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Learning through Moving Pictures: Farmer-to-farmer Video to Stimulate Farmers’ Innovations about Botanical and Alternative Pest Management Practices in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Managing pests is crucial for quality crop and seed production in agrarian tropical countries, but has often led to excessive and indiscriminate use of pesticides, threatening environmental and human health and increasing production costs. For years, farmer field schools (FFS) have promoted integrated pest management (IPM), often including local alternatives to managing pests. Although impacts on target communities have been significant, challenges to extend the impact beyond those directly involved in FFS have become more pressing. Farmer to farmer learning plays an important role and must be strengthened in future. We therefore assessed whether and how video-mediated group learning could contribute to farmer-to-farmer extension of local pest management innovation. We developed a video based on results of participatory research on a botanical pesticide prepared from the local plants to control field pests of vegetables and storage pests of crop seeds (vegetables and grains) in northwestern Bangladesh. Six men and six women farmers groups were organised in twelve villages in Bogra district. In both men and women groups we compared the effectiveness of conventional one-day community training workshops with facilitated and non-facilitated farmer-to-farmer video shows as ways to share results of participatory research. Workshops and video shows were organised at the beginning of vegetable (*e.g.* bean) cultivation season. All participants were interviewed before and after (*i.e.* at the end of bean and rice season) each exposure. In this presentation we report the findings of the women groups. Video proved more powerful than conventional training to convey new ideas derived from farmers’ participatory research and improve fellow farmers’ knowledge, attitude and practices about complex issues like pest management. Video allows better explanation of underlying biological and physical process and stimulates learning about local innovative pest management practices. Although effective as a stand-alone method to trigger further knowledge seeking and experimentation, video shows followed by facilitated group discussions helped to further explain scientific principles and build confidence of the rural women about knowledge intensive innovations like botanical pesticides. The study creates a better understanding of how farmer field schools can benefit from video-mediated learning to enhance farmers’ innovation capacity in managing pests.

Keywords: Bangladesh, botanical pesticide, local innovation, participatory research, video