

What women and men in farming households eat and where they get their food from: A preliminary analysis of household data from rural Andhra Pradesh, India



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Background

- In India, 43% of adults are employed in agriculture.
- Agricultural communities are at the greatest risk of having low-quality diets.
- To improve the diets of farming households, we need to understand where they obtain their food.

Objectives

- Describe dietary diversity of women and men in farming households in Andhra Pradesh, India.
- Quantify what proportion of their diet is from home production, markets, and other sources.

Methods

- **Study Population:** Farming households enrolled (n=2,964) in the **BLOOM Study** (Co-Benefits of Large-scale Organic Farming on Human Health), an ongoing randomised controlled evaluation of an agroecology programme in Andhra Pradesh, India.
- **Dietary Assessment:**
 - Baseline 24-hr dietary recall data collected during monsoon season (September to December 2022).
 - Participants reported the source of each food item (home production, market or other source).
 - Dietary diversity was calculated using the MDD-W, which ranged from 0 (lowest) to 10 (highest).

Key Takeaways

- Dietary diversity is low for farming households in South India.
- More than half of calories come from white rice.
- Reliance on market vs. home production varies across food groups.

Results

Figure 1. Histogram of individual dietary diversity scores among adult men and women in farming households in rural Andhra Pradesh (n=2,964, mean (SD) age 32 (7.7) for men and 25 (4.6) for women). Threshold for a diverse diet is >4 food groups on the previous day.

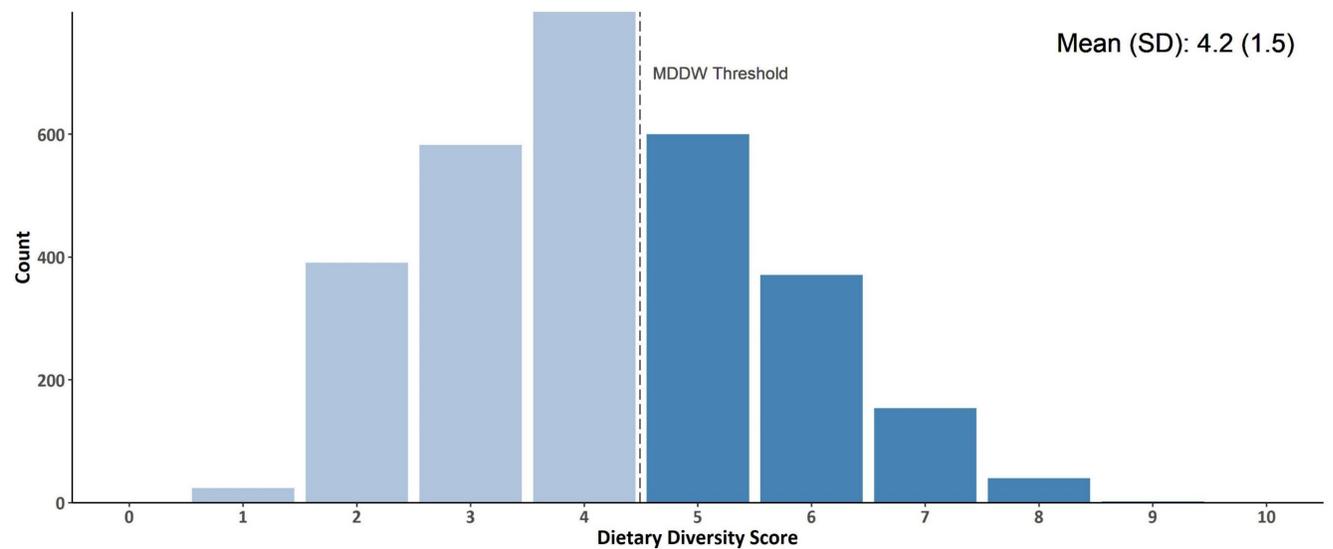


Figure 2. Mean grams of intake per food group per day.

