

Changing Pattern of Consumption Expenditure in India

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Abstract

Understanding the changes in the demand for different commodities is necessary for economic planning and designing appropriate policies related to production and distribution. As the consumption expenditure reflects the demand for goods and services, this paper examines the consumption expenditure and its changing pattern in rural and urban India using the data published in the quinquennial surveys on consumption expenditure conducted by NSSO during 27th to 66th rounds of NSS in the years 1972-73 to 2009-10. It was observed from the study that there has been a tremendous increase in the consumption expenditure in both rural and urban India. A continuous fall in the proportion of food expenditure accompanied by the increasing share of non-food expenditure was observed in both rural and urban India. Among the food items, the shares of expenditure on cereals and grams have been much higher in rural areas than in urban areas. Further a larger increase in the share of expenditure on miscellaneous goods and services in both rural and urban areas indicate a greater consciousness of health, education and other human development-related issues in both rural and urban areas.

Keywords: Economic Planning, Consumption Expenditure, Rural and Urban

Introduction

Most of the countries have been experiencing a drastic change in the roles of the Government and the market in bringing about their economic development. The primary objective of the Government in bringing about development has been on the conventional wisdom of economic growth, emphasizing the role of capital accumulation which depends primarily on domestic savings. Also the domestic capital is an important input for a rapid and all-round development, but what is most important is investment. Along with the value of internal

savings, the value of investment depends upon the level of consumption which pushes up the investment to a higher level. (Pankaj K. Prabhat, 1998)

There are various impediments, regional and household specific factors that affect the consumption pattern and have implication of overall demand pattern. This further affects the flow of output and consequently affects growth rate well. Thus, household consumption pattern can very well produce far-reaching growth implications.

Need for Studies on Consumption Expenditure Pattern

The need for studies on consumption expenditure pattern in developing countries like India is felt especially because development brings about significant changes in the size and structure of population, urbanization, attitudes and aspirations of various social classes and in the patterns of consumption. (Kamal, Vatta and R.S. Sidhu, 2007) The exercises of consumption expenditure pattern in relating to such factors are of immense value for gaining knowledge about the future demand for different commodities and for effective socio-economic development planning.

As per the basic objective of economic planning in developing countries, a rise in real per capita income is usually accompanied by an increase in the demand for different commodities. If the supply of these commodities falls short of the demand, the deficit will lead to rising prices of these goods, and also a rise in the general price level. Any effort made to meet this deficit by means of imports may require cutting down of imports which may hinder the economic development. On the other hand, if the supply exceeds demand for different consumer goods, the price level will fall and consequently reduce the income of the producers as well as consumers. This may cause reduction in the demand for both industrial and agricultural products. In either situation, the process of economic development will be hampered. Thus, the production of goods and services should be planned in such a way that the level of the future production of goods and services should match the future demand conditions reflected by future consumption pattern.

It is therefore, valuable to have a knowledge of the future demand for different consumer goods. The need for such knowledge is further heightened by the fact that in developing

countries, the increased incomes in the hands of the poor, will generate a rapid increase in the demand for consumer goods. In countries like India, having considerable quantum of inequality in income levels, the understanding of the nature of demand conditions by the different sections of people is necessary in planning for the smooth functioning of the process of economic growth. Hence, the studies on consumption expenditure pattern in India are very useful in order to build up the planning strategies effectively. In this direction, the analysis of changing household consumption pattern over time would help in designing appropriate policies related to production and distribution. (Venkateswara Rao.A and B.B.Sahep, 2012)

Objectives

In this direction, the basic objective of this research work is to analyze the changing pattern of consumption expenditure in India. The study focuses on the analysis of consumer behavior in terms of household consumption expenditure at the aggregate level as well as aiming to access the interregional variations in rural and urban areas with the possible time trends. The specific objectives of the study are as follows.

- i) To determine the magnitude and composition of household consumption pattern in India during the period from 1972-73 to 2009-10.
- ii) To trace the item-wise changes in the consumption pattern of food and non-food items in rural and urban India.

Methodology

This study is based on the secondary data collected from the reports of various rounds of NSSO surveys on 'Household consumer expenditure'. From NSS 27th round on 1972-73, Consumption Expenditure surveys became a quinquennial survey integrated with employment and unemployment surveys. In order to access the changing pattern of the consumption expenditure on various items in rural and urban areas in India, the relevant data published in the reports of eight quinquennial surveys conducted so far in 27th, 32nd, 37th, 42nd, 47th, 52nd, 57th and 62nd rounds of NSS are used in this study. The data on the monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) on the various items of food and non food expenditure in rural and urban areas from 1972-73 to 2009-10 are used for the analysis.

