

GENDER DIFFERENTIALS IN CONSUMPTION PATTERN AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

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INTRODUCTION

Consumption is a harbinger of vivacious economy. Men and women are the real wealth of a nation. The purpose of over all human development is to create a conducive environment for people for enjoying long, healthy and creative lives. Consumption is the very effective factor for ensuring healthy life which depends on intake of nutrition, full of calorie and balanced diet. The consumption is multifaceted but the present study is confined to gender differential in consumption pattern especially in consumption of food and non-food items. Individual consumption level is an important indicator to examine the relationship between intra-household resources allocation and household food security. Women are active at every point in the food chain and are often responsible for protecting the integrity of food and ensuring its wholesomeness and safety. Women inadequate dietary intake and poor nutritional status are largely a result of the fact, established by anthropological observation, that women and girls eat last and least, a reflection of the inferior social status they are accorded in Indian society through their lives. This unequal status leaves considerable disparities between how much women contribute to consumption activities and how little they share in its benefits.

Consumption pattern is a reflection of social status. Human consumption shortfalls hold back on human development and lead to human poverty. For example, healthcare consumption shortfall leads to disease and death and food under consumption leads to malnutrition and decreased ability to work.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The earlier studies conducted by Jose and Shanmugaratnam (1993), Basiotis (2000), Seema Singh (2001), Mira Seth (2001), Archana Sinha (2004) and Nitya Rao (2005) concluded that consumption is most essential to achieving basic capabilities to live long, healthy creative lives and to enjoy a decent standard of living. The areas of consumption include: food, shelter, clean water, education, health care, energy, transportation, communication, and freedom of creative and cultural expression. They concluded that there was an uneven distribution of consumption expansion- globally. In Worldwide consumption there was a wide disparity between nations. Initial disparities were so large that increased- consumption has not bridged the gap between the most developed nations and the developing.

For example, in low-income countries, consumption has declined 1 per cent annually over

past 15 years. While developed country consumption has increased.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has been taken up for detailed empirical verification with a view to achieve the following objectives:

- i) To study the socio-economic profile of the sample households among the different size of holdings; and
- ii) To study the gender differentials in consumption pattern among the sample households in the different size of holding groups by Sex.

SAMPLING

The present study is confined to Una district of Himachal Pradesh. For the empirical investigation this district has been selected purposely because it has got peculiar vagaries not only in terms of terrain but also in terms of socio-economic demographic structure. This district has a mixture of most progressive and most backward areas of Himachal Pradesh. The required information has been collected from 296 sample households on the different size of holdings of 27 villages scattered over 9 panchayats selected randomly from the three development blocks of Una districts of Himachal Pradesh.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

In the present paper primary data were collected for both males and females regarding their consumption pattern. With the help of a pre-tested schedule information pertaining to family compositions as well as consumption of food and non-food items has been collected from all the selected household as it existed at the time of the survey.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Out of the total 296 sample households, 150 households fall in the category of marginal farmers having land less than one hectare, 77 households fall in the category of small farmers, having 1-2 hectares of land, 48 households are the medium size of holdings and remaining 21 households fall in the category of large farmers. Out of the total population of 1647, 848 are males and 799 are females. The average size of family is the lowest on the marginal size of holding and shows an increasing tendency with an increase in the size of holdings. The average size of family among all the sample household came to 5.56, which is lower as compared with the average size of family at the state level as a whole, i.e. 5.97 (Census 2010).

The percentage of labour force shows a decreasing tendency with an increase in the size of holdings, whereas, contrary to it the percentage of dependents shows an increasing tendency with an increase in the size of holdings. The literacy level of the sample households shows that illiteracy was more among women (I.e. 12.77 per cent) as compared to men (i.e. 6.61 per cent). In

the sample as a whole 90.40 per cent of population is literate out of which 93.39 per cent are males and 87.23 per cent are females. The literacy percentage is the highest on the medium size of holdings, i.e. 91.82 per cent (Table-I).

