

CONSUMER PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR AND MEAT CONSUMPTION PATTERNS IN TAMIL NADU

P. Sivakumar^{1*}, P. Vignesh² and R. Kiruba³

Department of Food Processing Technology
College of Food and Dairy Technology
Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University
Koduveli, Chennai – 600 052

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the factors influencing meat purchasing behavior among consumers across different districts in Tamil Nadu. Using data collected through Google Forms, the research highlights variations in meat consumption, expenditure, packaging preferences, and awareness of online meat delivery platforms, along with demographic characteristics, purchasing habits, and preferences regarding meat products. The findings emphasize the influence of socio-economic factors, awareness of processed meats, hygiene concerns, and online purchasing behavior in shaping consumer decisions. Significant differences were observed across districts, primarily driven by variation in urbanization, income levels, and awareness of hygiene standards. The results revealed that chicken was the most preferred meat (58.5%) followed by seafood (19.4%) and chevon (7.2%). The frequency of meat consumption in Tamil Nadu indicated that once a week (37.5%) followed by twice a week (29.4%). A majority of respondents (73.5%) were aware about processed meat. Additionally, 64% preferred consuming meat in gravy form. 61.8% of consumers expressed their reason for meat purchase based on quality and followed by price (11.8%). Overall, the study concludes that improving hygiene standards, ensuring certified meat products, and promoting hygienic packaging and food safety awareness- while leveraging the rise of online meat purchasing can better address evolving consumer expectations across urban and rural markets in Tamil Nadu.

Key words: Meat, consumption pattern, online meat, processed meat, packaging

Received : 04.06.2025

Revised : 16.12.2025

Accepted : 24.12.2025

INTRODUCTION

Over the next 25 years, many developing countries are expected to undergo economic transformation and rapid urbanization. Changes in tastes and lifestyles associated with urban living will likely have a significant impact on food consumption patterns. Among animal-based protein foods,

¹Assistant Professor

* Corresponding Author Email: drsivata@gmail.com

²B.Tech Final Year (Food Technology),

³B.Tech Final Year (Food Technology),

meat occupies a dominant position in the food chain (Chemnitz and Becheva, 2014). In India, the availability of meat is relatively lower compared to other developing nations. As of 2024, India provides only about 19.5 g of meat per person per day, significantly below the ICMR's recommended intake of 80 g per person per day (Islam *et al.*, 2016). Studies by Jackson *et al.* (2016) indicate a promising link between meat consumption and improved iron status. Despite cultural and traditional influences on meat consumption, both production and demand have been rising considerably. The Indian meat industry has witnessed substantial growth, driven by urbanization, evolving dietary habits, and increasing disposable incomes (Mittal, 2020). Understanding consumer purchasing behavior is essential for retailers and policymakers to address demand trends, hygiene concerns, and the growing popularity of online meat delivery services. Tamil Nadu, known for its rich culinary heritage, has a diverse consumer base with varied preferences for meat products. Recognizing regional differences in consumption patterns, spending habits, and consumer awareness is crucial for improving meat supply chains and ensuring food safety. This study examines household consumption levels and patterns of animal-based foods in rural and urban households across Tamil Nadu, considering income levels and socio-economic categories.

The meats commonly consumed in India include chicken, chevon, mutton, beef and carabeef, sea foods, pork. Religious beliefs and cultural preferences significantly influence meat consumption patterns in

India. The consumption pattern of livestock products like meat and meat products has changed a lot with the purchasing power and availability of a variety of meat products. In earlier years, the price of meat and meat products were a major concern, but in recent days many factors like age, sex, family size and income are involved in the expenditure on meat and meat products. Generally, the food consumption pattern changes among the sex. Men consume heavily food than women. Likewise, the preference for meat, place of meat and meat products consumption, and place of meat purchase is also varying depends upon the generation or age factor. During recent years, younger individuals prefer fast foods, street foods and restaurants whereas old age people always prefer homemade foods. These behavioural factors influence meat consumption patterns among people.