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N.Surendran, Research Scholar and B.Mathavan, Professor of Economics, Annamalai University
Changing Pattern of Consumption Expenditure in India

Changing Pattern of Consumer Expenditure

The structural changes in the consumption expenditure in rural and urban areas have been assessed by taking the MPCE at current prices reported in the quinquennial survey of NSSO from 1972-73 to 2009-2010. The proportion of food and non food expenditure during the period is rural and urban India in given in table-1.

Table – 1: Pattern of MPCE among Food and Non food items in Rural and Urban Areas in India

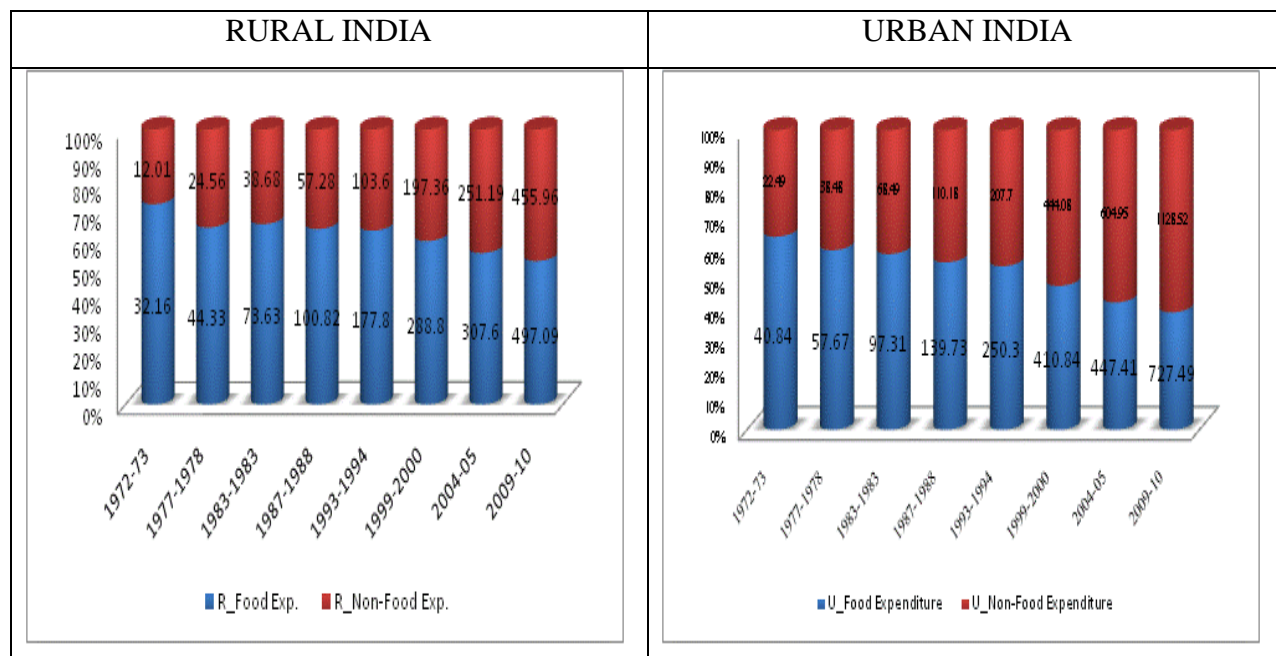
YEAR	Expenditure in Rural India			Expenditure in Urban India		
	Food	Non-Food	Total	Food	Non-Food	Total
1972-73	32.16 (72.81)	12.01 (27.19)	44.17 (100)	40.84 (64.49)	22.49 (35.51)	63.33 (100)
1977-1978	44.33 (64.35)	24.56 (35.65)	68.89 (100)	57.67 (59.98)	38.48 (40.02)	96.15 (100)
1983-1983	73.63 (65.56)	38.68 (34.44)	112.31 (100)	97.31 (58.69)	68.49 (41.31)	165.80 (100)
1987-1988	100.82 (63.77)	57.28 (36.23)	158.10 (100)	139.73 (55.91)	110.18 (44.09)	249.92 (100)
1993-1994	177.80 (63.18)	103.60 (36.82)	281.40 (100)	250.30 (54.65)	207.70 (45.35)	458.00 (100)
1999-2000	288.80 (59.40)	197.36 (40.60)	486.16 (100)	410.84 (48.06)	444.08 (51.94)	854.92 (100)
2004-05	307.60 (55.05)	251.19 (44.95)	558.78 (100)	447.41 (42.51)	604.95 (57.49)	1052.36 (100)
2009-10	497.09 (52.16)	455.96 (47.84)	953.05 (100)	727.49 (39.20)	1128.52 (60.80)	1856.01 (100)

Values in the parameters' are percentage to the total.