Table-I Average Family-size, Percentage of Family Work Force, Percentage of Dependants among the Sample Households

Sr. No.	Particulars	Among the Small Households				
		Marginal Holdings	Small Holdings	Medium Holdings	Large Holdings	All Holdings
1.	Total Number of Sample Household	150	77	48	21	296
2.	Total Number of Family Members	807	436	269	135	1647
3.	Average Size of Family	5.38	5.66	5.60	6.42	5.56
4.	Percentage of family Work Force	83.02	80.51	78.07	75.00	82.52
5.	Percentage of Dependents	137 16.97	85 19.49	59 21.93	30 22.23	311 18.89
6.	Literacy Percentage					
	Male	377 92.85	221 94.04	131 93.57	63 94.02	792 93.39
	Female	354 88.28	54 85.07	116 89.92	56 82.35	697 87.23
	Total	731 90.58	392 89.90	247 91.82	119 88.15	1489 90.40

PATTERN OF HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE AMONG THE SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS ON FOOD ITEMS BY SEX

The pattern of household consumption expenditure on food-items by males and females among the sample household falling on the different size of holdings has been presented in Table 3. This Table clearly shows that the percentage amount of money spent on cereals to the total household food expenditure by males has been worked out 23.01, 21.30, 19.14 and 13.61 per cent and for females 20.51, 16.41, 17.09 and 13.53 on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. The percentage expenditure on cereals by males shows a decreasing trend with an increase in the size of holdings. When compared with that of females it was more among males falling under different size of holdings. It happened mainly, due to the fact that males are engaged in more outdoor activities which require more energy and nutrition for physical exertion as compared to females.

The percentage expenditure on pulses and grams indicates that the females was comparatively less (i.e. 1.19 per cent) on the medium size of holdings, whereas the percentage expenditure on pulses and grams was almost the same in other size of holding groups.

The percentage expenditure on milk and milk products to the total household food expenditure of males has been worked out 7.12, 5.18, 4.53 and 4.41 per cent on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. The percentage amount of expenditure on milk and milk products for the females shows a decreasing trend with an increase in the size of holdings. The total percentage expenditure on oil and fats to the total expenditure on food-items by both males and females came out 7.04 per cent. This percentage expenditure is rather high because 'mustard oil' and 'pure ghee' are commonly used for cooking by the sample households.

The percentage expenditure on meat, eggs and fish etc., to the total consumption expenditure on food-items has been worked out highest (i.e. 10.67 per cent) on the large size of holdings and the percentage came out lowest (i.e. 4.64 per cent) on marginal size of holdings. The percentage expenditure on fruits (i.e. both fresh and dry) to the total consumption expenditure on food-items by males and females shows an increasing trend with an increase in the size of holdings. The percentage of consumption expenditure on sugar and gur by both males and females in all different size of holdings is rather high due to the reason that manual labourers need more intake of sugar to keep up their energy level intact. Moreover sugar taking has become a habit with them.

Table-6.1
Pattern of Household Per Month Consumption's Expenditure on Food-Items among the Sample Households by Sex
(Value in Rs.)

