



A qualitative inquiry of the effects of social protection and nutrition education on climate resilience of rural women and their households in southern Bangladesh

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Two years of training should not be forgotten in life. I have learned more or less everything. I have also memorized it. Otherwise, I wouldn't have remembered anything. If I didn't learn it, if I didn't maintain it, I wouldn't remember it... **I can't even sign my own name well, still I remember it.**

(Salma, Bagerhat)

Rationale

Differential *vulnerabilities and resilience capacities* of rural women and their households are shaped by intersecting factors, including gender, livelihood, resource access and ownership, and social protection (SP) and climate change adaptation (CCA) efforts.

'Adaptive' social protection (ASP) integrates disaster risk reduction (DRR) and CCA with SP (Tenzing 2020; Bangladesh Planning Commission 2020).

SP, specifically *nutrition-sensitive programs can address gender inequality* (Camilletti, 2020) and support behavior change and empowerment (Ahmed et al., 2020). Adding nutrition BCC to cash or food transfers can lead to larger impacts on household consumption and assets (Ahmed et al., 2024).

But how SP can support longer-term *resilience capacities* of women and their households through a *gender and climate lens*, remain less well understood, especially in contexts where shocks like cyclones overlap with slow onset salinization (Nesbitt-Ahmed 2023; Kundo et al. 2023).

Rationale

Building on gaps and opportunities...

- Identify **entry points from existing efforts** to inform pathways for transformative SP (Gavrilovic et al., 2023)
- **Equitable resilience**: consider vulnerabilities, and differential access to power, knowledge and resources (Matin et al., 2018)

Research Questions

Do social protection programs in Bangladesh, with or without nutrition education, support resilience capacities of rural women and their households?

What are some entry points for nutrition education to foster nutrition+ outcomes?

Methods

Social protection programs

Vulnerable Group Development (VGD):

- Food transfer
- Started as Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF)

Transfer Modality Research Initiative (TMRI):

- Cash transfer
- Food transfer + nutrition behavior change communication (BCC)

