

# ICRISAT CRP 2 Activity

## Women's Empowerment in Rural South Asia: Micro-level Evidences on Labor Participation, Institutions and Food Security

R Padmaja, MCS Bantilan and K Kavitha

### Introduction

The ICRISAT Village Level Studies (VLS) offer a unique opportunity to look at changes in villages over time. This activity offers a valuable and unique opportunity to examine the gender implications of changes in production systems. The existing panel data for 6 villages in the Semi-Arid Tropics (SAT) of India from 1975-84 and 2001 onwards captures and documents the changes in the farming systems and rural households.



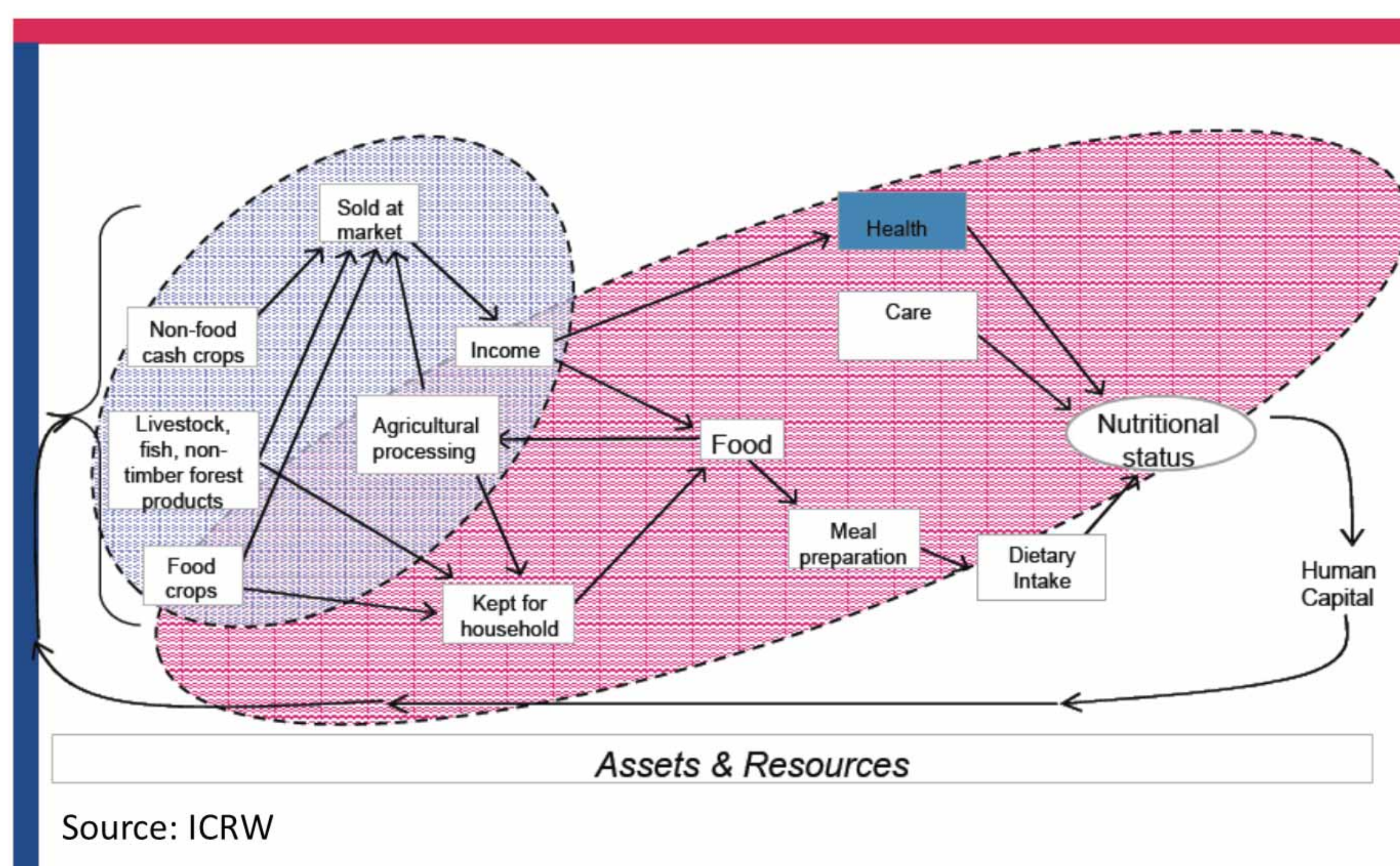
### The proposed activity

This research will augment the VLS data in selected VLS villages, to examine changes over time on gender-related issues. In particular, it will help analyze:

