

Women's Empowerment in Agriculture: Findings from SPRING/Bangladesh's Farmer Nutrition Schools

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Overview of Webinar

- Bangladesh context
- SPRING's Farmer Nutrition Schools
- Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)
- Methodology for WEAI study
- Results from WEAI
- Discussion

SPRING

বিশ্বব্যাপী পুষ্টি বিষয়ে অংশীদারিত্ব,
ফলাফল ও অভিনবত্ব জোরদারকরণ



BANGLADESH CONTEXT

- Many development programs focused on food security, livelihoods, homestead food production
- High rates of stunting (36%)
- Low rates of dietary diversity (39%)
- Significant challenges with hygiene (only 10% of people wash their hands at some critical junctures)
- Bangladeshi women, especially rural, face barriers and disadvantages in nearly every aspect of their lives, including access to health services, economic and educational opportunities, political participation, and control of finances.



SPRING/BANGLADESH PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Five-year, USAID field support component of centrally-funded Cooperative Agreement (Oct 2011 to Sept 2017) – SPRING/Bangladesh: March 2012-May 2017
- Target group: pregnant and lactating women and women with children under 2 years of age (“1,000 Days”)
 - Special emphasis on two poorest wealth quintiles
- Work inside Feed the Future ‘Zone of Influence’
 - 40 upazilas along Bangladesh’s coastal belt
- Collaborate with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Agriculture, using multiple channels to reinforce key nutrition messages



Farmer Nutrition Schools (FNS)

- Rooted in the essential nutrition and essential hygiene actions, farmer nutrition schools (FNS) are an innovative approach to helping farmers learn about and improve their production system.
- FNS are a participatory training approach that are used both as an extension tool and a form of adult education, evolved from concept “farmers learn optimally from field and experimentation”



Nutrition Content

- Essential Nutrition Actions (ENA)
 - Nutrient rich diversified food **consumption**
 - Health/nutrition care
 - Repeated messaging/follow-up at HH
- Essential Hygiene Actions (EHA)
 - Handwashing
 - Clean environment
 - Repeated messaging/follow-up at HH
- Agriculture-Nutrition Linkages
 - ENA/EHA incorporated into all sessions
 - Separate ENA/EHA session in each module



Learning by Doing



Peer to Peer Support



Community Nutrition Champions



- FNS members select one woman to serve as their Community Nutrition Champion (CNC)
- This is a non-remunerated/voluntary position
- Other members also work like CNC in many cases
- Linkages are formed with frontline health facilities



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN AGRICULTURE INDEX

How is the WEAI constructed?

WEAI is made up of two sub indices

Five domains of empowerment (5DE)

A direct measure of women's empowerment in 5 dimensions

Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)

All range from zero to one; higher values = greater empowerment

Gender parity Index (GPI)