Study sites and sample

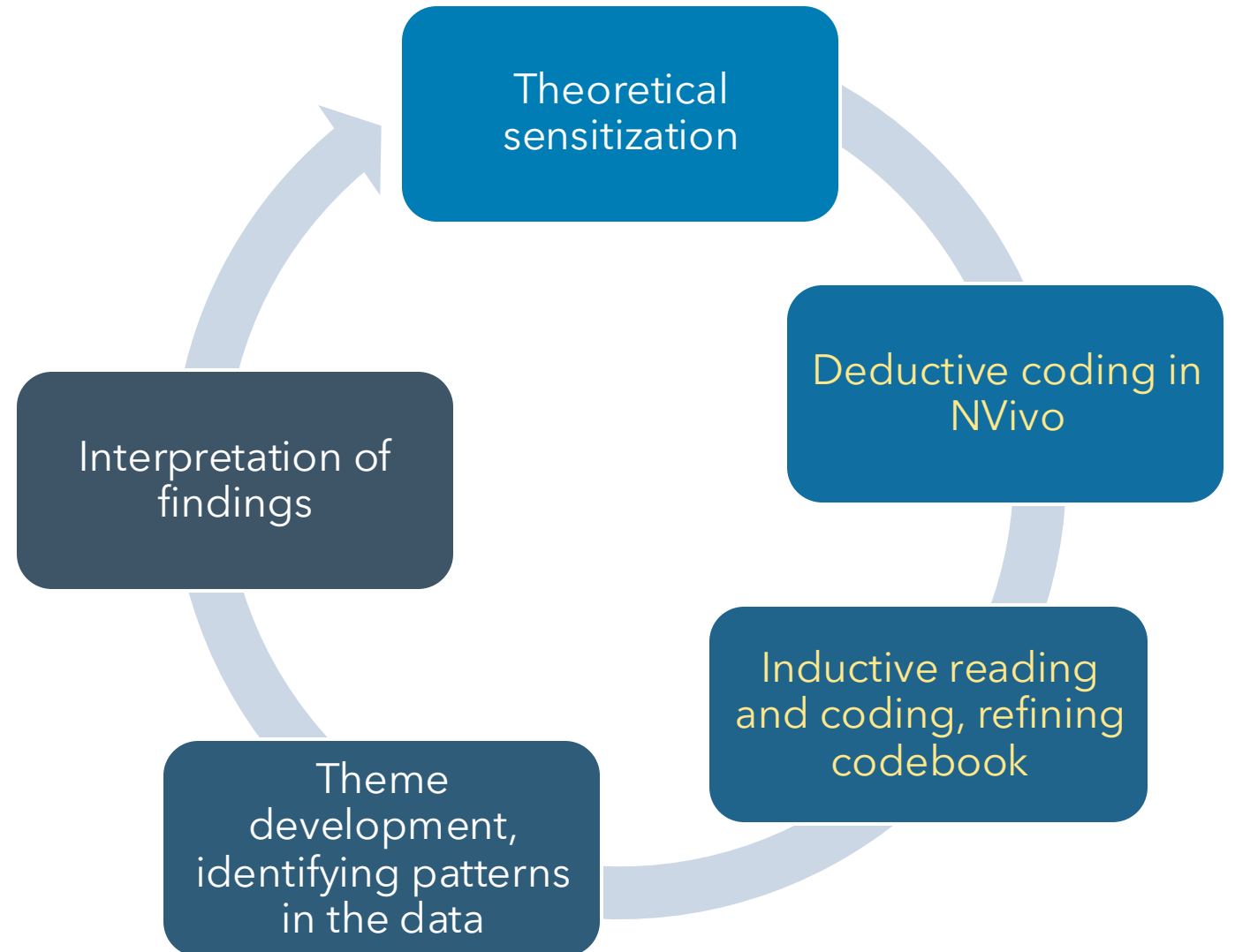
District	<u>Upazila</u>	<u>Village</u>	Instrument	Interviews with Women (18)	Interviews with Men (12)
Khulna	<u>Dacope</u>	<u>Khatail Tildanga</u>	FGD (2) Interviews (10)	6	4
Bagerhat	<u>Fakirhat</u>	<u>Jaria Maitkumra</u>	FGD (2) Interviews (11)	7	4
Patuakhali	<u>Bauphal</u>	<u>Gosinga</u>	FGD (2) Interviews (9)	5	4



Interview with husband of a TMRI participant (Food + nutrition BCC)

Analytical Approach

Type of SP benefit	Number of semi-structured interviews	Coding process
Food or cash transfers without nutrition BCC	17	<i>Deductive and inductive:</i> SP impact on resilience capacities <i>Inductive:</i> women's access and agency
Food transfer with nutrition BCC	14	<i>Deductive and inductive:</i> SP impact on resilience capacities <i>Inductive:</i> women's access and agency



Results

SP impact on resilience capacities of rural women and their households in southern Bangladesh

Climate impacts

Rapid onset events: cyclones, storm surges, flooding
+
Slow onset events: salinization
Rainfall variability

Loss and damage of property
Effect on agriculture: crops, livestock, and fish
Employment and income insecurity
Food insecurity
Water insecurity

Role of social protection (SP)

Protective
(cash and food transfers, shelter)

Preventive
(cash and food transfers, training, shelter)

Promotional
(social transfers, assets, training, livelihood diversification, shelter, water tank, tube well)

Use of SP benefits

Absorptive capacity
Buy and eat food
Pay for basic needs
Build makeshift structure
Training-help cope after cyclone

Anticipatory capacity
Store food and basic items
Go to shelter (cyclone)
Save money from not buying food
Training-help prepare for future shocks

Adaptive capacity
Buy and access assets, e.g., land, livestock
Cultivate land
Rear livestock
Invest in children's education
Plan for future
Savings
Learn skills

Timeframe

Shorter term



Longer term

Adapted from Davies et al. (2013) and Bangladesh Planning Commission (2020).

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<https://hdl.handle.net/10568/135996>

SP benefits strengthen shorter-term coping capacities in the face of climate shocks, with the potential to support longer-term adaptive capacities

Coping and anticipatory action like eating dry food, saving before disasters and going to cyclone shelters were reported.