Knowledge about food demand and consumer behaviour towards food is essential for finding answers to various policy development issues like improvement in nutritional status, food subsidy, and sectoral, etc. Therefore, to assess the food security-related policy issues an analysis of food consumption patterns and how these patterns are likely to shift due to changes in income and relative prices are required (Mittal, 2020). Hence, this study was planned to get data on meat consumption patterns among the rural and urban areas of Tamil Nadu, so that the choice of preference of meat and more information regarding meat consumption will be obtained to determine the meat consumption pattern.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A Google Form questionnaire was distributed to consumers across various districts in Tamil Nadu. Four hundred respondents participated in this study to provide information on meat consumption patterns and preferences towards meat and meat products through the Google Forms platform. The survey gathered information on demographic details, meat consumption patterns, purchasing preferences, awareness of online meat delivery platforms, packaging preferences, and hygiene-related certifications. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis to identify trends and relationships. The least significant differences were calculated at the appropriate level of significance following analysis of variance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results shows in Table 1 revealed that most of the heads of households belonged to the middle age group of 30–75 years. The majority of families had an annual income of less than Rs.2,00,000 (69.4%), followed by those earning between Rs. 2,00,001–5,00,000 (14.7%), and above Rs. 5,00,000 (16%). Regarding occupation, the majority were self-employed or entrepreneurs (33.7%), followed by those engaged in agriculture (26.7%), government sector employees (20.9%), and private sector employees (18.7%). In terms of family size, 64.0% of the households had fewer than 5 members, 12.5% had exactly 5 members, and 23.5% had more than 5 members. Most respondents had attained primary education,

ranging from 1st to 10th standard (42.6%), followed by educated up to the intermediate level (26.7%), illiterates (13.8%), degree holders (11.3%), and postgraduates (5.6%). The results of meat consumption pattern of various districts of Tamil Nadu are presented in Table 2. It revealed that most of the people preferred poultry meat (58.5%) followed by fish& sea food (19.4%), chevon (6.4%), mutton (7.2%) and beef 7%) and very less percentage of people preferred to take pork (1.5%). This may be because of the religious restrictions which influences the meat consumption patterns of the people in a religious country like India. Table 2 also revealed that most of the people were consuming meat once in a week (37.5%) followed by for twice a week (29.4%) and thrice a week (11%). A similar type of result was found with Thammi Raju and Suryanarayana (2005). The difference in the frequency of consumption of meat may be attributed to individual taste, specific occasions like festivals and cost. Most of the people purchased meat based on quality (61.8%) and followed by price (11.8%), taste (10.3%). Most of the people purchased meat from local butchers (97.1%). Hence, this indicates a strong preference for fresh meat (100%). This influence the most preferred packaging meat type was fresh (unwrapped) around 80.9%. Most respondents were aware of online meat delivery platforms (62.5%), and the reason for purchasing an online meat for convenience (45.6%), followed by discount and offers (15.3%) and hygienic standards (28.5%). Monthly meat purchases ranged from 1–2 kg (47.8%), followed by 3–4 kg (17.6%). In terms of monthly meat expenditure, the majority of people spend

Rs. 1000–2000 (41.2%), followed by those who spend less than Rs. 1000 (27.2%). The awareness about processed meat and meat products was comparatively low with the results of 13.5% of respondents having knowledge about processed meat and meat products.

The hygiene conditions of slaughter and meat selling areas were perceived as moderately satisfactory by the majority of respondents (55.1%), while 27.2% expressed satisfaction and 17.6% reported dissatisfaction. Furthermore, 32.4% of consumers indicated that they never verify certification prior to purchasing meat, whereas 29.4% stated that they check certification only occasionally. The predominant method of cooking meat among respondents was frying (47.1%), followed by steaming (39%). In terms of preferred

meat-based dishes, gravy preparations were most favored (64%), while biriyani was the next preferred choice (29.4%).