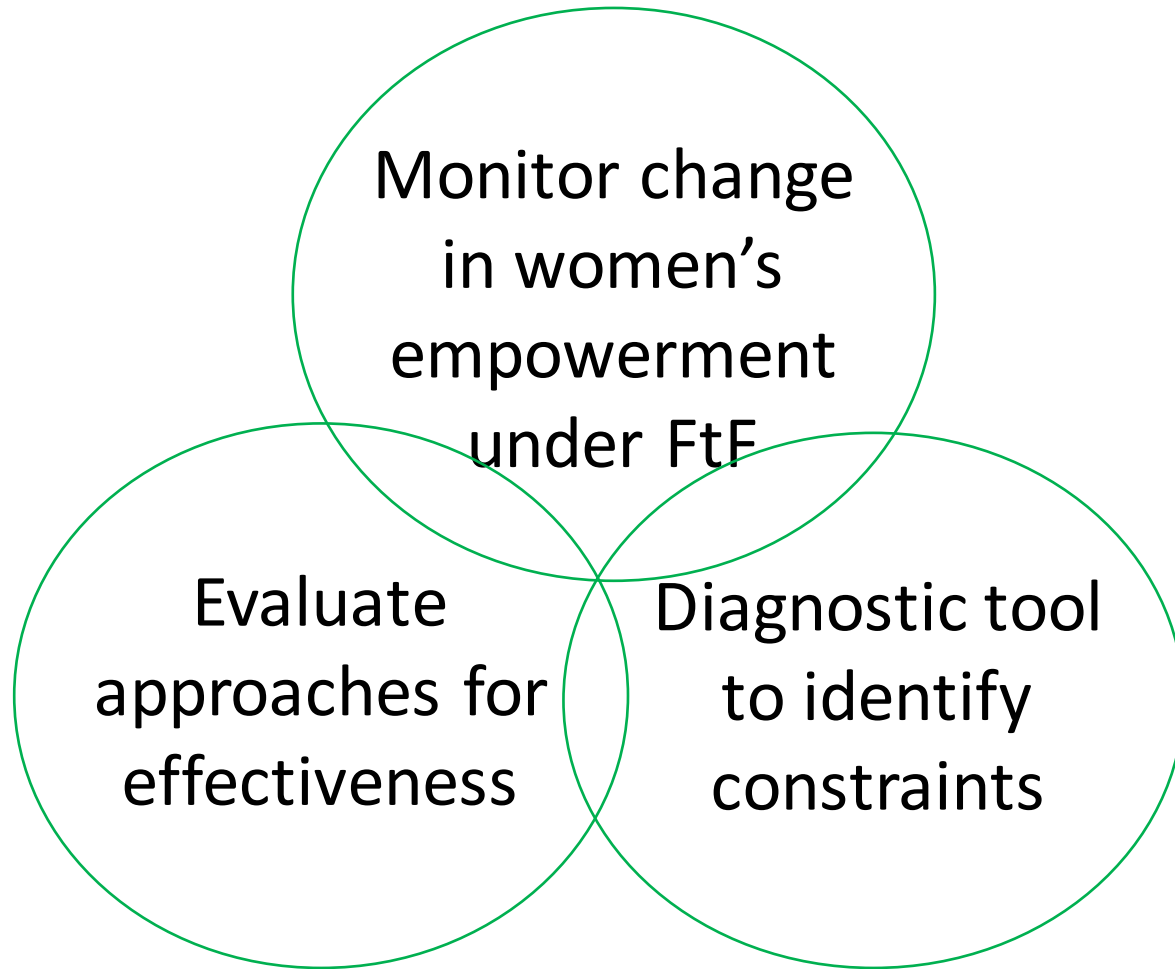
Women's achievement's relative to the primary male in hh



Source: OPHI presentation, Alkire and Vaz, 2012.



PURPOSE AND USE OF THE WEAI TOOL





FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

Original WEAI vs A-WEAI

Original: 5 domains, 10 indicators

	DOMAIN	INDICATORS	WEIGHT
1	Production	Input in productive decisions	1/10
		Autonomy in production	1/10
2	Resources	Ownership of assets	1/15
		Purchase, sale, or transfer of assets	1/15
		Access to and decisions on credit	1/15
3	Income	Control over use of income	1/5
4	Leadership	Group membership	1/10
		Speaking in public	1/10
5	Time	Workload	1/10
		Leisure	1/10
TOTAL			100%

A-WEAI: 5 domains, 6 indicators

	DOMAIN	INDICATORS	WEIGHT
1	Production	Input in productive decisions	1/5
2	Resources	Ownership of assets	2/15
		Access to and decisions on credit	1/15
3	Income	Control over use of income	1/5
4	Leadership	Group membership	1/5
5	Time	Workload	1/5
TOTAL			100%



Source: IFPRI



A-WEAI

SPRING used the A-WEAI, where A stands for 'Abbreviated'. In this case:-

- Dimensions remain same with reduced number of indicators
- Requires 30% less time to administer the questionnaire
- Results are consistent with the fuller/original WEAI



Five Domains of the Empowerment Index (5DE)



Each component counts for 20% of the total 5DE score.

The total counts for 90% of the A-WEAI score.

Source: IFPRI



GENDER PARITY INDEX

Two elements:

1. The percentage of women who enjoy **gender parity**.
Defined as:
 - Being empowered (empowerment score ≥ 0.8) *or*
 - Empowerment score is equal to or greater than the score of the primary male in her household.
2. The **empowerment gap** – the average percentage shortfall that a woman without parity experiences relative to the male in her household.

Counts for 10% of final A-WEAI score.



