvn.edu/academics/academic_centres/agro_economic_centre/

Agro-Economic Research Centre

Genesis of AERC

The information gap pertaining to the agricultural economy of our country, which was keenly felt while drawing up schemes of agricultural development for the First Five Years Plan, established the policy need to promote institutions regularly and exclusively devoted to agricultural economic research in different parts of the country. Consequently, the Government of India sponsored and undertook to finance, wholly or substantially many research institutions; the AER Centres also owe their existence to the above policy. The year 1954 was a landmark in the history of agricultural economics in India as in that year the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Government of India, established 4 AERCs, one each at Delhi, Pune, Chennai and Santiniketan. These Centres were headed by distinguished economist like the late Prof. D. R. Gadgil, Professor V.K.R.V Rao and Professor Balkrishna. Encouraged by the initial success of this programme, the Government of India decided to cover many more regions

Details of 15 AERCs/Us in India

| Location | Institution where located | Est. in | Area of coverage |
|--------------------|--|-------------|--|
| Delhi | Delhi University | 1954 | Delhi, Haryana, Uttarakhand |
| Chennai | Madras University | 1954 | Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Pondicherry, Laksh'p |
| Pune | GIPE, Pune | 1954 | Maharashtra, Karnataka, Daman & Diu |
| Shantiniketan | Visva-Bharati University | 1954 | WB, Sikkim, Andaman & Nicobar Islands |
| Jabalpur | J.N. Krishi Vishwa Vidyalaya | 1958 | Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh |
| Jorhat | Assam Agricultural University | 1960 | Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram. |
| Vallabh Vidyanagar | Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Anand, Gujarat | 1961 | Gujarat, Rajasthan, Dadra and Nagar Haveli/ All India |
| Allahabad | Allahabad University | 1963 | Uttar Pradesh |
| Waltair | Andhra University | 1967 | Andhra Pradesh, Orissa. |
| Shimla | Himachal Pradesh University | 1972 | Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir |
| Bhagalpur | Tilka Manihi Bhagalpur | 1996 | Bihar, Jharkhand |
| Ludhiana | Punjab Agricultural University | 1996 | Punjab |
| Delhi | Institute of Economic Growth | 1961 | All-India |
| Ahmadabad | IIM, Ahmedabad | 1965 | All-India |
| Bangalore | ISEC, Bangalore | 1972 | All-India |

Establishing of AERC, Vallabh Vidyanagar



AERC, SPU, Vallabh Vidyanagar had the unique advantage of being located in an educational township which was primarily established to serve the cause of rural society. It was late Shri Vallabhbhai Patel, the first- Deputy Prime Minister of independent India, who had inspired two veterans – Shri Bhailalbhai Patel and Shri Bhikhabhai

Patel – to promote education for serving the village people. Their pioneering efforts led to the creation of an educational township known as Vallabh Vidyanagar (1946).

of the country by such Centres. As a matter of policy, these Centres have been attached to Universities or to Agricultural colleges, so as to ensure on one hand, close acquaintance and hence deeper understanding of the problems of the regions under the jurisdiction of the Centres and independence and objectivity in the conduct and reporting of finding of researches, on the others. Two more centres were established in 1958, one at Jorhat (Assam) and another at Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh). In the year 1961, this AERC was established with area coverage of states of Gujarat and Rajasthan, Dadra and Nagar Haveli (UTs). In the later years, seven more such centres/units were established in different states of India (as given in table below). The AERCs/Us function as separate departments under the administrative and functional control of the university / institute where these are located. These centres are totally financed by Government of India through grant-in-aid.

Three important events preceded the establishment of AERC, SPU, VVN. First, the Sardar Patel University (known as Sardar Vallabhbhai Vidyapeeth in the initial years) was established in 1955 with a mission to serve the cause of rural transformation. Second, the Post Graduate Department of Economics, established in 1958, had also accepted agriculture and rural development as thrust areas for its teaching and research programme. Third, and perhaps very crucial, late Shri H. M. Patel, one of the ablest ICS officers of our country, decided to settle in Vallabh Vidyanagar in 1959. Putting aside many alluring assignments which he could have easily obtained, he decided to serve the cause of rural development which was so close to his heart. These three developments provided an ideal setting for establishing AERC, VVN. It can be regarded as one of the most appropriate and satisfying activities to be undertaken in this township.

