

Influence of gendered social norms on intra-household food access and consumption: evidence from Uttar Pradesh, India

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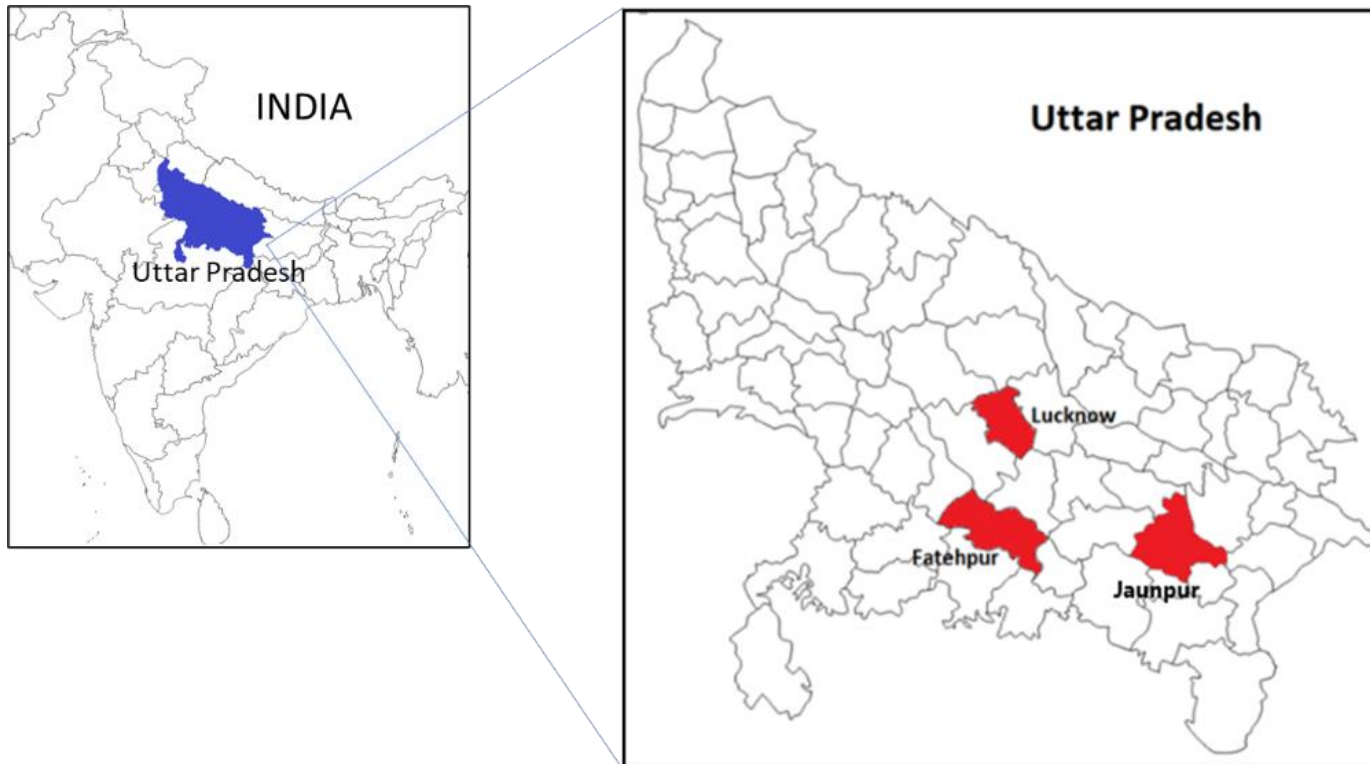


Rationale & Objectives

- Gendered social norms deeply influence patterns of household food distribution and consumption
- For households with limited food availability, decisions on food allocation within households could have important nutritional consequences for some members.
- Unequal distribution of food between household members can contribute to lingering under-nourishment, especially among women & girls.
- Understanding intra-household food distribution and consumption is important in order to ensure that the needs of all individuals within households are met.

Objective: *To map the intra-household pattern/behaviours of food distribution and consumption* among family members (women, men, girls and boys), and how it affects their food security and nutrition.

