

# Social learning online v/s in-person: Experimental Evidence from Indian Farmers

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## Research Questions

1. What do farmers learn from their online-peers?
    - What if these online peers are exogenously assigned across space?
  2. What if these online peers are invited to meet in-person?
- Proposed mechanism:**
- Changes in beliefs about learning from online peers (measured by likelihood of discussing agriculture information with unknown farmers)

## Relevant literature and Contribution

- Social Learning in Agriculture:**
- Reflected in input use (seed variety, land use) <sup>1</sup>
  - **Contribution:** Measuring adoption and learning of smartphone agriculture through in-person vs virtual ties

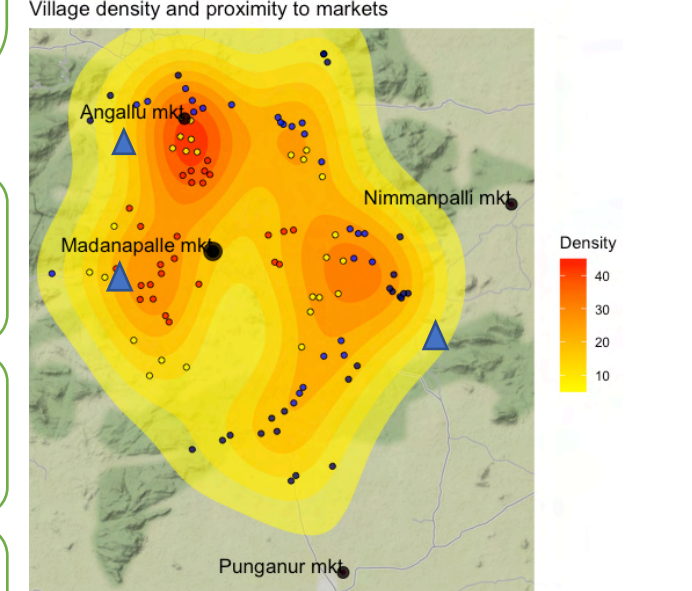
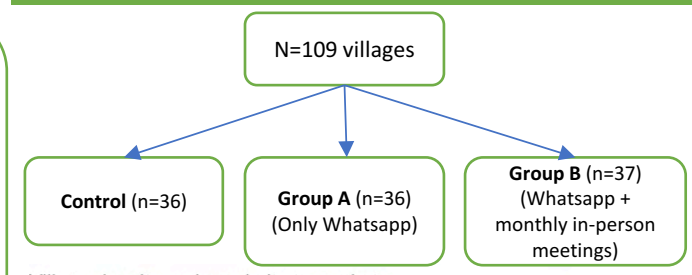
- Diffusion:**
- Injection points<sup>2</sup>, early v/s late adopters<sup>3</sup>, strength of ties<sup>4</sup>
  - **Contribution:** Diffusion through virtual platforms to increase scalability of social learning

- Peer Effects:**
- Endogenous network formation<sup>5</sup>, dynamic peer effects<sup>6</sup>
  - **Contribution:** Observable links and information exchange between peers on a virtual platform

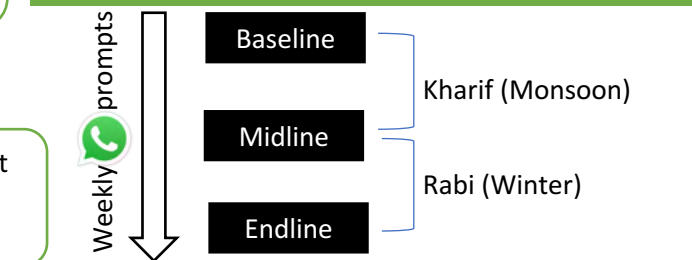
## Data

1. Baseline, Midline and Endline every 3 months (based on start and end of crop cycles)
2. Weekly Whatsapp data measuring respondent participation

## Treatment Assignment



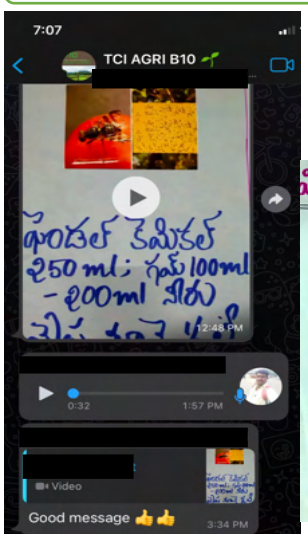
## Project Timeline



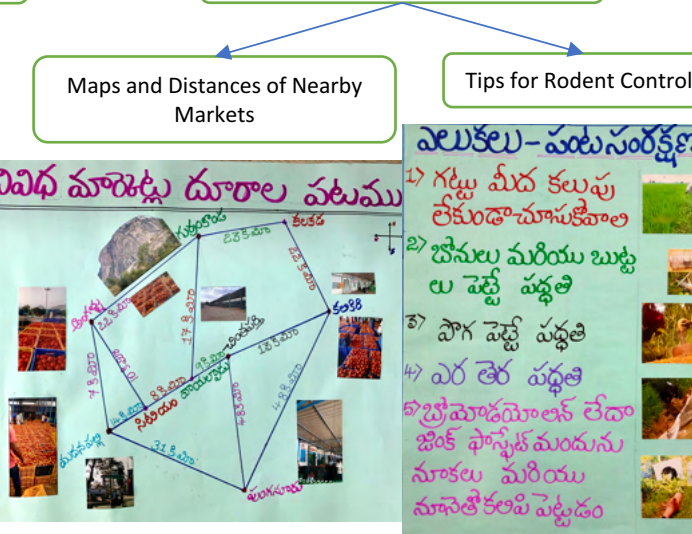
## Treatment Intervention

1. **Group A (Only Whatsapp):**
    - Weekly moderation on groups
    - participation graded by reading/ responding/initiating conversation
  2. **Group B (Whatsapp + In-person lunches):**
    - Weekly moderation on groups
    - participation graded by reading/ responding/initiating conversation
    - Monthly in-person lunches connecting farmers from 3-4 villages from distant regions
- GOAL:** To test difference in technology adoption and agriculture practices of farmers exogenously connected via WA vs farmers who also meet in-person vs control

## Examples of Farmer Chats



## Examples of Information Posters



## Citations

1. [Foster and Rosenzweig, 1995] [Bandiera and Rasul, 2006] [Conley and Udry, 2001] [Munshi, 2004]
2. [Banerjee et al., 2013] [Beaman and Dillon, 2018] [BenYishay and Mobarak, 2019] [Kondylis et al., 2017] [Cai et al., 2015]
3. [Beaman et al., 2018] [Bandiera and Rasul, 2006]
4. [Granovetter, 1973] [Nourani, 2016] [Murphy et al., 2019]
5. [Manski, 1993] [Besley and Case, 1993] [Fernando, 2019]
6. [Bandiera and Rasul, 2006] [Comola and Prina, 2015]