AERC VVN story began like this. Prof D. G. Karve, Prof. D. R. Gadgil and Dr S. R. Sen had been invited by Shri H. M. Patel to visit this campus when they came to Baroda in 1959 for attending the Annual Conference of the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics. It was during this visit to Vallabh Vidyanagar and to a nearby village (Kavitha) that the idea of establishing an institute for rural studies in this campus was mooted. It was late Shri H. M. Patel who, with his vision and foresight, persuaded the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India to establish such a Centre at Vallabh Vidyanagar in order to strengthen the teaching and research activities in economics in the university campus. He always gave prime importance on building value based academic institutions in Vallabh Vidyanagar.

When H. M. Patel asked Prof. M. L. Dantwala to suggest a suitable person to head the Centre, he had suggested the name of Dr. V. S. Vyas. AERC, VVN was singularly fortunate to have Dr. V. S. Vyas as its founder director. He was picked up at the young age of 30. Dr. Vyas will always be remembered for the admirable leadership that he provided with his robust positive outlook, his habit of hard work and his keen desire to strive for excellence. Not only did Dr. Vyas fully enjoy the excitement and euphoria of building a new institution, he also encouraged his young team to participate in this worthy endeavor. In 1970, the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Ministry of

Agriculture, GOI had entrusted the Comprehensive Scheme to Study Cost of Cultivation of Principal Crops in Gujarat (CCS) to the Sardar Patel University. As directed by the University, AERC, VVN has organized this work from its establishment at Sardar Patel University in 1971 to till October 2019.

Achievements of AERC, Vallabh Vidyanagar

The AERC, SPU, Vallabh Vidyanagar has contributed to major research studies in agricultural economy of India. Over the past six decades, Centre has completed 205 problem-oriented studies, 21 village surveys and 6 village resurveys. Most of these research projects have been taken up by Centre on the recommendation of the Government of India and State Governments of Gujarat and Rajasthan. Work done was notably in the field of Farm Business Survey, Irrigation, Watershed Management, Village Surveys, Rural Credit, Agricultural Tenancy, Co-operation, Droughts and Famines, Crop Insurance, Agricultural Marketing, Agricultural Exports, Poverty Alleviation, Genetic Crops, Water Saving Technologies and impact analysis of Government Schemes. Besides the research projects entrusted by the Central and the State governments, AERC has also undertaken research studies as requested by the NABARD, NDDB, NDRI, IASRI, DES (GOG), SPRRI, VMDDP and other national Institutions. Centre

| Sr. No. | Particulars | Guj | Raj. | Guj & Raj | All India | Total |
|---------|--|-----|------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| A | Research Studies (for MOA, GOI; Planning Commission, GOI; Govt of Gujarat; NDDB, Anand; IASRI, New Delhi, etc) | 125 | 50 | 08 | 21 | 204 |
| B | Village Benchmarks Survey | 11 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| C | Village Resurvey | 04 | 02 | 0 | 0 | 06 |
| | Total | 140 | 62 | 08 | 21 | 231 |

has emerged as a leading Centre of its kind in the country and has to its credit several noteworthy achievements which may be mentioned here:

Recent Major Steps taken for reinvesting Centre

- AERC Foundation Day Lecture Series
- H.M. Patel Memorial Lecture Series organized
- IWMI-AERC Seminar Series
- Invited Lecture/Seminar Series
- Faculty Seminar Series
- Working Papers published
- Market Outlook
- Collaborative Research/Inter-disciplinary research
- Systematic Publication of Annual Report
- Dr. V. S. Vyas Felicitation Prize for best research report
- Steps taken in support of Farmers

Usefulness of AERC Reports in Policy Formulation

- AERC has been providing independent and objective feedback to the GOI for several decades. It has been serving as its eyes and ears.
- Government of Gujarat has been regularly inviting representatives of Centre for their meetings to discuss the issues relating to recommendation of MSP.
- AERC has also represented on a number high level

expert committees constituted by the GOG (Chairman of Agriculture Commission; Executive Member of Narmada Planning Group). Such an interface with the government, nurtured through productive linkages, proved to be of great mutual benefit.

