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Topic: Food and nutrition security

Title: Improving agriculture production, food accessibility and consumption through the promotion of Natural Farming in post conflict areas of Sri Lanka

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Introduction

This study aimed to evaluate the impact of a Natural Farming approach (implemented from March 2013 to June 2015) on agricultural production and household food security in Vaharai area in Eastern Sri Lanka. The program introduced no-till farming, mulching with natural materials, indigenous microbes, and compost without using chemical fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides.

Method

A structured household survey was used to collect data among 153 randomly selected beneficiary and 40 non beneficiary HHs. Respondents, (80% Women) were asked about their access to foods that produced by Natural Farming (including the number of meals eaten per day and a measure of Household Dietary Diversity) as well as the cost of agricultural input and the yield of the crops they produced.

Result

Access to natural agricultural products improved from 20% to 99% among 195 surveyed groups (62% in non-beneficiary groups). 97% of children from participating HHs ate more regularly (three times a day) compared to 93% of those from non-participating HHs. Similarly, the percentage of children that consumed more than 4 food groups per day was higher, 67%, in beneficiary HHs compared to non-beneficiary groups (52%). Compared to non-beneficiary HHs ($p < 0.05$), participants in Natural Farming interventions enjoyed a 50% greater yield of Okra, Eggplant, Pepper, Bean, Bitter, and Drumstick and they spent less on farming input 87%.

Conclusions

The adoption of Natural Farming practices has been shown to be an effective means to enhance agriculture productivity and improve food security significantly among small holder farmers in Eastern Sri Lanka.