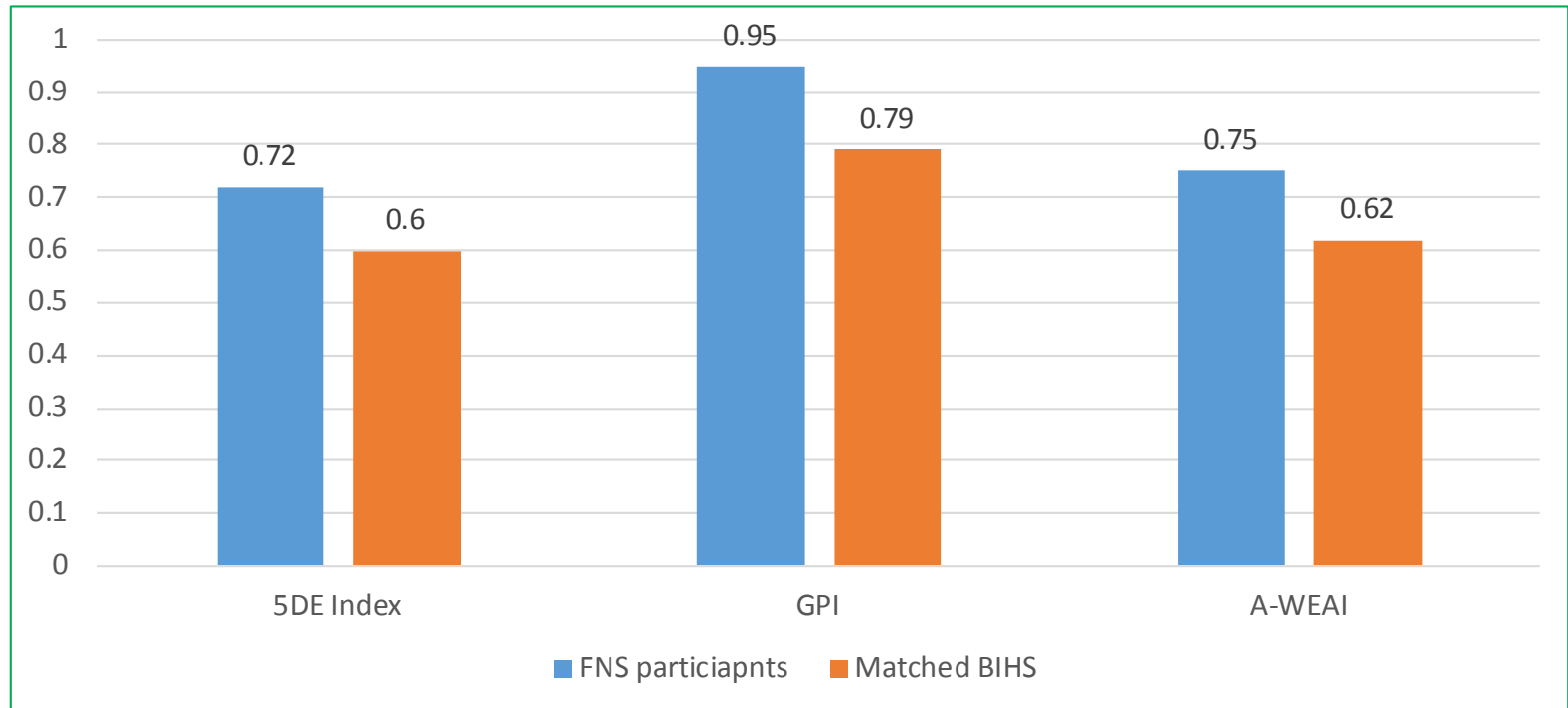
METHODOLOGY FOR SPRING STUDY

SPRING combined two different data sources for this analysis:

- Survey of SPRING FNS graduates using A-WEAI
 - Cross sectional survey of 371 women and their spouses in 16 upazilas in December 2015
 - An equal sample from the FY14, FY15, and FY16 FNS cohorts to compare results across years
- Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey (BIHS)
 - Panel survey of >2,000 households in the Feed the Future zone of influence undertaken in 2011/12 and 2015
 - Compared the results in SPRING areas to other FtF areas between 2011/12 and 2015
- Combined analysis
 - We matched FNS women from the SPRING survey to women in non-SPRING areas from 2015 BIHS (using propensity score matching).
 - Only 108 households were available for the matched comparison.