- the current situation of women's participation in rural farm/non-farm enterprise and non-land agriculture employment, and prospects for empowering them;
- the role of different institutions towards empowering women's participation in economic and socio-cultural-political activities, and improving nutritional security of households;
- the documentation of the requirements and nutrient intakes of rural men and women temporally and spatially to understand shift in their nutritional status due to changes in levels of physical activity (eg, mechanization of agriculture) and change in lifestyle; and
- shifts in consumption patterns at different points of time in selected VLS villages of India.



The dataset provides information at the household level on farm economy, other enterprises, income and livelihood options, food expenditure pattern, migration, coping with shocks, risk management and poverty analysis. Results can be compared at a higher, ie, district level, using the time series meso-level data, and help analyze the agriculture and nutrition pathways using a gender lens (Figure 1).



Source: ICRW

Figure 1. Agriculture and nutrition pathways with male (blue) and female (pink) domains.

### What does the data tell us?

#### Per capita expenditure on different food items

Food expenditure pattern of the six VLS villages of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra shows increases over time (Figure 2).

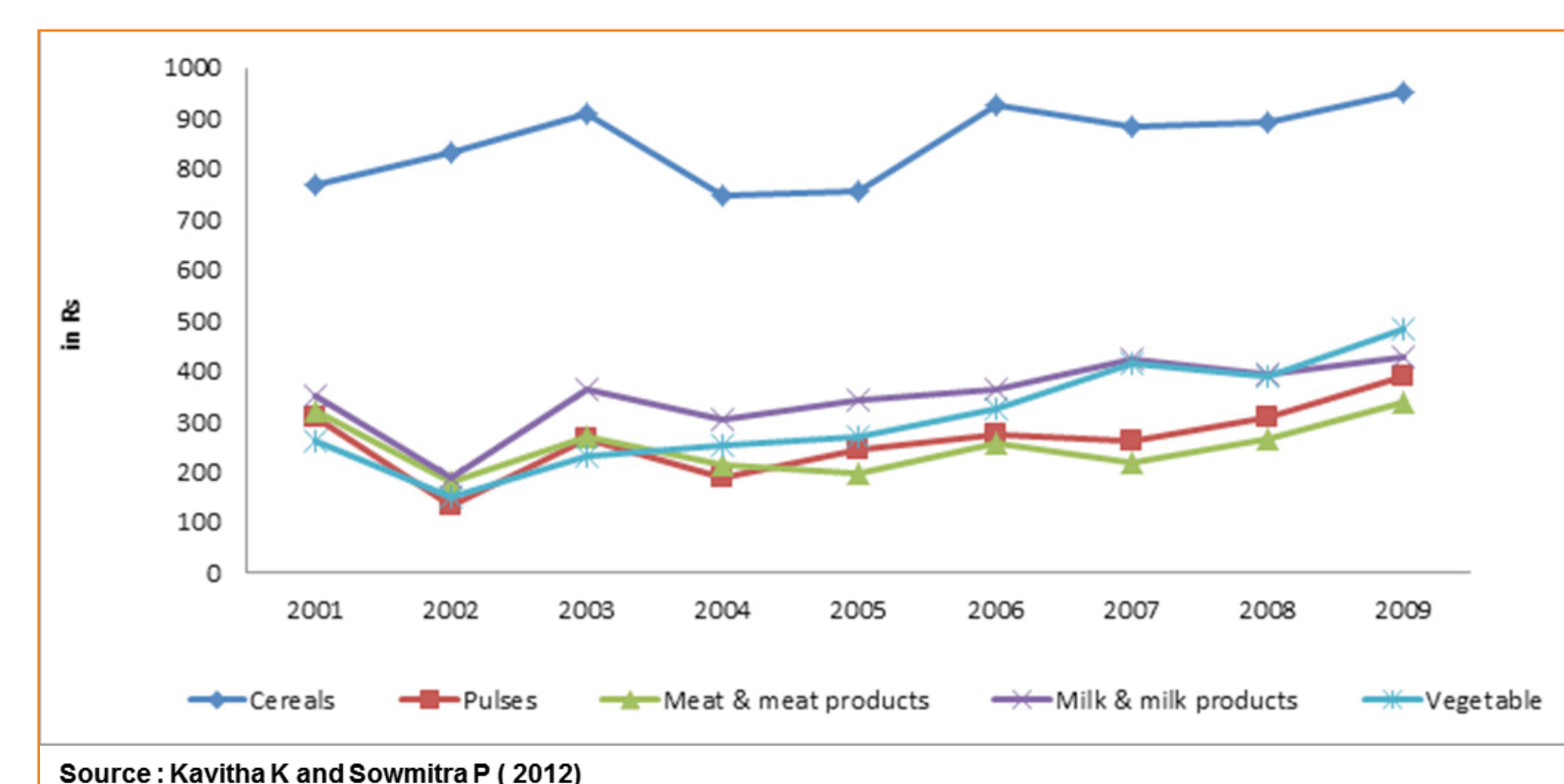


Figure 2. Average per-capita expenditure (in real terms) on different food items in six SAT Indian villages from 2001-09.

#### A hypothesis related to nutrition tested as part of this activity

- Evidence on food intake and nutrition in India point to a decline of average calorie intake during the last 25 years.
- Decline of per capita consumption is not limited to just calories, but to proteins and other nutrients (except fat consumption, which is on the rise both in rural and urban India).
- Anthropometric indicators of nutrition in India, for both adults and children, are among the worst in the world, and the rate of improvement is slow and sluggish.
- Increase in real incomes and real wages, as cited by several researchers, was observed in the VLS villages as well (ICRISAT VLS data 1975-84, 2001-2010). These increases are not clearly reflected in the nutritional well-being of the individuals.

There is no direct link between calories consumed and the nutritional health of an individual.

