Exploring the diverse food system of Bangladesh: Unpacking its influence on people's eating habits

Khandaker Sadia Afrin[1], Sadika Haque[2], Abrar Naeb Noman[3], Md. Mehedi Hasan[4], Aunjuman Ara Prithi[5], Mst. Meshkatul Jannat[6], Shafia Najat Hoque[7], Raihana Rahman Rahman[8]

[1] *Bangladesh Agricultural University, Department of Agricultural Economics, Bangladesh*

[2] *Bangladesh Agricultural University, Agricultural Economics, Bangladesh*

[3] *Bangladesh Agricultural University, Department of Agricultural Economics, Bangladesh*

[4] *Bangladesh Agricultural University, Interdisciplinary Institute for Food Security, Bangladesh*

[5] *Bangladesh Agricultural University, Department of Agricultural Economics, Bangladesh*

[6] *Bangladesh Agricultural University, Department of Agricultural Economics,*

[7] *Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Anthropology, Bangladesh*

[8] *Bangladesh Agricultural University, Department of Agricultural Economics, Bangladesh*

Abstract

Food system is a complex web of different activities where actors play an important role in the consumers' food consumption patterns. Consumers all over the world have different perspectives, choices, and habits of food consumption. Different socioeconomic characteristics directly or indirectly influence consumers while consuming food from different groups. Keeping this in mind, the study's objectives were to list the available food items under 12 food groups, explore the major food groups' management system, and find the relationship between food consumption patterns and food management systems. Data were collected from 144 market actors for this study. Value chain analysis was applied to determine the value of adding different foods to the market. Consumers' food consumption pattern was determined through the household dietary diversity (HDD) score. Poisson regression was used to determine the relationship between the food system and the household food consumption pattern. The food management system consisted of actors, marketing channels, financing, marketing information, etc. At the same time, consumer behaviour is strongly correlated with the different food system activities like processing, transportation, sourcing, wholesaling, retailing, and supply from local vendors. The average HDDS was 8.56, indicating that among the 12 food groups, consumers consume almost nine groups regularly. When consumers had higher occupational status, higher income, and higher educational qualification, their HDD score became higher, and they consumed more diversified food as they had higher access and awareness. When consumers buy food from local suppliers, they get more diverse food. On the other hand, wholesalers' transparent activities could reduce food waste, which may eventually increase food consumption patterns. Buying semi-processed foods and buying from the local market also increased food consumption, as the consumption of semi-processed food helped urban consumers save time and buy more diversified food, and reduced the effect of intermediaries in getting the product at a reasonable price. The mode of transportation is also important to reduce food waste and

---

Contact Address: Sadika Haque, Bangladesh Agricultural University, Agricultural Economics, Bangladesh agricultural university, 2202 Mymensingh, Bangladesh, e-mail: sadikahaque@bau.edu.bd

facilitate more diversified food in the market. Finally, based on the findings, some policy recommendations were suggested to improve the food management system and increase the household food consumption pattern.