Sr. No.	Items	Marginal Holdings			Small Holdings			Medium Holdings			Large Holdings			All Holdings		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
1.	Cereals	347.09 (23.01)	309.34 (20.51)	656.43 (43.52)	457.48 (21.30)	352.52 (16.41)	810.00 (37.71)	552.75 (19.14)	493.39 (17.09)	1046.14 (36.23)	629.62 (13.61)	626.50 (13.53)	1256.57 (27.14)	429.20 (20.25)	372.08 (17.55)	802.08 (37.84)
2.	Pulses and Grams	28.33 (1.88)	20.00 (1.32)	48.33 (3.20)	38.83 (1.80)	28.70 (1.34)	67.53 (3.14)	53.66 (1.86)	34.42 (1.19)	88.08 (3.05)	70.67 (1.53)	62.66 (1.35)	133.33 (2.88)	38.17 (1.80)	27.63 (1.30)	65.80 (3.10)
3.	Milk & Milk Products	107.44 (7.12)	72.80 (4.82)	180.24 (11.94)	111.27 (5.18)	91.64 (4.27)	202.91 (9.45)	130.75 (4.53)	104.25 (3.61)	235.00 (8.14)	204.00 (4.41)	178.65 (3.87)	382.85 (8.28)	119.07 (5.62)	90.32 (4.26)	209.39 (9.88)
4.	Oil and Fats	71.73 (4.76)	37.33 (2.47)	109.06 (7.23)	96.10 (4.47)	61.04 (2.84)	157.14 (7.31)	101.04 (3.50)	91.67 (3.17)	192.71 (6.67)	169.05 (3.65)	138.09 (2.95)	307.14 (6.63)	89.73 (4.23)	59.46 (2.81)	149.19 (7.04)
5.	Meat, Eggs and Fish	70.00 (4.64)	56.40 (3.74)	126.40 (8.38)	143.37 (6.88)	63.90 (2.97)	207.27 (9.65)	206.25 (7.14)	97.50 (3.38)	303.75 (10.52)	494.28 (10.68)	142.86 (3.09)	637.14 (13.77)	141.28 (6.66)	71.15 (3.36)	212.43 (10.02)
6.	Vegetables	32.17 (2.13)	24.00 (1.59)	56.17 (3.72)	52.44 (2.44)	39.74 (1.85)	92.18 (4.29)	68.98 (2.39)	57.31 (1.98)	126.29 (4.37)	90.34 (1.95)	100.33 (2.17)	190.67 (4.12)	47.54 (2.24)	38.91 (1.84)	86.45 (4.08)
7.	Fruits (Fresh)	19.33 (1.28)	18.07 (1.20)	37.40 (2.48)	39.46 (1.84)	35.27 (1.64)	74.73 (3.48)	59.33 (2.05)	50.00 (1.73)	109.33 (3.78)	115.05 (2.49)	99.81 (2.16)	214.86 (4.65)	37.84 (1.79)	33.52 (1.58)	71.36 (3.37)
8.	Fruits (Dry)	46.67 (3.09)	70.00 (4.64)	116.67 (7.73)	77.92 (3.63)	129.87 (6.04)	207.79 (9.67)	151.04 (5.23)	161.46 (5.59)	312.50 (10.82)	273.81 (5.92)	380.95 (8.23)	654.76 (14.15)	87.84 (4.14)	122.47 (5.78)	210.31 (9.92)
9.	Sugar, Gur etc.	15.87 (1.05)	16.14 (1.07)	32.01 (3.12)	29.81 (1.39)	22.40 (1.04)	52.21 (2.43)	43.87 (1.52)	36.63 (1.23)	79.50 (2.75)	72.00 (1.56)	49.71 (1.07)	121.71 (2.63)	28.02 (1.32)	23.31 (1.10)	51.33 (2.42)
10.	Others*	97.53 (6.46)	48.07 (3.19)	145.60 (9.65)	170.00 (7.91)	106.97 (4.93)	275.97 (12.84)	210.00 (7.27)	183.75 (6.36)	393.75 (13.63)	381.43 (8.25)	347.14 (7.50)	728.57 (15.75)	154.76 (7.30)	106.35 (5.02)	281.11 (12.32)
11.	Total (1 to 10)	836.16 (55.44)	672.15 (44.56)	1508.31 (100.00)	1216.69 (56.65)	931.05 (43.35)	2147.74 (100.00)	1577.67 (54.85)	1309.38 (43.35)	2887.05 (100.00)	2500.25 (54.04)	2126.35 (45.96)	4626.60 (100.00)	1173.45 (55.36)	946.00 (44.64)	2119.45 (100.00)

Note: Figures in Parenthesis: * Other Food Items includes, salt, spices, biscuits, bread etc.
are the percentage to the column total.