Source: NSSO Reports, Level and Pattern of Consumer Expenditure, (1993-94 to 2009-10),

Government of India.

Chart – 1: Food and Non food Expenditure in Rural and Urban Areas in India



The MPCE in rural India was 44.17 in the year 1972-73 and it has increased to 158.1 in 1987-88. Within the next decade it had tripled, to Rs.486.16 in 1999-2000 and it became Rs.957.05 in 2009-2010. The enormous increase in these figures in the recent decades was due to the faster economic development as well as the inflationary pressure. It is further evident that the proportion of food expenditure has sharply declined from 72.8% in 1972-73 to 65.56% of the total expenditure in 1983-84 and currently it has become 52.16% in 2009-2010. This continuous decline in the proportion of expenditure to food item indicates that there has been an enormous increase in the expenditure allotted for non-food items. The proportion of expenditure to non-food items has increased from 27.19% in 1972-77 to 36.33% in 1987-88 and it rose to about 47.84% in 2009-2010.

In urban India, the MPCE has increased from Rs.63.33 in 1972-73 to 458 in 1987-88; and further to Rs.1856.01 in 2009-10 at current prices. The proportion of food expenditure had also declined from 64.49% in 1972-73 to 39.20% in 2009-2010; and the proportion of total expenditure allotted to non-food items has increased from 35.51% in 1972-73 to 60.80% in 2009-2010.

It has been observed from these results that during the entire period under study from 1972-73 to 2009-10, there had been about a twenty fold increase in MPCE in rural area and around thirty fold increases in it for the urban households. Furthermore, the decline in the proportion of expenditure for the food items was higher in urban areas than the areas of the rural India. Thus, in order to ideality the specific item in food and non-food categories, causing these types of changes, expenditure on individual item have also been looked into for rural and urban households; the values of the consumption for the broad groups of item per person in rural and urban India for the period from 1972-73 to 2009-10 are given in tables 4 & 5 respectively.

Based on the data given in the NSSO reports, in the study, all the food items are classified into ten categories. In rural India ‘Cereals, cereals substitutes and grams’ constitute the major food expenditure in the year 1772-73, and 41.68% of the total MPCE was only for the category. The absolute value of MPCE on ‘Cereals and grams’ had increased from Rs.18.41 in 1972-73 to Rs.68.90 in 1993-94 and further to Rs.147.23 in 2009-10 at the current prices. However, the proportion of total allotted for this expenditure experienced a sharp decline from 41.68% in 1972-73 to 24.48% in 1993-94 and further to 15.45% in 2009-10. As Cereals and pulses are the basic food items and most important necessary items for the livelihood of rural India, the greater proportion of the expenditure was allotted to this in the 1970s. As this was already fulfilled, only very marginal spending was allotted from the increased income due to the implementation of various developmental progress and speedy economic activity. Thus, though there is an increase in expenditure on ‘Cereals and grams’ in absolute terms, there was a sharpened decline in this proportion of expenditure on this item.

Table – 2: Value of consumption (Rs) of broad groups of items per person in Rural areas for a period of 30 days over NSS round from 1972-73 to 2009-10

Items / Year	1972-73	1977-1978	1983-1983	1987-1988	1993-1994	1999-2000	2004-05	2009-10
Cereals, Cereal substitutes and Grams	18.41 (41.68)	23.11 (33.55)	36.71 (32.69)	41.92 (26.51)	68.90 (24.48)	108.75 (22.37)	101.77 (18.21)	147.23 (15.45)