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the dynamic nature of meat purchasing behaviour in Tamil Nadu. Retailers should focus on improving hygiene standards and offering certified products to meet consumer expectations. Urbanization, income levels, and awareness of hygiene standards are key factors influencing these behaviours. The growing trend of online meat purchasing presents new opportunities for businesses, while the demand for traditional fresh meat remains strong in rural areas. The various efforts to improve food safety awareness and promote hygienic packaging could further Influence the consumer preferences over different types of meat

Table.1. Social and Educational Background of the Respondents

Particulars	Percentage (%)	Particulars	Percentage (%)
Income (in Rs/Annum)		Family size	
Low (<2,00,000)	69.4	<5members	64
Medium (2,00,001-5,00,000)	14.7	>5members	23.5
High (>5,00,000)	16	5 members	12.5
Occupation Type		Education	
Agriculture/Farming	26.7	Illiterate	13.8
Self-employed/Entrepreneur	33.7	Up to10th	42.6
Government Sector	20.9	Up to Higher Secondary	26.7
Private Sector	18.7	Undergraduate	11.3
		Postgraduate and above	5.6

Table.2. Meat Consumption Patterns of Various District of Tamil Nadu.

Particulars	Percentage (%)	Particulars	Percentage (%)	Particulars	Percentage (%)	Particulars	Percentage (%)
Meat of Choice		Weekly thrice	11	Reason of purchase meat online		Hygiene level satisfactory overall	
Chicken	58.5	Monthly twice	11.8	Convenience	45.6	Satisfied	27.2
Mutton	6.4	Specific occasion	3.7	Discount & offers	28.5	Moderately satisfied	55.1
Chevon	7.2	Rarely	3.7	Hygienic standards	15.3	Not satisfied	17.6
Beef and Carabeef	7	Place usually purchase meat		Varieties	16.8	Check for certification (e.g., Organic, FSSAI)	
Pork	1.5	Local Butchers	97.1	Average quantity of meat purchase /month		Always	3.6
Fish/Seafoods	19.4	Gather from own farm	0.7	1-2kg	47.8	Sometimes	14.4
Choice of meat purchase		Supermarket	0.7	2-3kg	14.7	Rarely	19.6
Quality	61.8	Others	1.5	3-4kg	17.6	Never	62.4
Price	11.8	Mostly preferred type		4-5kg	10.3	Preferred method of cooking meat	
Taste	10.3	Fresh	100	>5kg	9.6	Frying	47.1
Nutritional	7.4	Frozen & Dried	---	Average monthly expense of meat		Grilling	2.9
Availability	6.6	Preferred packaging of meat		<Rs.1000	27.2	Steaming	39
Variety	0.7	Fresh (unwrapped)	80.9	Rs.1000-2000	41.2	Others	11
Occasion	0.7	Vacuum sealed	11.8	Rs.2001-3000	15.4	Most prepared meat food	
Others	0.7	Plastic wrapped	4.4	Rs.3001-4000	8.1	Biryani	29.4
Frequency of consumption		Aware of online meat		>Rs.4000	0.0	Gravy	64
Daily	2.9	Known	62.5	Aware about processed meat		Deep fried items	3.7
Weekly once	37.5	Not Known	37.5	Known	13.5	Snack items	1.5
Weekly twice	29.4			Not Known	86.5	Others	1.4

