Women and Food Security: quantifying the pathways, feedbacks, and tradeoffs

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This presentation discusses and quantifies the many different pathways that forest-dependent women can influence food security. Women are vital to food security and can impact food directly through how they spend their time, how much money they earn, influence they have over income and production decisions. Women can also influence food security through their level of education and through serving in public office, which is associated with reduced drudgery and unpaid work for women. We used structural equation modeling to simultaneously test regressions across a network of variables. We find that a women’s influence over income, the amount she makes, and her education level are all positively impact food security at a similar level. We also find that unpaid labor is negatively associated with food security, and reserved seats for women can reduce women’s drudgery and have a positive, marginal impact on food security indirectly. If natural-resource dependent women are going to continue to be targeted for income diversity projects, we need to better understand how this may directly and indirectly affect food security.