Pulses & pulse products	1.89 (4.28)	2.63 (3.82)	3.98 (3.54)	6.27 (3.97)	10.70 (3.80)	18.50 (3.81)	17.18 (3.07)	34.23 (3.59)
Milk & milk products	3.22 (7.29)	5.29 (7.68)	8.50 (7.57)	13.63 (8.62)	26.70 (9.49)	42.56 (8.75)	47.31 (8.47)	80.16 (8.41)
Edible oil	1.55 (3.51)	2.46 (3.57)	4.53 (4.03)	7.88 (4.98)	12.50 (4.44)	18.16 (3.74)	25.72 (4.60)	34.15 (3.58)
Egg, Fish & Meat	1.09 (2.47)	1.84 (2.67)	3.37 (3.00)	5.11 (3.23)	9.40 (3.34)	16.14 (3.32)	18.60 (3.33)	32.26 (3.38)
Vegetables	1.59 (3.60)	2.60 (3.77)	5.31 (4.73)	8.23 (5.21)	17.00 (6.04)	29.98 (6.17)	34.07 (6.10)	57.20 (6.00)
Fruits & Nuts	0.45 (1.02)	0.77 (1.12)	1.54 (1.37)	2.57 (1.63)	4.90 (1.74)	8.36 (1.72)	10.42 (1.86)	14.88 (1.56)
Sugar	1.66 (3.76)	1.82 (2.64)	3.18 (2.83)	4.51 (2.85)	8.60 (3.06)	11.57 (2.38)	13.25 (2.37)	22.63 (2.37)
Salt & Spices	1.23 (2.78)	2.09 (3.03)	2.82 (2.51)	4.52 (2.86)	7.40 (2.63)	14.41 (2.96)	13.90 (2.49)	22.33 (2.34)
Beverages, etc.	1.07 (2.42)	1.72 (2.50)	3.69 (3.29)	6.18 (3.91)	11.70 (4.16)	20.38 (4.19)	25.37 (4.54)	52.03 (5.46)
Total Food	32.16 (72.81)	44.33 (64.35)	73.63 (65.56)	100.82 (63.77)	177.80 (63.18)	288.80 (59.40)	307.60 (55.05)	497.09 (52.16)

Pan, tobacco & intoxicants	1.36 (3.08)	1.99 (2.89)	3.35 (2.98)	5.03 (3.18)	8.90 (3.16)	13.96 (2.87)	15.03 (2.69)	20.59 (2.16)
Fuel and light	2.49 (5.64)	4.13 (6.00)	7.92 (7.05)	11.77 (7.44)	20.70 (7.36)	36.56 (7.52)	56.84 (10.17)	87.79 (9.21)
Clothing	3.09 (7.00)	5.99 (8.70)	9.64 (8.58)	10.52 (6.65)	15.10 (5.37)	33.28 (6.85)	25.33 (4.53)	57.61 (6.04)
Footwear	0.23 (0.52)	0.51 (0.74)	1.11 (0.99)	1.55 (0.98)	2.50 (0.89)	5.37 (1.10)	4.24 (0.76)	10.05 (1.05)
Miscellaneous goods & services*	3.89 (8.81)	7.12 (10.34)	14.06 (12.52)	22.78 (14.41)	48.70 (17.31)	95.43 (19.63)	130.52 (23.36)	220.61 (23.15)
Durable goods	0.95 (2.15)	4.82 (7.00)	2.60 (2.32)	5.64 (3.57)	7.70 (2.74)	12.76 (2.62)	19.23 (3.44)	39.30 (4.12)
Total: Non-Food	12.01 (27.19)	24.56 (35.65)	38.68 (34.44)	57.28 (36.23)	103.60 (36.82)	197.36 (40.60)	251.19 (44.95)	455.96 (47.84)
Total Expenditure	44.17 (100)	68.89 (100)	112.31 (100)	158.10 (100)	281.40 (100)	486.16 (100)	558.78 (100)	953.05 (100)

Values in the parameters' are percentage to the total.

Source: NSSO Reports, *Level and Pattern of Consumer Expenditure, (1993-94 to 2009-10)*,

Government of India.

*Medical, education, entertainment, minor durable goods, toilet articles, other household consumables, consumer services, conveyance.