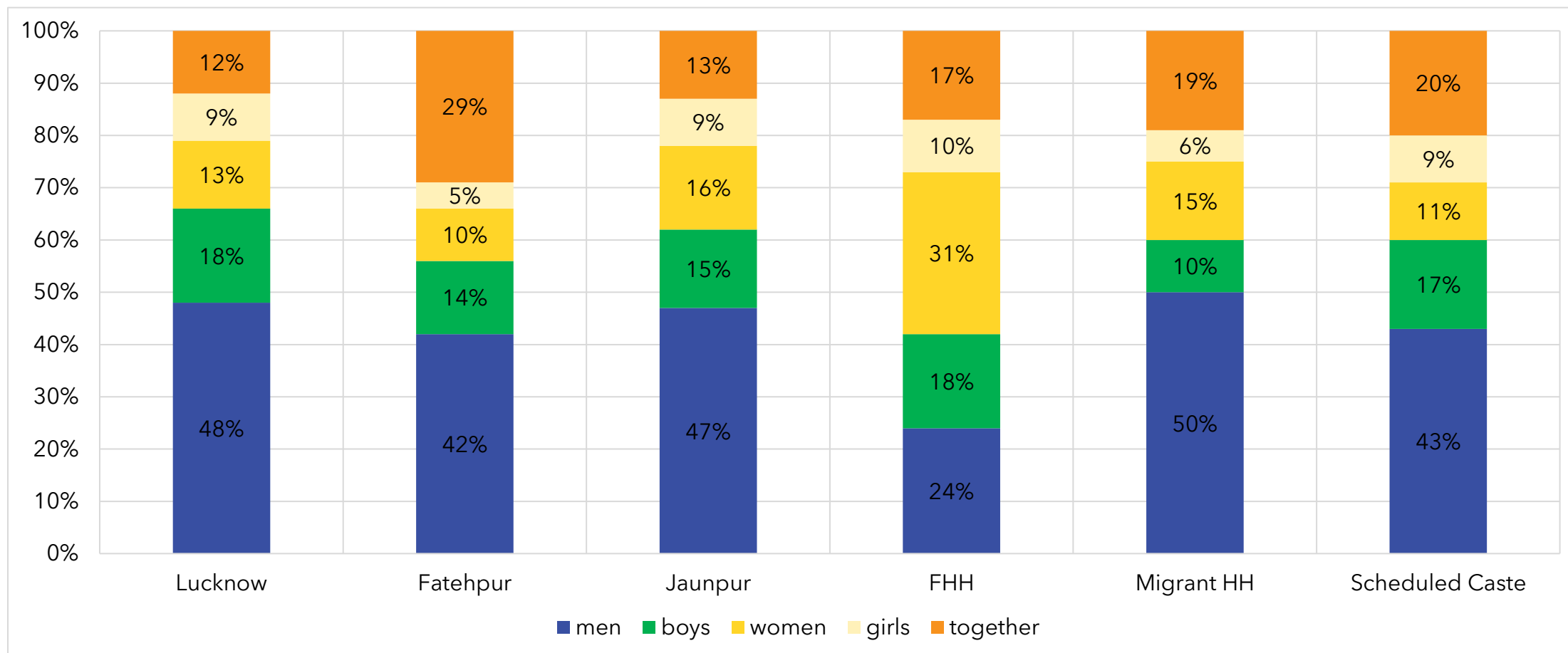
Study Area and Methods



- Quantitative survey of 1049 households across 3 districts:
 - Lucknow (urban)
 - Fatehpur (rural)
 - Jaunpur (rural + migrant)
- Qualitative- 20 In-depth interviews, 12 FGDs, 8 key informant interviews