MATCHED SAMPLE: A-WEAI RESULTS

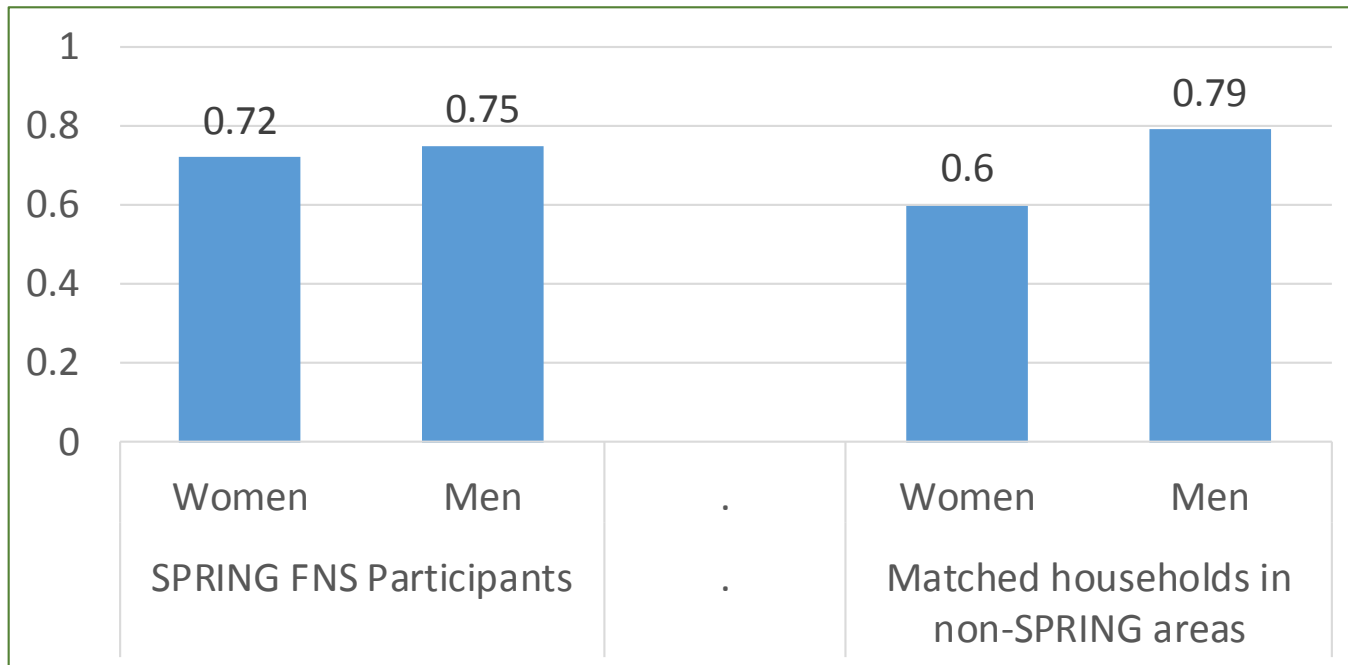


The A-WEAI score clearly shows that women who participate in FNS score better than the women in areas covered by the BIHS (matched areas), 0.75 vs. 0.62.