- Evaluation and impact study of various government schemes conducted by AERC providing grass root feedback to the Ministry (for positive alternation/modification in scheme)
- Our feedback on queries raised in the discussion in lower house of Parliament, i.e. 'Loksabha' which help MOA in preparing its reply.
- Findings on Bt Cotton study helped to build pressure on MNCs to reduce the seed cost almost by half.
- Two-page note/policy brief on Soil Health card scheme in Gujarat submitted to ESA, MOA, GOI was considered before replicating this programme at all India level.
- Government of Gujarat has asked this Centre to provide necessary support for upgrading State supported Cost of Cultivation Scheme
- Supported the Department of Agriculture, GOG in conducting Pilot Project on Crop Cutting Experiments for IASRI, New Delhi

Support provided to Selected Farmers:

- Research and Field staff posted in selected villages for data collection work also works as consultant to farmer
- Centre has prepared and distributed booklet on Govt. Schemes to the farmers in the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan
- Centre has printed and circulated 10,000 leaflet on 'How to take Soil and Water Sample' to increase awareness of farmers
- Arranged farmers meeting with Agriculture /Horticulture Officer and benefited them with various schemes (e.g. 121 applications submitted with support of our fieldsmen)
- Centre has conducted soil test of 480 sample farmers and provided SHC
- Supporting selected farmers' visit to 'Krishi Mela' at different places to provide them exposure to new technology and implements
- Centre has been attempting to provide the latest information to farmers and Institutions through monthly magazine 'Market Outlook'
- Centre also provide the exposure to successful cases (e.g. bee keeping, poly house, etc.)
- Centre has provided support to farmer members of The Umreth Taluka Kisan Club Farmers' Cooperative Society Ltd., Umreth- facilitating area increase under for organic farming (information, certification, etc).
- This Centre was not perceived as a routine government scheme requiring only submission of four to five reports to the Government of India. AERC, VVN had built up a very high reputation for organizing seminars and conferences. Total 36 Seminars, conferences and workshops were organized (jointly with Department of Economics).
- Since inception, Centre has been working in close collaboration with the Post-graduate Department of Economics of our University and so far it has helped/supported more than 40 scholars to successfully complete their Ph. D. work in agricultural economics. At present 14 Ph. D. students are registered with AERC CCS faculty
- Centre has received appreciation letter from Madam Ms. Sangeeta Verma, Economic and Statistical Adviser, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India for significant work undertaken.



Collaborations for research with

- ICAR Directorate of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Anand, Gujarat
- International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Colombo-Anand.
- Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Dr. V.K.R.V Rao Road, Nagarbhavi, Bengaluru-560 072 (Karnataka).
- National Sample Survey Organization, Ahmedabad Regional Office, Ahmedabad
- ICAR-National Dairy Research Institute, Karnal (Haryana)
- ICAR- Indian Agricultural Statistical Research Institute, New Delhi.
- Mahatma Phule Krishi Vidyapeeth, Rahuri, Maharashtra (CS Scheme)
- Centres for International Projects Trust (as research partner/India Office of the Columbia Water Center, New York, New Delhi)
- M.P. Institute of Social Science Research, Ujjain (PDF Student)
- Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Gujarat Vidyanpith, Kheda

Inter disciplinary Collaborations

- Post Graduate Department of Economics, SPU (Project, PhD.)
- Department of MBA, SPU, VVN (Ph.D. Course work);
- Department of Statistics, SPU, VVN (student thesis)
- Department of Physics (Solar study- 2 students)

Collaborations for research with -Gujarat:

- The Umreth Taluka Kisan Club Farmers' Cooperative Society Ltd., Umreth- for organic farming study
- Directorate of Agriculture, Government of Gujarat
- Department of Agricultural Economics, Anand Agricultural University (AAU), Anand
- International Agribusiness Management Institute, AAU, Anand
- Sardar Patel Renewable Energy Research Institute, VVN
- Irrigation Department, Petlad, Govt. of Gujarat
- Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Gujarat,

Book Post

To,

From:

DOI : 02-08-2021

Agro-Economic Research Centre

For the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan

(Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India)

H.M. Patel Institute of Rural Development,

Opp. Nanadalaya Temple, Post Box No. 24,

Sardar Patel University

Vallabh Vidyanagar 388120, Anand, Gujarat

Ph.No. +91-2692-230106, 230799, Fax- +91-2692-233106

E-mail : director.aerc@gmail.com

Website: www.aercspu.ac.in

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