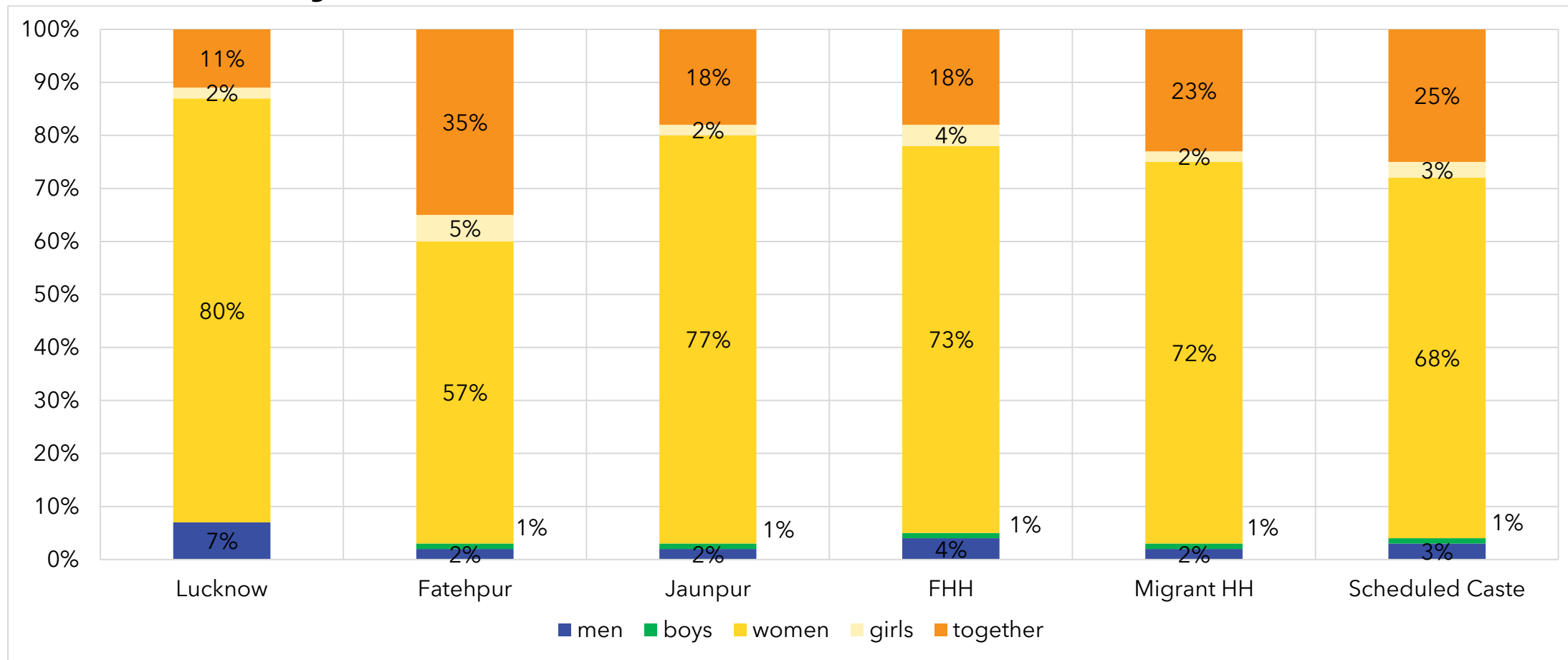
Results

Who eats first in your household?