Since calorie requirements usually rise with activity levels, moderate reductions in activity levels would explain and test the reduction in average calorie intake. However, this hypothesis needs to be tested to find the association between activity levels and calorie intake. The ICRISAT VLS can be one avenue through which this assumption is tested at the micro-level in different production environments. A survey of time allocation coupled with dietary intake would provide some explanation.

### Nutrition in the ICRISAT VLS

S No	Year	Nutrition Variables in the data	Villages covered
1	1975-1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consumption expenditure pattern on food and non-food items</li> <li>Food consumption pattern</li> <li>Food frequency</li> <li>Nutrient Intake</li> <li>Nutritional status: Anthropometry, Clinical examination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Andhra Pradesh: Aurepalle, Dokur</li> <li>Maharashtra: Shirapur, Kalman, Kanzara, Kinkheda</li> </ul>
2	1992-93	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diet survey</li> <li>Food frequency</li> <li>Anthropometry</li> <li>Morbidity for women and children</li> <li>Breast feeding and Reproductive history</li> <li>Quality dietary information</li> <li>Vitamin A frequency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Andhra Pradesh: Aurepalle, Dokur</li> <li>Maharashtra: Shirapur, Kanzara</li> </ul>
3	2000-01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expenditure pattern on food and non-food items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Andhra Pradesh: Aurepalle, Dokur</li> </ul>
4	2001-2005 2006-2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consumption expenditure pattern on food and non-food items</li> <li>Consumption expenditure pattern on food and non-food items</li> <li>Anthropometry (height, weight and mid- upper arm circumference)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Andhra Pradesh: Aurepalle, Dokur.</li> <li>Maharashtra: Shirapur, Kalman, Kanzara, Kinkheda</li> </ul>
5	2009 onwards VDSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consumption expenditure pattern on food and non-food items</li> <li>Anthropometry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>42 villages in SAT India, East India and Bangladesh</li> </ul>
6	2012 – CRP 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>24 hour dietary recall for all members in the household</li> <li>Food frequency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18 villages in SAT India covering five states – Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat</li> </ul>