

# Gender Dimensions in the Backyard Poultry Sector in Sri Lanka

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## Introduction and Aim

- Sri Lankan poultry production is mainly functioning as a broiler, layer, and backyard (DAPH, 2023).
- Backyard poultry as a system that provides both economic and nutritional benefits.
- Backyard farm population is high in Northern, Eastern, and Northern Western provinces (Livestock Statistical Bulletin, 2021).
- Literature suggests that backyard chicken in rural Sri Lankan households is primarily owned by men, although both women and men participate equally in poultry production (Mathavan et al., 2011; Atapattu et al., 2016).
- This study aimed to explore gender roles associated with backyard poultry farming with the specific objectives of to document the key practices that influence health risks and their association with gender, region, and ethnicity.

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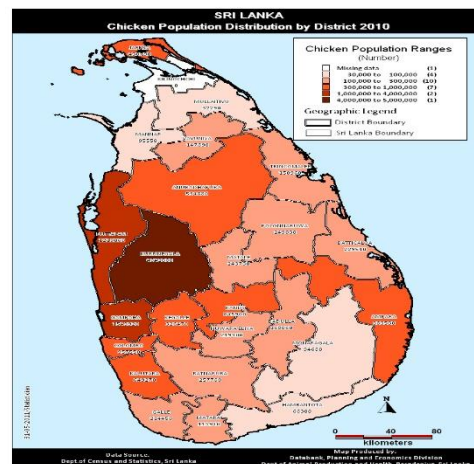
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## Methods

- The study employed secondary data and primary data collected through ethnographic methods such as semi-structured interviews and field observations.
- Households raising backyard chickens in Northern, North-western, and Eastern provinces selected using the snowball sampling method.
- A total of 30 backyard farmers were interviewed (15 Male, 15 Female)



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## Results and Discussion

- Backyard farms exhibit a significant gender-based division of labour in North Western and Eastern Provinces.
- Men perform the heavy work, while women perform caregiving tasks and tasks that require less physical strength.
- Women in Northern Province not only performed strenuous tasks, but they were also more independent in decision-making and financial management.
- Laxity towards health and hygiene in all provinces regardless of gender or ethnicity. Considerable reliance on traditional treatment methods, informal purchasing of medicine over the counter, and consulting of fellow farmers.

## Conclusions

- The study concluded that gendered division of labour is practised among Sinhala and Muslim communities whereas Tamil women were independent in many senses due to their pre-exposure to war and hardship.
- Hygienic practices were poor regardless of gender or ethnicity in all three provinces.