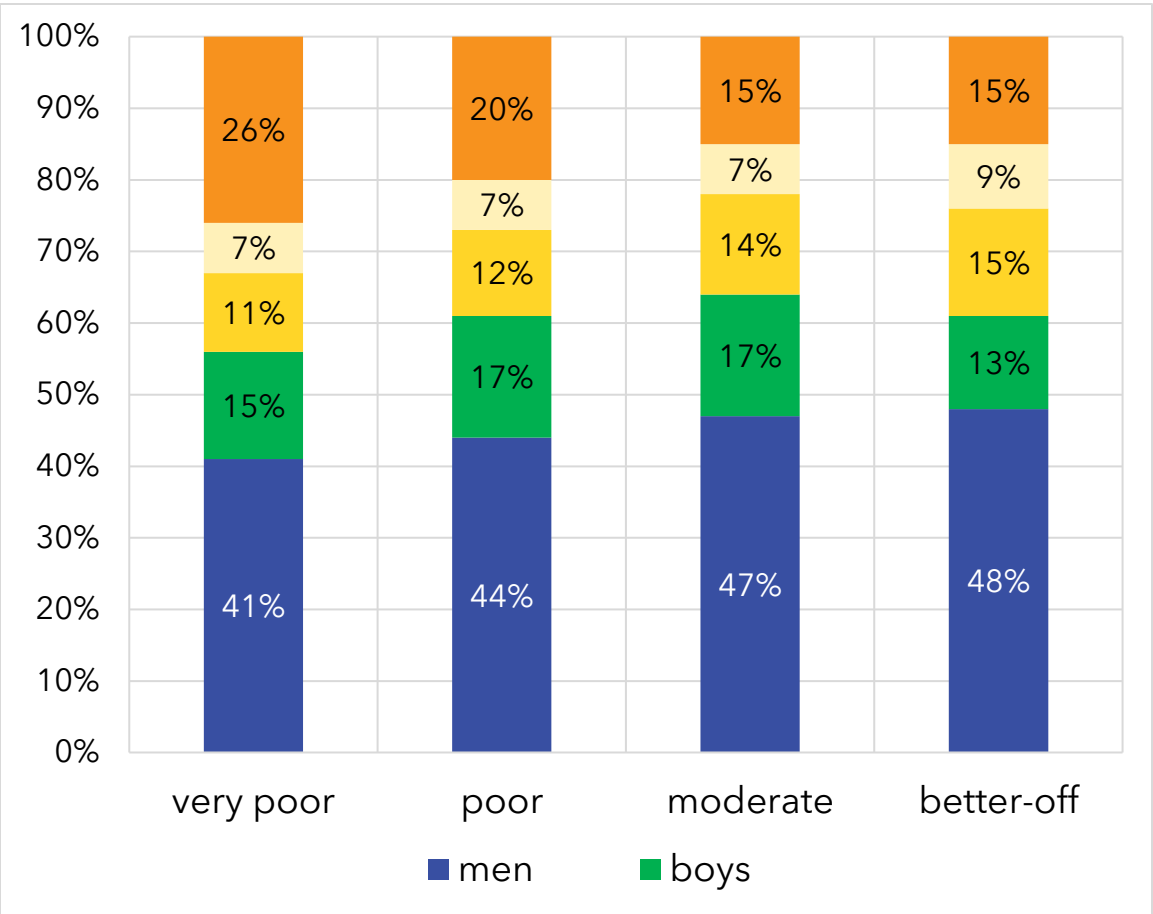
Results

Who eats last in your household?



Results

“Who eats first in the household?” by asset wealth



- Men eating first increases with increase in asset wealth
- Having meals together also decline with increasing asset wealth
- Could be because of multiple members engaged in jobs and with different eating times

Results

Food taboos/restrictions on children, adolescents, pregnant women

- Most food taboos associated with pregnant women, adolescent girls and young children
- Children were advised to not eat 'cold' foods like yogurt and certain fruits that could cause infection.
- Food restrictions for adolescent girls were associated with menstrual health.
- In rural areas, most people believed that pregnant women should eat less in order to have an easy delivery

Pregnant women

- Eat less quantity of food
 - Eat leftover food
 - Avoid eating fruits; dry fruits; rice; meat; fish; eggs
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Adolescent girls - avoid eating sour food items including fruits; protein rich foods like egg/meat

Children - avoid cold foods like yogurt/seasonal fruits in winter season mostly fruits and raw vegetables - orange and radish

"If a pregnant lady eats less the baby will not grow too large. Also, eat less fruits, otherwise the baby will grow in size, and then it is difficult to deliver." - Service Provider, Fatehpur.

Policy implications

- Deeply entrenched social norms and cultural food taboos in India imply that emphasis on healthy diets alone will not be adequate to make a change towards healthy eating for all.
- Need for community education and **social behavior change communication** to give equal priority to women's nutrition.
- Messages to **reinforce positive practices** should be communicated, such as encouraging family members to eat together, sharing equal food servings and sharing household chores to prevent excessive work pressure on women.
- Higher risk of women's undernutrition in poor households, points to the need for **special nutrition programmes for women** in high poverty populations.
- Need to **enhance nutrition awareness of men** and engage them for sustainable social change.

THANK YOU