



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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# Research Team

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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

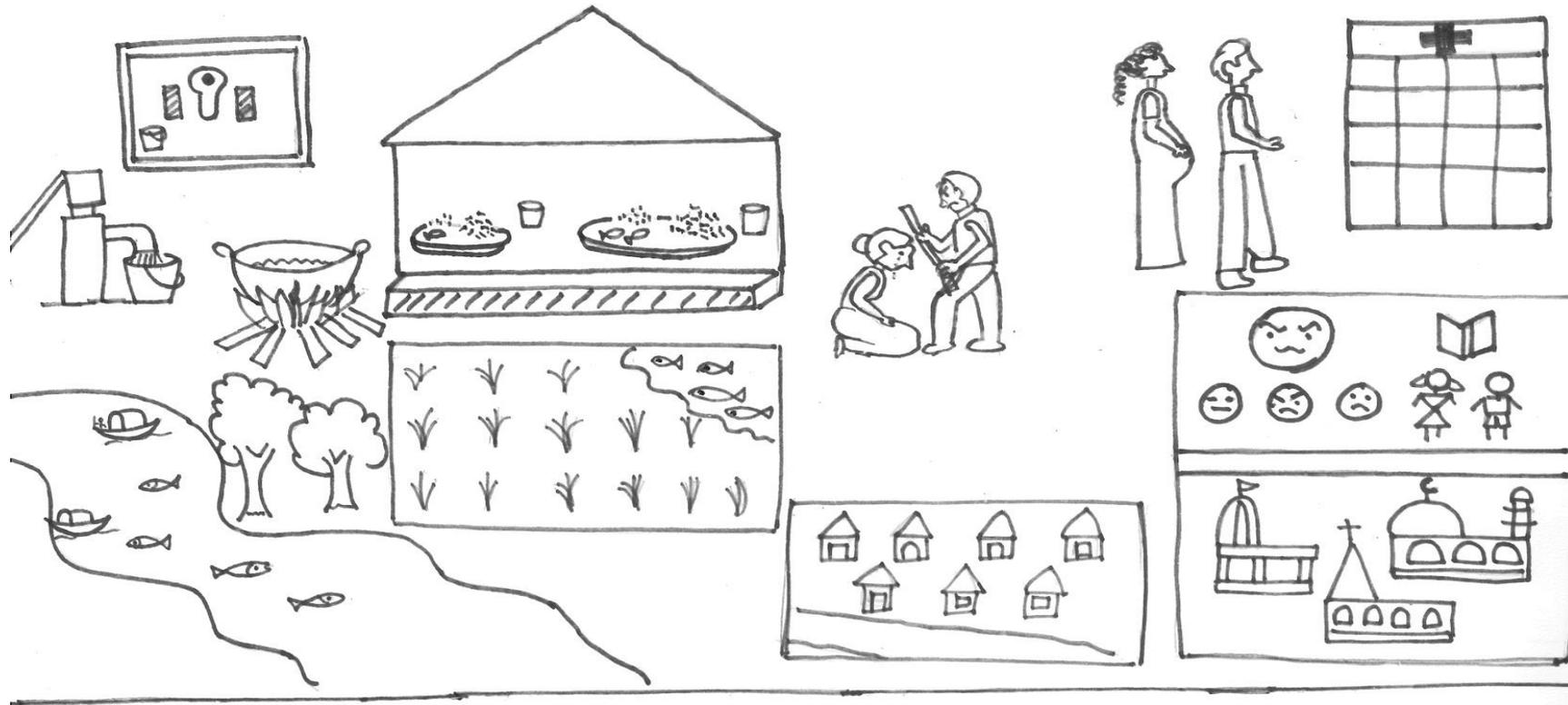
- Northern Bangladesh
- Odisha, India
- Bihar, India (to come)

## 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