



Innovative Methods and Metrics for
Agriculture and Nutrition Actions

Women's Empowerment in Nutrition Index(WENI) *Measuring nutritional empowerment to better link agriculture to nutrition*

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June 23, 2016
Addis Ababa

Funded by:



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HYGIENE
& TROPICAL
MEDICINE



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Research on Agriculture and Health

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with

Krushna Ranaware, Ankita Mondal, Udayan Rathore, Nirali Bakhla, among others

Motivation

- Empowerment is domain specific
 - Focus on the domain of nutrition
 - (How) does empowerment in agriculture translate into improved nutritional status?
- Groups whose link with agriculture is indirect (e.g., landless in rural areas, coastal communities)
- Focus on women, not (just) children

Research Objective

- Develop a Women's Empowerment in Nutrition Index (WENI) that reflects nutritional empowerment across agrarian contexts in South Asia
 - Bangladesh and India (Odisha and Bihar)
 - Rural context, for now
- Examine its relationship to WEAI

Empowerment

- Nutritional empowerment: the capacity for a woman, and not *just* her children, to be well fed and healthy; to have a meaningful say in household nutritional practices; and to receive support in implementing them.
 - Our starting point is Kabeer's (1999) conceptualization of empowerment: resources, agency, and achievements

Steps

- Formative research
 - Review of literature
 - Participatory research (CBOT) and GDs to identify overlooked factors that may influence nutritional empowerment
 - Quantitative research to identify candidate components and sub-domains that matter.
- Generate WENI by incorporating findings from participatory research, literature, secondary data
- Collect quantitative and women's anthropometric data in order to validate WENI

Participatory Research

Three sites

- Northern Bangladesh
- Odisha, India
- Bihar, India (to come)

NGO partners

- Nijera Kori
- JJSS
- Agragamee
- PRADAN
- Anwasha
- Sambhav



Participatory Research: Factors influencing nutrition



Participatory Research: Nijera Kori in Bangladesh

- 5 days of research training of 14 Nijera Kori landless group members
- 10 members (2 were men) selected to interview people from surrounding communities for 7 days



Participatory Research: Odisha

- 4 days of research training of 24 community researchers
- Conducted around 160 interviews in 8 villages (Ganjam, Rayagada, Nayagarh, Kandhmal)
- Coastal community, tribal forest based livelihoods/slash and burn, landless lower caste groups prone to drought and cyclones, those with strong NGO mobilization.

Learnings

- Its still early; we haven't analyzed our data yet
- Potential implications for our understanding of empowerment.
 - Factors that influence extent of empowerment (education, NGO activity)
 - Contextual conditions that amplify and attenuate the effect of lack of empowerment on food and nutritional intake (poverty, domestic violence, indebtedness, norms and beliefs, social discrimination, agroclimatic factors)
 - Community notions of empowerment (public speaking, freedom of movement, fighting for what is due to them in the village).
 - Generally, challenges faced by women in addressing their food, nutritional and health needs.

Future work

- Complete participatory research in Bihar, analyze data
- Review literature and existing data to identify the domains
- Conceptualize, construct and validate WENI