Data source: SPRING FNS Participants: SPRING survey
Matched households: BIHS



MATCHED SAMPLE: RESULTS BY SEX



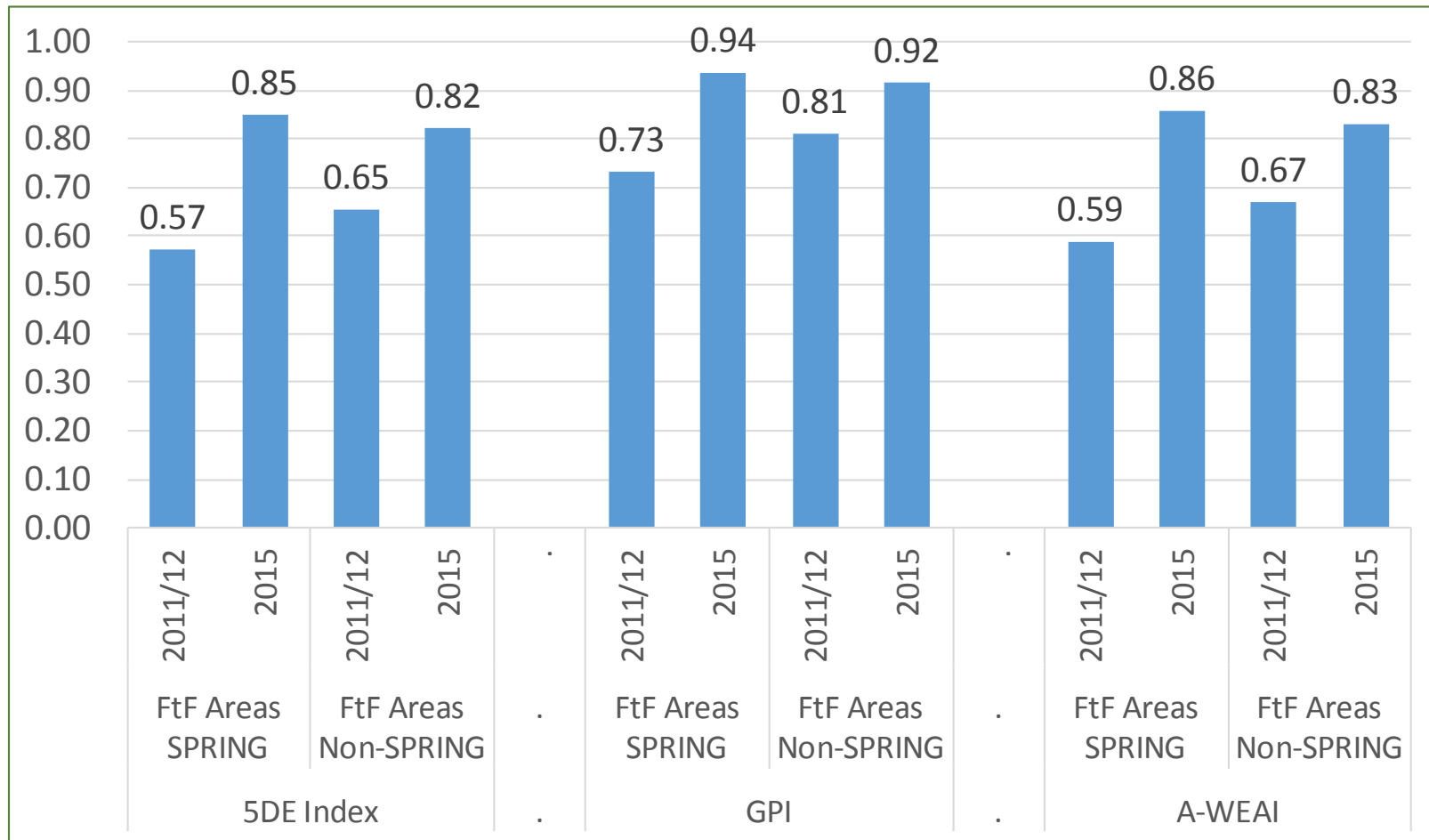
Men are more empowered than women in both surveys but BIHS men appear to be slightly more empowered than the SPRING men. Gap is less in SPRING households.

Data source: SPRING FNS Participants: SPRING survey

Matched households: BIHS



SPRING and NON-SPRING FTF AREAS COMPARED



Data source: BIHS



DISCUSSION

- Findings from this study are promising and indicate a strong likelihood that programs such as SPRING's FNS could be an effective way to empower women.
 - Lower gap between 5DE indices of women and men indicate a better empowerment status of SPRING women.
 - In all the studies, gender parity indices were found higher than the comparison groups.
 - Empowerment happening to men as well but the gap is reducing.
- The nature of SPRING's farmer nutrition schools (FNS) intervention played a vital role in greater improvement in empowerment over time.



DISCUSSION - Continued

- Although SPRING's FNS intervention specifically focused on PLW, involvement of men in the household can further accelerate the process of empowering women for better gender parity.
- FNS is not just about developing skills around nutrition and food production; it lends to more confident and productive women who are more empowered and better able to lead their communities.



ধন্যবাদ

Thank you