Thus, from the Table it can be concluded that out of total household consumption expenditure on food-items, the percentage share of males on total food-items came out 55.44, 56.65, 54.65 and 54.04 per cent and that of females 44.56, 43.35, 45.35 and 45.96 per cent on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. Among all the holdings taken together the total household consumption expenditure on food-items by the males was more as compared to females. This consumption pattern on food-items shows considerable disparities between how much women contributed to household consumption requirements and how little they share in its benefits. In addition to this the parents and family give lower value to girls since their birth and that this is translated into their lifelong neglect. In rural India, among the household occupation types, agricultural labour households showed lower levels of per capita consumption of important item groups like milk and milk products, meat, egg and fish. Whereas, in the present study area the percentage expenditure on these food-items by both males and females came out to be 19.90 per cent when all sizes of holding taken together. In urban India, among the different household type per capita consumption of many item groups (like cereals, milk and milk products and sugar) was the lowest for casual labour households.

PATTERN OF PER MONTH HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE ON NON-FOOD ITEMS BY SEX

There cannot be an iota of doubt that in order to sustain life on the earth minimum food requirement is 'necessary' but not sufficient for the existence of mankind. A certain minimum amount of non-food items is equally important for the survival of the human beings. In the present study due consideration has been given to non-food items such as fuel and light, clothing, foot-wear education etc. No specific norms comparable to minimum caloric requirements, has so far been suggested by any institution or individual scholar for non-food items.

The pattern of average monthly household consumption percentage on non-food items has been presented in Table-4. The Table clearly indicates that the percentage share of expenditure on pan, tobacco by males is higher for the males as compared with that of females because men are addicted to these vices. The percentage expenditure on fuel and light among all the holdings together by males and females came out 8.03 and 6.34 to the total expenditure on non-food items.

The percentage expenditure on clothing to the total household expenditure on non-food items by males has been worked out 7.65, 8.44, 10.46 and 12.09 per cent and by females 10.30, 13.62, 12.80 and 13.66 per cent on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. The percentage expenditure on clothing by females was much more higher than that of males in all size of holdings. In addition to that women liked to wear new clothes on each and every religious festival and occasion. Women want to look more presentable, so their expenditure for clothes is more when compared to that of men.

Table-6.2
Pattern of Per Month Household Consumption Expenditure on Non-Food Items Among the Sample Households

(Value in Rs.)

Sr. No.	Items	Marginal Holdings			Small Holdings			Medium Holdings			Large Holdings			All Holdings		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
1.	Pan, Tobacco & Intoxicants	80.55 (8.94)	8.33 (0.92)	88.88 (9.87)	95.24 (8.81)	9.74 (0.70)	104.98 (7.51)	97.22 (4.69)	15.62 (0.75)	112.84 (5.44)	154.76 (4.37)	31.75 (0.90)	186.51 (5.27)	92.34 (6.45)	11.54 (0.82)	103.88 (7.27)
2.	Fuel and Light	80.00 (8.88)	56.89 (6.54)	136.89 (15.42)	111.47 (7.97)	88.74 (6.35)	200.22 (14.32)	152.78 (7.36)	142.36 (6.86)	295.14 (14.22)	289.68 (8.17)	206.35 (5.82)	496.03 (13.99)	114.87 (8.03)	90.65 (6.34)	205.52 (14.37)
3.	Clothing	68.89 (7.55)	92.78 (10.30)	161.67 (17.95)	117.96 (8.44)	190.48 (13.62)	308.44 (22.06)	217.01 (10.46)	265.62 (12.80)	482.63 (23.26)	428.57 (12.09)	484.13 (13.66)	912.70 (25.75)	131.19 (9.17)	173.99 (12.16)	305.18 (21.33)
4.	Footwear	48.33 (5.37)	39.44 (4.38)	87.77 (9.75)	71.43 (5.11)	42.21 (3.02)	113.64 (8.13)	86.81 (4.18)	65.97 (3.18)	152.78 (7.36)	115.08 (3.25)	103.17 (2.91)	218.25 (6.16)	65.31 (4.56)	48.99 (3.43)	114.30 (7.99)
5.	Misc. Goods & Services	153.89 (17.09)	207.22 (23.01)	361.11 (40.10)	242.42 (17.34)	303.03 (21.67)	545.45 (39.00)	359.37 (17.32)	499.58 (23.59)	848.95 (40.91)	634.92 (16.46)	992.06 (25.72)	1626.98 (42.18)	244.37 (17.08)	333.61 (23.34)	577.98 (40.42)
6.	Durable Goods Including (Second Hand)	28.89 (3.21)	33.34 (3.70)	62.22 (6.91)	54.11 (3.87)	71.43 (5.11)	125.54 (8.98)	103.37 (5.27)	72.92 (3.51)	182.29 (8.78)	178.57 (5.04)	238.09 (6.72)	416.66 (11.76)	59.12 (4.13)	64.19 (4.48)	123.31 (8.62)
	Total (1 to 6)	460.55 (51.14)	440.00 (48.85)	900.55 (100.00)	692.64 (49.54)	705.93 (50.46)	1398.27 (100.00)	1022.56 (49.28)	1052.07 (50.71)	2074.63 (100.00)	1801.59 (46.71)	2055.55 (53.29)	3857.14 (100.00)	707.20 (49.44)	722.97 (50.57)	1430.17 (100.00)