Next to the 'cereals and grams'; 'pulses and pulse products'; 'milk and milk products'; 'edible oils'; 'egg, fish and meat'; 'vegetables' and so on are the major food consumables. Among the various categories of food items, the proportion of expenditure to the total has declined for 'pulses and pulse products' (4.28% to 3.59%), 'sugar' (3.76% to 2.37%) and 'salt and spices' (2.78% to 2.74%). However, in rural areas, it could be found that the proportion of expenditure has increased for the items, 'Milk and milk products' (2.79% to 8.41%), 'egg, fish

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N.Surendran, Research Scholar and B.Mathavan, Professor of Economics, Annamalai University
Changing Pattern of Consumption Expenditure in India

and meat' (2.47% to 3.38%), 'vegetables' (3.6% to 6%), 'fruits and nuts' (1.02 to 1.56%) and 'beverages' (2.42% to 5.46%). The expenditure on all the six classes of the non-food item has also recorded an increase in absolute terms. Furthermore, the proportion of expenditure on 'fuel and light', 'foot wear', 'miscellaneous goods & services' and 'durable goods' has recorded a sharp increase during the period from 1972-73 to 2009-10. However, 'pan, tobacco and intoxicants' and 'clothing' are the other two items for which the proportion expenditure to the total has declined.

In urban India also the food habits are almost similar to the rural India as 'Cereals, Cereal substitutes and grams' are the major food items. However, the proportion of income allotted for this is comparatively lower than the proportion in rural area. Further, the proportion of income allotted to this is declining from 23.76 percent in 1972-73 to 15.02 percent in 1987-88 and further to 8.88 percent in 2009-10. The expenditure of all other food items taken together is around 40 percent in 1972-73 and around 30 percent in 2009-10. Even though there is an absolute increase in the amount spent on various food items, the proportion of expenditure is very low. Also, the proportion of expenditure to the total has declined for all the food items, except fruits and nuts for which there was a slight increase from 2.01 percent in 1972-73 to 2.25 percent in 2004-05.

Table – 3: Value of consumption (Rs) of broad groups of items per person in urban areas for a period of 30 days over NSS round

Items / Year	1972-73	1977-78	1983-83	1987-88	1993-94	1999-2000	2004-05	2009-10
Cereals, Cereal substitutes and Grams	15.05 (23.76)	20.00 (20.80)	32.29 (19.48)	37.55 (15.02)	65.40 (14.28)	106.87 (12.50)	107.44 (10.21)	164.85 (8.88)
Pulses & pulse products	2.16 (3.41)	3.43 (3.57)	5.32 (3.21)	8.44 (3.38)	13.90 (3.03)	24.25 (2.84)	22.51 (2.14)	47.61 (2.57)
Milk & milk products	5.91 (9.33)	9.16 (9.53)	15.27 (9.21)	23.84 (9.54)	44.90 (9.80)	74.17 (8.68)	83.30 (7.92)	138.71 (7.47)

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Edible oil	3.07 (4.85)	4.46 (4.64)	7.98 (4.81)	13.23 (5.29)	20.10 (4.39)	26.81 (3.14)	36.37 (3.46)	46.10 (2.48)
Egg, Fish & Meat	2.07 (3.27)	3.33 (3.46)	5.93 (3.58)	8.85 (3.54)	15.50 (3.38)	26.78 (3.13)	28.47 (2.71)	48.03 (2.59)
Vegetables	2.77 (4.37)	4.23 (4.40)	8.17 (4.93)	13.12 (5.25)	25.00 (5.46)	43.90 (5.13)	46.84 (4.45)	76.66 (4.13)
Fruits & Nuts	1.27 (2.01)	1.88 (1.96)	3.48 (2.10)	6.27 (2.51)	12.20 (2.66)	20.68 (2.42)	23.65 (2.25)	37.37 (2.01)
Sugar	2.28 (3.60)	2.54 (2.64)	4.06 (2.45)	5.86 (2.34)	10.90 (2.38)	14.00 (1.64)	15.88 (1.51)	27.60 (1.49)
Salt & Spices	1.44 (2.27)	2.55 (2.65)	3.55 (2.14)	5.78 (2.31)	9.40 (2.05)	19.11 (2.24)	17.65 (1.68)	27.59 (1.49)
Beverages, etc.	4.82 (7.61)	6.09 (6.33)	11.26 (6.79)	16.82 (6.73)	33.00 (7.21)	54.28 (6.35)	65.31 (6.21)	112.97 (6.09)
Total: Food	40.84 (64.49)	57.67 (59.98)	97.31 (58.69)	139.73 (55.91)	250.30 (54.65)	410.84 (48.06)	447.41 (42.51)	727.49 (39.20)
Pan, tobacco & intoxicants	1.75 (2.76)	2.34 (2.43)	4.05 (2.44)	6.53 (2.61)	10.70 (2.34)	16.22 (1.90)	17.04 (1.62)	21.91 (1.18)
Fuel and light	3.57 (5.64)	6.17 (6.42)	11.40 (6.88)	16.72 (6.69)	30.20 (6.59)	66.26 (7.75)	104.62 (9.94)	142.76 (7.69)
Clothing	3.34 (5.27)	6.78 (7.05)	12.80 (7.72)	15.00 (6.00)	21.40 (4.67)	51.76 (6.05)	42.09 (4.00)	98.59 (5.31)
Footwear	0.26 (0.41)	0.59 (0.61)	1.84 (1.11)	2.69 (1.08)	4.20 (0.92)	10.05 (1.18)	7.17 (0.68)	19.75 (1.06)
Miscellaneous goods & services	12.17 (19.22)	14.05 (14.61)	33.85 (20.42)	58.64 (23.46)	126.00 (27.51)	268.94 (31.46)	391.22 (37.18)	752.98 (40.57)
Durable goods	1.40 (2.21)	8.55 (8.89)	4.55 (2.74)	10.60 (4.24)	15.20 (3.32)	30.85 (3.61)	42.81 (4.07)	92.61 (4.99)
Total: Non-Food	22.49	38.48	68.49	110.18	207.70	444.08	604.95	1128.52

