Food system, consumption patterns and gender

An Indian case study

Lavinia Scudiero

Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock, FAO

Royal Veterinary College, University of London
**Meat consumption**

- Industrialisation of the food systems
- Production of meat has increased drastically
- Persistent triple burden of malnutrition and unequal consumption

---

### Poultry in India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1993-1994</th>
<th>2011-2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumption</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HH</td>
<td>HH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken and eggs</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>115,354</td>
<td>101,658</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1993-1994</th>
<th>2011-2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average consumption</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken (kg PCPM)</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egg (in PCPM)</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Drivers of consumption

- Household level
  - Market concentration
  - Household socio-economic background
  - Increased convenience and diversification of poultry
  - Increased health risk perceptions (mainly among women)

- Intra-household level: females on average consume 0.4 time less poultry than males (at urban level)
  - Household composition
  - Gender norms
  - Food “work” – food provisioning tasks
  - Food “care” – food value beyond economic terms

"... Now with hormonal imbalance, Polycystic Ovarian Disease, premature aging, and infertility that are attributed to the injections in chicken, we have significantly reduced our chicken consumption.” (Christian, female, high income household)
Gender disparities in food consumption: women face greater barriers to accessing food compared to men due to socio-economic inequalities and cultural norms linked to food provisioning

- Societal barriers and food access: cultural structures (prioritising men over women) dictate women’s consumption

- Economic inequality and food work and care: women generally do unpaid household work, which limits their ability to buy food but leads them to prioritise “better” and more food for others, often male members, to show care

Take aways

• Increased production ≠ nutritional security for all
• Without addressing social inequalities, it perpetuates existing disparities
• Effective policies must consider gender-specific challenges and aim to dismantle societal and cultural barriers that impede women’s access to nutritious and safe food
Thank you