Note: Figures in Parenthesis denote the percentage to the column total.

* Miscellaneous goods and services includes: toiletries, cosmetics, medical, education's religions work, Amusement, fair, festivals etc.

* Durable goods includes, machinery, furniture, kitchen ware etc.

The percentage expenditure on footwear is higher by males as compared to females mainly due to the reason that males work outside their houses and their footwear has more wear and tear. The percentage expenditure on miscellaneous goods and services (i.e. toiletries, cosmetics, medical, education, religious work, amusement, fair, festivals and charity etc.) by females was more in all sizes of holdings as compared to that of males. The percentage expenditure on durable goods (i.e. furniture, kitchen ware, etc) by females came out more because female have an inborn tendency to collect more durable items to make their home comfortable. Moreover women want to keep the durables for their posterity as a token of remembrance.

Thus from the above Table it can be concluded that the percentage of expenditure on non-food items was 49.45 per cent for males and 50.55 per cent for females shows a minor variation in between. The Table-4 further reveals that out of the total expenditure on non-food items the highest percentage of expenditure came out on miscellaneous goods and services (i.e. 40.42 per cent) followed by clothing (i.e. 21.33 per cent), fuel and light (i.e. 14.37 per cent), durable goods and services (i.e. 8.62 per cent), footwear (i.e. 7.99 per cent) and pan, tobacco (i.e. 7.27 per cent). Thus people of the area thought that it is worthwhile to spend few percentage of income on non-food items to make life more cozy, comfortable and worthy living.

COMPOSITION OF THE RECOMMENDED AND THE ACTUAL AVERAGE DIET

To carry on with all life processes we need food. Food provides energy, helps in repairing damaged parts of cells and tissues and also makes new material necessary for growth and reproduction of living being. The composition of per consumer unit per day recommended average diet by the nutrition experts as well as the composition of per capita per day actual consumption on food grains among the sample households has been presented in Table-5. Among all the holding groups together the per capita per day consumption of cereals came out 551 grams by males and 507 by females. Whereas the quantity of cereals suggested by the Indian Council of Medical Research, i.e. 540 grams.

The per capita per day actual consumption of pulses and grams came out 16 gram by males and 12 gram by females, as against the recommended per capita per day consumption of pulses and grams, i.e., 12 grams. Only females of marginal category were taking less than the recommended quantity. In regard to the milk and milk products the per capita per day actual consumption by males has been worked out 109, 101, 124 and 177 grams and by females 75, 97, 107 and 153 grams on the marginal, small, medium and large sizes of holdings respectively. The recommended per capita per day consumption of milk is 80 grams.

