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## THE STRUCTURE OF FOOD CONSUMPTION OF URBAN KERALA

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### ABSTRACT

*Kerala has a unique place among the states of India because of its development experience. And Kerala is well known for its consumerism. This also seen in the food consumption structure of Keralite, especially urban people. Unlike rural people the raw food items are not seen in the food basket of urban people. Processed and packed food items are the choices before them. They are the fans of junk foods. The cost of these types of food items are very high. So this paper dealing with the food structure of urban people in Kerala.*

*For this purpose a study is conducted among the urban people in Calicut city. The study covers both the urban poor and rich people. The study reveals that both the rich and poor people consume these processed food and high cost high protein food. But the frequency is lesser for poorer people. From this paper we can see there is a type of demonstration effect- "keep up with John's". This paper also very helpful to examine the changing consumption structure of Kerala.*

**KEY WORDS:** Food Consumption, Urban, Processed Food, Demonstration Effect.

### INTRODUCTION

In economics, the consumption is a process of getting satisfaction by using goods and services. Through consumption pattern one can understand the structure of living standard of all people and this structure reveals economic inequality among different classes. Thus the structure of consumption is changing as per the income level of the individuals. In absolute terms rich spend more on all items including food than the poor people. But in relative terms the scene is quite different. The share of expenditure made by poor people on food is greater. In economics terminology, we can say that the propensity to consume is greater for poorer section compared to the richer group.

Food being the foremost basic need of every creatures including human beings. So that it gets preferences in the patterns of expenditure of people, especially the poor classes. The demand

for food depends mainly on income of the consumer and price of the commodity. The growth in income is slower than the growth in price of the commodity. which badly affect the mere consumers. At a more or less constant income level, a rise in price leads to reducing purchasing power of the people.

In India, Kerala is a small state, but its development experience has attracted attention from the whole world. Kerala has a unique development experience in the sense that without having economic infrastructure, Kerala could achieve a high HDI comparable to some of the developed countries. Instead of unbalanced trickle-down theory Kerala adopted balanced redistribution policies. This lead to a remarkable achievement in all social and educational spheres which inturn increase the well-being of the people.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVE

Though Kerala is well known for its development aspects, its primary sector shows a stagnant trend. Agricultural production has shrunk and demand of the State is met from the neighbouring states like, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. In Kerala, price structure of the essential commodities especially vegetables and meat increased day by day due to inadequate domestic production and supply of these products. The people from Kerala act as consumers and a culture of consumerism is developed in Kerala. Among them urban people are act as mere consumers than the rural people. So being the largest urban band in the country, Kerala occupies second position in urban MPCE. (NSSO, 68<sup>th</sup> round).

In urban area food items are supplied only through market. There is lesser provision of domestically produced food items. They can't access raw food items like the rural people. Most of the choices before them is packed food or processed food. So it adversely affect the economically backward classes. Moreover in a state like Kerala where a well redistribution system existed the poor people (BPL households) got necessary food items at a very cheaper rate through PDS and through other fair price shops. So it is very important to compare the demand for food, especially processed and high protein variety of food by different income groups.

## DATA SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY

Both primary and secondary data will be used in this study. Though this study mainly based on sample survey conducted in Calicut district. As per 2011 census 67.15% of total population of Kozhikode district living in urban area and only 32.85% are from rural area. For this study a sample of 60 households are taken and out of this 60 households 30 are from richer section and 30 from poorer section. The classification is done on the basis of poverty line that is APL and BPL. Secondary data from journals, economic reviews, census reports and different websites.

This study focused mainly on demand for processed food and also high protein variety of food. Processed food is the food item which can directly consume without further processing. It comprises packed food like, junk food, and other fast food items. High protein variety of food consist of meat, fish, dairy products etc. This study focused classified food categories in to three- bakery items, fast food and meat and fish

items. Bakery items include biscuits, dairy products, packed chips, and other sweet items. Some statistical tools like averages, percentages, correlation, t test etc are used

## SOCIO ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE DATA

In order to understand the consumption pattern on processed and high protein food consumption a sample of 60 households are surveyed. Out of this half of the sample 30 are from poor people and 30 from richer section. The classification is done on the basis of poverty line i.e., APL and BPL.

There is much difference in the average income of richer and poorer sections. The average income of the poor people is Rs.6200 and the mean income of the APL is RS.45166 (table 1). Regarding the nature of employment, most of the urban poor belongs to government servants and professionals, where as their rural counterparts engaged in informal sector activities. More than 75% of the urban poor have loan and other financial liabilities compared to the richer sections. Only the richer people saves and poorer people struggle with their day to day needs.