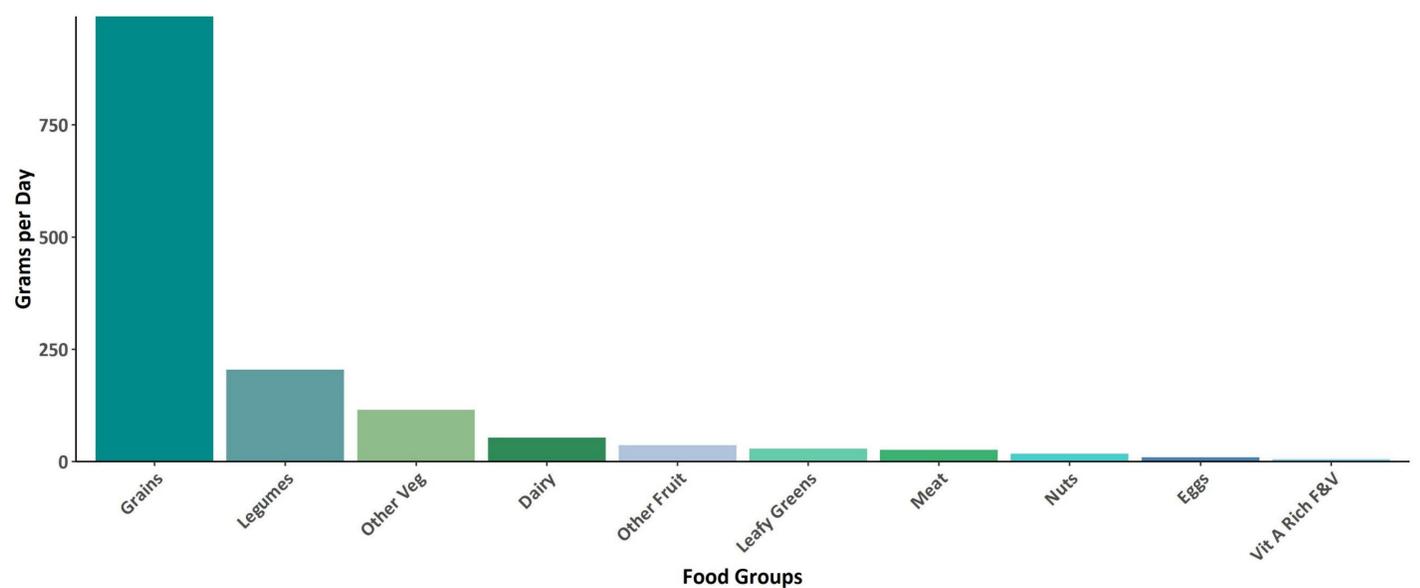
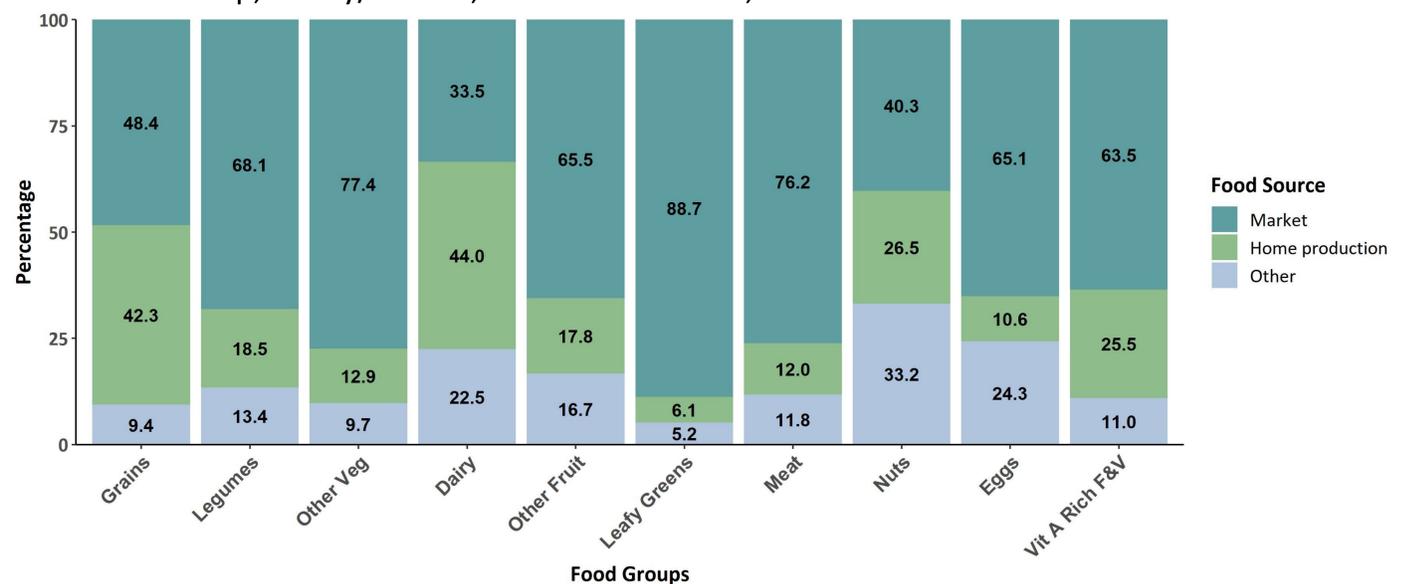


Figure 3. Source (home production, market, or other) of food groups. 'Other' includes public distribution shop, family/friends, take home rations, or restaurant.



Implications

- Nutrition counselling in these communities should focus on balancing the plate to reduce calories from white rice and increase calories from more nutrient-rich foods.
- To improve diets of farming households, policies and interventions need to consider both the market and home production pathways.