Per Consumer Unit Recommended and Actual Composition of Diet (Quantity in Grams)

Table- 6.5

S. No.	Items	Marginal			Small			Medium			Large			All Holdings			Composition of Recommended Average Diet (Grams)
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
1	Cereals	534	482	508	555	500	529	574	556	565	598	595	591	551	507	530	540
2	Pulses & Grams	13	9	11	16	14	15	21	15	18	26	23	24	16	12	14	12
3	Milk and Milk Product	109	75	93	101	97	99	124	107	116	177	153	165	115	92	104	80
4	Oil and Fats	17	11	16	20	15	18	23	22	22	35	28	31	22	15	19	15
5	Meat Eggs & Fish	14	11	13	26	13	20	39	20	30	86	24	55	27	14	21	05
6	Vegetables	79	59	69	95	84	90	112	101	107	134	147	141	93	80	87	99
7	Fruits (Fresh)	24	22	23	30	32	31	42	38	40	75	64	69	32	31	32	05
8	Fruit Dry	2	3	2	3	6	4	6	8	7	11	15	13	4	6	05	-
9	Sugar	13	14	14	21	19	20	27	24	26	41	28	35	20	18	20	13
10	Others	17	8	13	21	15	19	26	25	26	44	39	41	22	15	19	-

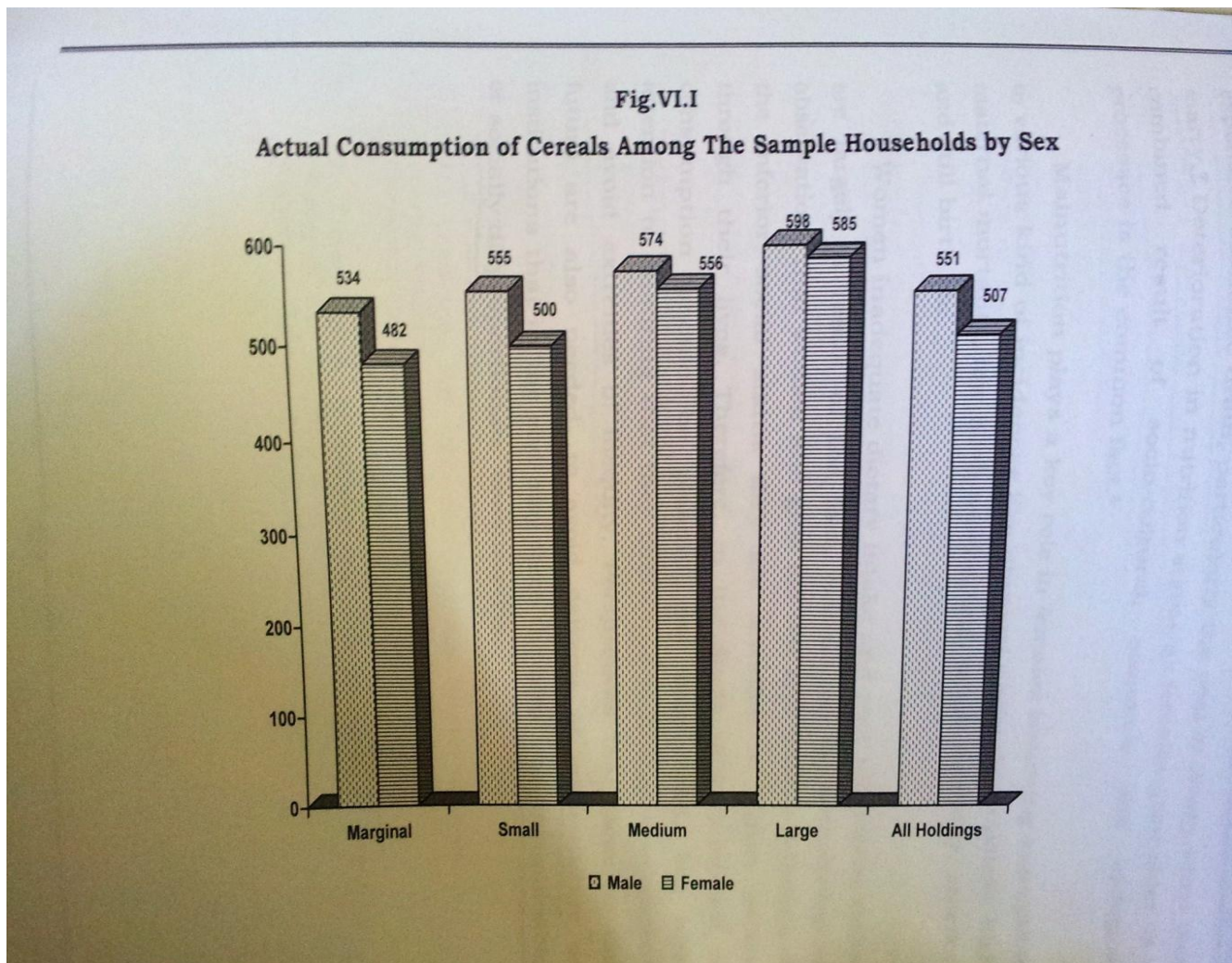
* Composition of average diet recommended by the nutrition experts which provides the minimum required 2400 calories per consumer unit per day in order to keep a person in normal health and working condition. For this see, C. Gopalan and Others, *Nutritive value of Indian Foods*, Indian Council of Medical Research (National Institute of Nutrition) Hyderabad, 1980, p.40.