There exists a very important relationship between income and food consumption expenditure. It is given in Table 2 by measuring the correlation between them. As per the correlation result, for both rich and the poor people income and consumption move together. But the degree of relationship is more for richer sections than the poorer. For the richer community, .506 is the degree of relationship whereas for BPL families it is 0.429. That means there is high correlation between income and food consumption expenditure for richer groups than urban poor. This is because of well redistribution system followed by Kerala and also the consumption habit of richer sections. They spend their income on high priced, high quality varieties of food and also they mainly depends so called branded malls for their basic needs.

Kerala is well known for its re distribution system. The public distribution system is very strong in Kerala. Some other fair price shops like maveli store, supplyco, Nanma store are functioning well in Kerala. Since public distribution system is targeted, it only concentrates on BPL. So there is no APL preferences towards PDS. From the diagram 1 it is clearly say that poor people depend mainly on PDS and other fair price shops like supply co. whereas richer sections buy their important food items from super market and hypermarket. This is

the case of the staple food items like rice, wheat, cereals etc. But for all the other food items both the richer and poorer section should depend on open market.

As per 68<sup>th</sup> round of NSSO data Kerala occupies second rank in the monthly percapita consumption expenditure on food. It is very interesting to know the differences in the monthly percapita expenditure of rich and poor people (table.3) As per the survey data the differences in the monthly percapita consumption expenditure is negligible.

In order to understand the consumption pattern on processed food items and high protein variety of food, study is considering Bakery items, fast food items, dairy products etc.

### **CONSUMPTION OF BAKERY ITEMS AND FAST FOOD**

Bakery items are the best examples of processed food. Here in this survey bakery items include biscuits, chips, sweets etc. in order to know whether there is any differences in the consumption expenditure of rich and poor on bakery items. To test this t test is used (table.4)

$$t = 2.82$$

$$df = 58$$

$$p \text{ value} = 0.007$$

since the p value is less than 5% there is significant difference in the consumption expenditure of bakery items. That means richer section spend more on bakery items. Fast food is the culture of urban area. As per the survey data the richer sections are the main consumers of fast food (table.5). This is because of high price of these type of food.

### **CONSUMPTION OF MEAT AND FISH**

Among the surveyed people more than 96% of people are non-vegetarians. So the consumption of meat and fish is very important both for APL and BPL. Here the study take chicken, beef, and egg and fish items. Regarding the consumption of chicken the richer group consume more than the poorer section (table.6). But the case of other meat items are different. The poorer section prefer other meat to chicken (table.7). All the families except the vegetarians consume egg (table.8). This is because egg is a very rich in protein and vitamins, and is cheap also.

To know whether there is any differences in the average consumption expenditure of fish t test has been used(table.9).

$$t = 0.582$$

$$df = 58$$

$$P \text{ value} = 0.56$$

From the result, it can be understood that there is no significant difference in the consumption expenditure on fish by richer and poorer sections. Both spend more or less equal amount for buying fish. this is because fish became a part of food culture of Keralites.

### **CONSUMPTION OF MILK AND DAIRY PRODUCTS**

Milk is considered as a complete food. It contains protein and minerals. As per the study (table.10) most all the people consume milk and other dairy products daily. Dairy products includes milk peda, paneer, curd, ghee etc. We have to check is there any significant difference in the consumption expenditure of dairy products. For this purpose also t test is used.(table.11)

$$t = 0.964$$

$$df = 58$$

$$P \text{ value} = 0.33$$

From the result it can be analyzed that there exists no significant difference in the consumption expenditure of milk. This is because Kerala people are more health conscious and since they are getting essential commodities at a very low price, they divert the rest of their income on milk.

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

Food can be classified as basic necessities and high protein and processed food. The present study focused on the second category. The study attempts to compare the demand for these types of food by richer and poorer sections. The study compared the consumption of processed food, fish & chicken and milk and other dairy products.

- there is high difference in the average income of the APL and BPL, whereas no significant difference in the consumption expenditure.
- For processed bakery items there exist a significant difference in the consumption expenditure by APL and BPL families. Rich people spend more on bakery items.
- The main consumers of fast food are the richer sections. But some of the poor people also consume fast food items.
- There is no significant difference in the consumption expenditure on fish by

richer and poorer sections. Both spend more or less equal amount for buying fish. This is because fish became a part of food culture of Keralites.

- There exists no significant difference in the consumption expenditure of milk. This is because Kerala people are more health conscious and since they are getting essential commodities at a very low price, they divert the rest of their income on milk.

In this sample area the people prefer non-vegetable items largely. Reason for this trend is that the culture of people in this area.

APL households more prefer super market than PDS and retail shops for purchasing food items. Because from there they gets what they wants at any time at reasonable price. In supply co and PDS there is some limitations in the quantity of items we gets. Most APL households, who were employed, have no time to go supply co and PDS's and they go to super markets as it is available at their time.

For the consumption of fish and milk both the rich and poor people spend more or less equal amount. This may be a sign of imitation, habit, health consciousness, culture etc.