“We somehow manage. Sometimes we **eat dry foods** during disaster time. Also, we always try to **make some savings** before a disaster, so that we can manage those days” (TMRI participant, Bagerhat)

Receiving food transfer helped families survive immediate aftermath of cyclones. Women reported negative coping strategies like skipping meals for times without food transfer.

“Then getting that **food benefited us. That we didn't have to starve.** If nothing else, we could eat pulses and rice somehow. At that time, it was a great benefit.” (TMRI participant, Patuakhali)

Money saved from not having to buy food could be used for family expenses in short term and even assets like land and livestock in the longer term.

“The support you gave us for 15 days, I would have used the money that you give me to buy food for those 15 days,... I could use that money... At that time a lot of **money would have been saved**” (Husband of TMRI participant, Khulna)

“As we were getting the food as relief, so I get to save some money in those two years. **From that savings I've bought a calf**” (Husband of TMRI participant, Bagerhat)

After SP program ends, longer term pathways supporting adaptive capacity could be truncated.
“**No, we couldn't harvest that land anymore.** I mean we did not get enough cash again so we couldn't do it further” (TMRI participant, Khulna)

SP benefits with and without nutrition BCC

Benefits	With nutrition BCC	Without nutrition BCC
Access to food during times of shocks		
Knowledge about nutrition		
Knowledge about water, sanitation, and hygiene		
Coping with shocks (absorptive capacity)		
Preparing for future shocks (anticipatory capacity)		
Knowledge sharing		

Nutrition education: What, how, who and where

Theme	Subtheme	Examples from TMRI Food + BCC participants and their husbands across the 3 study sites
Reported benefits: What, How	Nutrition	<p>-They used to talk about different types of health... they told us to cook a little khichuri like this. I used to listen to this kind of things (Husband, Khulna)</p> <p>-They've taught during those meetings what we should eat for getting proper nutrition. That man once came in our house and had given me some money and asked me to cultivate spinach, so that we can eat those. (Husband, Bagerhat)</p>
	Sanitation, Hygiene	<p>-I was given training about... kinds of food... how to use the bathroom, how to stay clean, about health (Husband, Khulna)</p>
	Shared decision-making	<p>-They've taught us that ask money from your husband for this and use that money later on your household (Participant, Bagerhat)</p> <p>-Yes, we discussed training. We sat and discussed what should be done (Participant, Bagerhat)</p>
Delivery mechanism: Who, Where	Knowledge sharing	<p>-I went with my mother-in-law... we discussed and told everyone nearby (Participant, Bagerhat)</p> <p>-I used to discuss these things with them... It was like, I was digging a hole and keeping wastes inside it then I saw another person doing the same (Participant, Patuakhali)</p> <p>-I have taught those to my own daughters and many other women in this locality (Participant, Bagerhat)</p>
	Anticipatory capacity	<p>-there was a trainer sister, she used to warn us when there was a storm... She used to teach us these things (Participant, Bagerhat)</p> <p>-During Corona, we remembered to always wash our hands with this soap (Participant, Patuakhali)</p>
	Who trained Who learned	<p>-My husband was there. And male officers actually talked to men. And when female officers came, then there were meetings with women (Participant, Bagerhat)</p> <p>-I had to go there for my little son (Husband, Khulna)</p> <p>-I took my mother-in-law, sister-in-law and daughter for training (Participant, Bagerhat)</p>
	Training sites	<p>-We learned, they used to hold meetings at our house (Participant, Bagerhat)</p>

Implications

Entry points for nutrition education to support equitable resilience

- By increasing women's access to nutrition-related knowledge, nutrition education can support women's agency in household decision-making.
- Engaging men in nutrition education can foster more cooperative attitude with men sharing household responsibilities around nutrition, water, sanitation, and hygiene.
- Women share what they learn in their household and community, so nutrition education can strengthen women's social capital and networks. The networks and knowledge shared in these networks can be critical for coping and preparing for shocks.
- **Delivery mechanism:** Practical strategies, such as involving both women and men Community Nutrition Workers (CNWs) in delivery of nutrition education.
- **Future research:** examine if and how integrating cash, food, or asset transfers with trainings on nutrition and livelihood skills can support nutrition+ outcomes.

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Thank you!

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