The per capita per day actual consumption of meat, fish and eggs has been worked out much more than the recommended (i.e.15 grams) quantity both by males and females mainly due to the reason that meat is the staple diet of the people of the area and there is no religious bar against it.

Regarding the per capita per day consumption of vegetables the farmers falling on large size of holdings grow vegetables at large scale, they consume them as well as sell them as cash crops, so their intake of fresh vegetable is relatively higher. The per day per capita consumption of fruit has been worked out much more than the recommended quantity, it happened due to the reason that the study area is located in the proximity of Hoshiarpur district of Punjab. Kinnows, Oranges, Maltas are found in abundance. Therefore, their prices crash and are locally available at throw away prices.

The per capita per day actual consumption of sugar and gur has been worked out 13, 21, 27 and 41 grams by males and 14, 19, 24 and 28 grams by females on the marginal, small, medium and large sizes of holdings respectively. Whereas , the recommend per capita consumption of sugar is 13 grams. In the present study area most of the males and females of sample households are found of eating gur and shakkar. Labourers and farming community take gur to keep their energies intact. Freshly made hot gur is considered a delicacy and is relished by all. Gur mixed with spices and coconut is almost a daily diet after supper in winters. Mostly on religious occasions especially during births and marriages 'gur' is distributed in villages as a token of good omen.

Thus, it can be concluded from the Table that cereal is the main diet of the study area. The graphic reflection of cereal intake by males and females of the sample households has been presented in Figure-I. The graph explicitly shows that males on the marginal and females on the marginal and small holdings were taking less grams of cereals than what has been recommended. Less intake of cereals results in malnutrition and adverse effect on their health status. It was found in the study area that the gender bias, poverty, low wages, were the most significant determinant factors of malnutrition.



CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Thus it can be concluded from the above discussion that among marginal and small size of farmers especially females were against female children, coupled with inadequate purchasing power, meant that girl had lower calorie intakes and consumed less supplementary food and less solid food than boys. The greater vulnerability of girls may be due to difference in the care and upbringing of sons and daughters. These differences reflect an economic, as well as cultural premium placed on living sons while daughter are considered unproductive and an expensive economic drain, particularly the cost of dowry when they marry. Deterioration in nutrition status as females grow older as a combined result of socio-cultural, economic and biological processes is the common fact.

Therefore, it is suggested that increases in consumption should be planned and encouraged, but with attention to ensuring that they contribute to human development and avoid extremes of inequity. Perspectives that focus on the future are also needed, to avoid

patterns of infrastructure or institutions that in the end may force the area into unsustainable or socially disproportionate consumption.

It is suggested that if employment opportunities for women expand, accompanied by fair wages, then household income, hence consumption will improve. Moreover by increasing the number of female worker could clearly do more to improve women's nutrition and health status than many other strategies. Ensuring fair wages for work done so that women can purchase food for themselves and their families, improving working condition so that they are not nutritionally draining or hazardous to health and providing access to services such as day care, health care, and means to lighten domestic work are all important ingredients of female welfare strategies.

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This definition has been adopted by N.S.S. organisation in various N.S.S. rounds. Also see V.K. Malhotra studies in Consumption Expenditure, *Development Profile of Himachal Pradesh*, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Shimla, 1985, p.15.

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