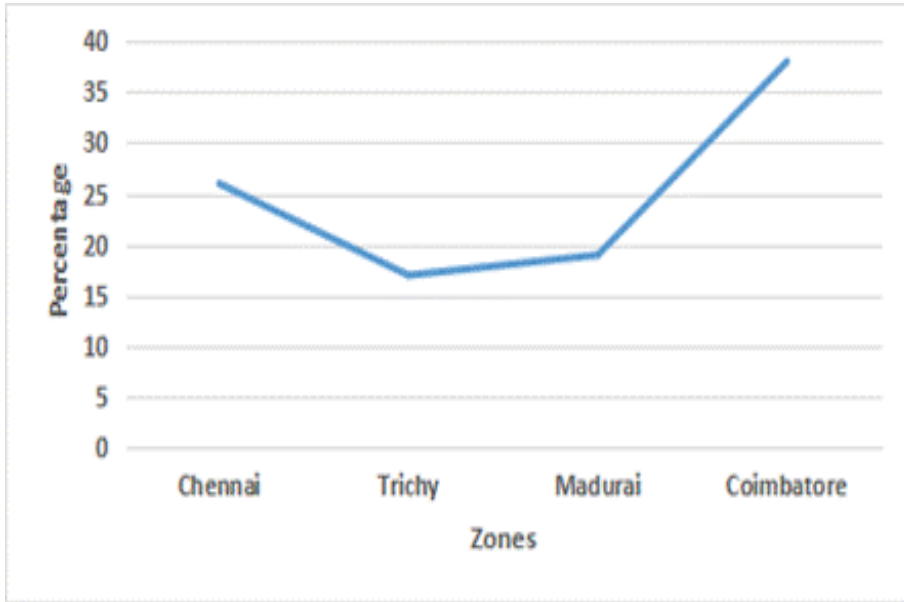


Fig.1. Zone wise response of meat consumption patterns

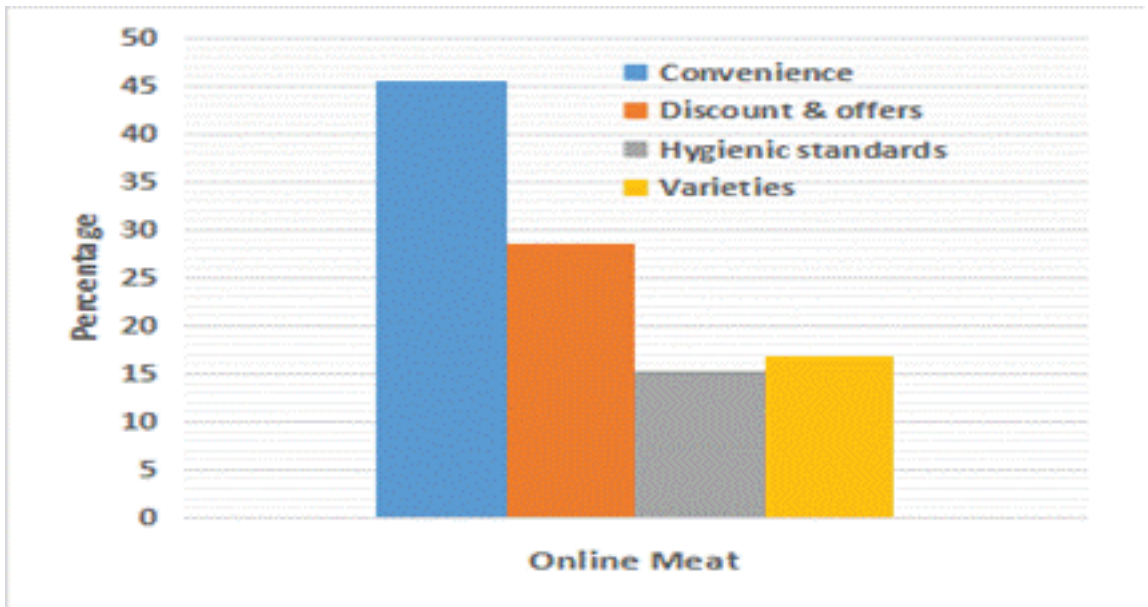


Fig.2. Reason of purchase meat online

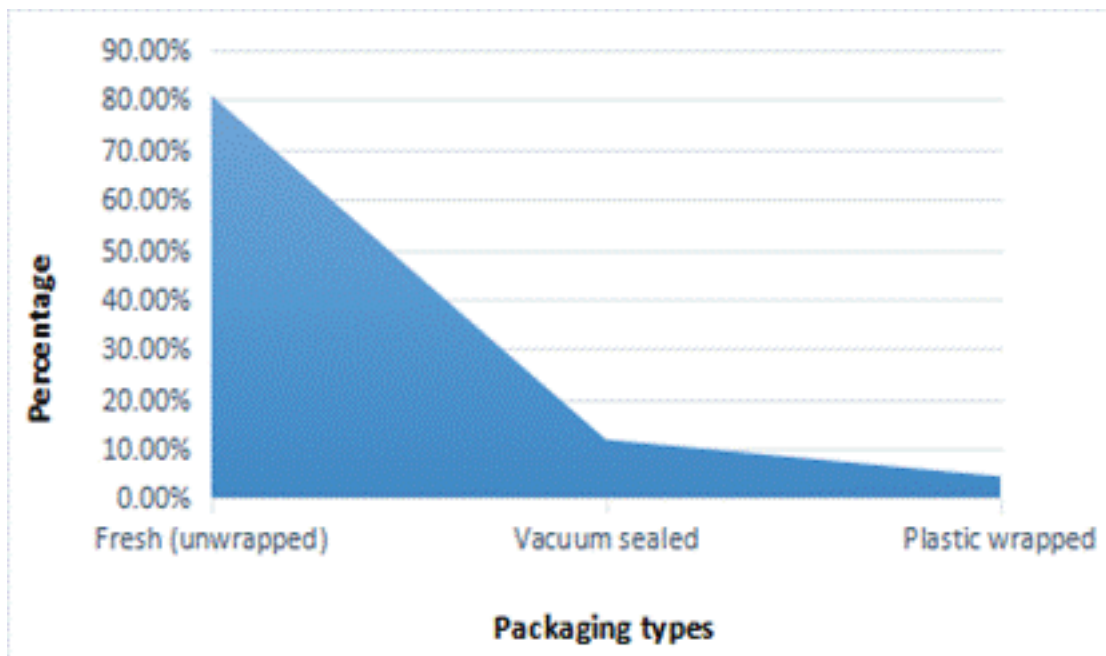


Fig.3. Preferred packaging of meat

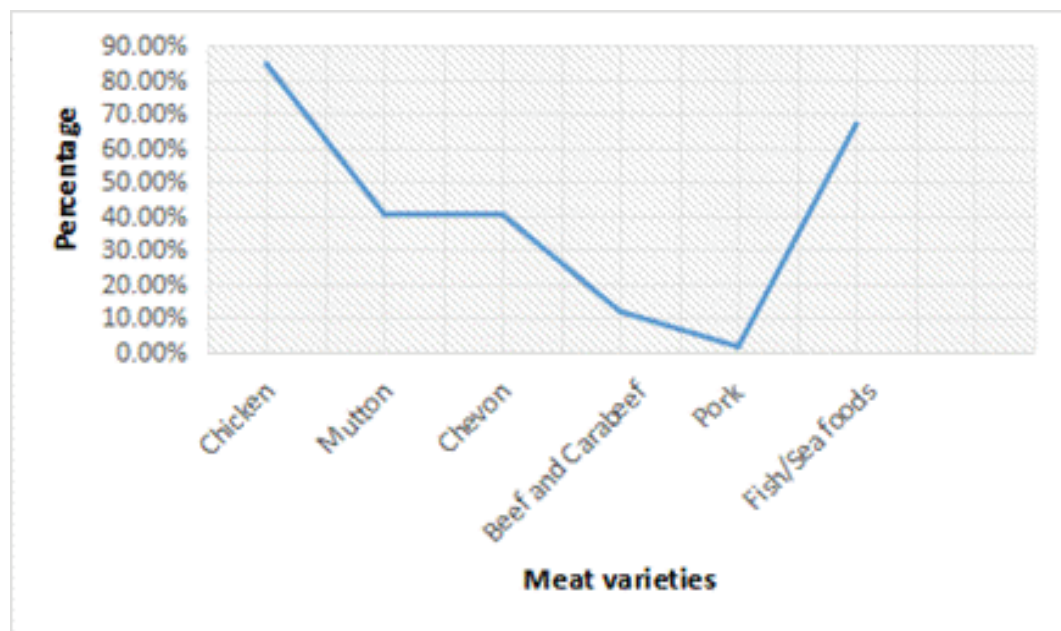


Fig.4. Choice of meat

REFERENCES

- Chemnitz, C and Becheva, S (2014). Meat Atlas. Retrieved 24 February 2014 from: www.foeurope.org/meatatlas.
- Islam, M.M., Anjum, S., Modi, R.J. and Wadhvani, K.N. (2016). Scenario of livestock and poultry in India and their contribution to national economy. *International Journal of Science, Environment and Technology*, **5**(3): 956-65.
- Jackson, J., Williams, R., McEvoy, M., MacDonald-Wicks, L. and Patterson, A. (2016). Is higher consumption of animal flesh foods associated with better iron status among adults in developed countries? A systematic review. *Nutrients*, **8**(2): 89.
- Mittal, S. (2020). Structural shift in demand for food: Projections for 2020. Working Paper No. 184, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, New Delhi 2006.
- Thammi Raju, D. and Suryanarayana M.V.A.N. (2005). Meat consumption in Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh: an analysis. *Livestock Research for Rural Development*, **17** (11).