	(35.51)	(40.02)	(41.31)	(44.09)	(45.35)	(51.94)	(57.49)	(60.80)
Total Expenditure	63.33	96.15	165.80	249.92	458.00	854.92	1052.36	1856.01
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)

Values in the parameters' are the percentage to the total.

*Source: NSSO Reports, Level and Pattern of Consumer Expenditure, (1993-94 to 2009-10),
Government of India.*

**Medical, education, entertainment, minor durable goods, toilet articles, other household consumables, consumer services, conveyance.*

Unlike the food items, the proportions of expenditure on the non-food items have been increasing for all the items except 'pan, tobacco & intoxicants' as well as 'clothing'. Among all the expenditure category, 'miscellaneous goods & services' stands in the first position for which the proportion of expenditure on this item has increased from 19.22 in 1972-73 to 31.41 in 1999-2000 and further to 40.57 percent in 2009-10. A shift in the consumer preference from public to private for acquiring the human development related services like health and education is the major factor for the high expenditure on 'miscellaneous goods and services'. For all other non-food items also there has been an increasing proportion of expenditure.

Thus, it was observed from the above two tables that in rural India, the proportion of expenditure on certain food items have increased where as in urban India the proportion of expenditure on all the food items have declined during the period 1972-73 to 2009-10. However, evidences show that the expenditure on various non-food items has increased at higher proportion both in rural urban areas. Further, the major differences in the expenditure Patten in rural and urban areas lies in three categories viz. The expenditure on food items is more than half of the total expenditure in rural areas, but in urban if is less than 40 percent. The decrease in the proportion of food expenditure is much faster in urban areas than in rural India; and in urban India, the proportion of high quality food items have increased faster than in the rural areas of India.

Conclusion

At all India level, a continuous decline in the share of food expenditure accompanied by a tremendous increase in the share of non-food items were observed in both rural and urban areas.

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N.Surendran, Research Scholar and B.Mathavan, Professor of Economics, Annamalai University
Changing Pattern of Consumption Expenditure in India

Secondly, among the food items, the shares of expenditure on cereals and grams have been much higher in rural areas than in urban areas. Also, among all other food items, this shows a largest decline in the share of expenditure on it, indicating that there is a shift in the food habit from cereals to other quality food items like, 'milk and milk products', 'Egg, fish and meat' 'vegetables', 'fruits and nuts'; and most significantly 'beverages, etc'., not only in urban areas, but also in rural areas.

Further, a larger increase in the share of expenditure on 'miscellaneous goods and services' in both rural and urban areas indicates a greater consciousness on health, education and other human development related issues in both rural and urban areas. Thus, examining the changes in expenditure pattern in rural and urban India leads one to understand the changes in demand pattern of the various food and non-food items in different regions. This will help the policy makers to plan for the changing investment pattern in various productive and other services sector. Again, at the organization level, the enterprises should plan to have a structural shift in the production modalities towards non-food items and to have the consideration on rural marketing, as the consumption pattern has shifted towards non-food items in both rural and urban areas.

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