## TABLES AND DIAGRAMS

**Table 1. Average income of rich and poor households**

POVERTY LINE		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
APL	INCOME	30	20000	200000	<b>45166.67</b>
	Valid N (listwise)	30			
BPL	INCOME	30	4000	10000	<b>6200.00</b>
	Valid N (listwise)	30			

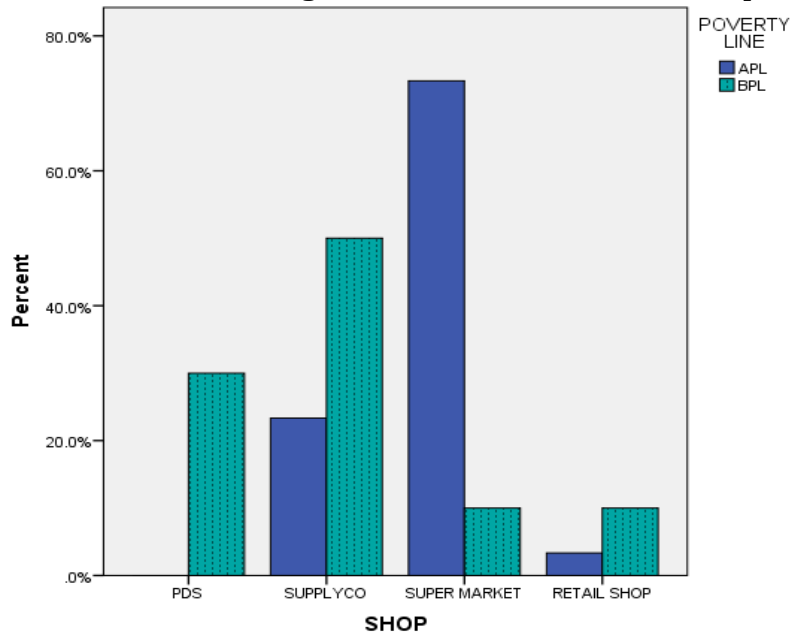
Source: sample survey

**Table 2 Correlations**

POVERTY LINE			Total exp on food	INCOME
APL	Total expon food	Pearson Correlation	1	.506**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
		N	30	30
	INCOME	Pearson Correlation	.506**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
		N	30	30
BPL	Total exponfood	Pearson Correlation	1	.429*
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.018
		N	30	30
	INCOME	Pearson Correlation	.429*	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.018	
		N	30	30
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				
Source: calculated from sample survey				



**Diagram 1. Preferences towards shops**



Source: sample survey

**Table3.Monthly expenditure on food**

POVERTY LINE		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
APL	Total exp on food	30	4000	9500	6607.83	1361.299
BPL	Total exp on food	30	3500	7600	5476.67	1137.051

Source: sample survey

**Table.4 Independent Samples Test**

BAKERY ITEMS		t-test for Equality of Means						
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
exOnBI	Equal variances assumed	2.820	58	.007	115.000	40.784	33.362	196.638

Source: calculated from samples

Table 5. FAST FOOD * POVERTY LINE				
Count				
Time period (weekly)		POVERTY LINE		Total
		APL	BPL	
FAST FOOD	NEVER	2	13	15
	ONCE	15	16	31
	2-4 TIMES	10	1	11
	MORE THAN 4 TIMES	3	0	3
Total		30	30	60

Source: sample survey

Table.6 CHICKEN * POVERTY LINE Cross tabulation				
Count				
		POVERTY LINE		Total
		APL	BPL	
CHICKEN	NEVER	2	1	3
	ONCE	15	21	36
	2-4 TIMES	9	2	11
	MORE THAN 4 TIMES	3	0	3
	VERY RARE	1	6	7
Total		30	30	60

Source: sample survey

Table.7PORKampBEEF \* POVERTY LINE Cross tabulation

Count				
		POVERTY LINE		Total
		APL	BPL	
PORKampBEEF	NEVER	18	6	24
	ONCE	8	14	22
	VERY RARE	4	10	14
Total		30	30	60

Source: sample survey

Table: 8EGGS * POVERTY LINE Crosstabulation				
Count				
		POVERTY LINE		Total
		APL	BPL	
EGGS	NEVER	2	0	2
	ONCE	5	8	13
	2-4 TIMES	7	7	14
	MORE THAN 4 TIMES	16	14	30
	VERY RARE	0	1	1
Total		30	30	60

Source: sample survey

Table:9Independent Samples Test								
FISH		t-test for Equality of Means						
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Expntre on fish	Equal variances assumed	.586	58	.560	70.000	119.440	-169.085	309.085

source: sample survey

TABLE:10 DIARY * POVERTY LINE				
Cross tabulation				
Count				
In a day		POVERTY LINE		Total
		APL	BPL	
DIARY	NEVER	2	1	3
	ONCE	25	28	53
	2-4 TIMES	3	1	4
Total		30	30	60

source: sample survey

TABLE.11Independent Samples Test								
		t-test for Equality of Means						
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
monthly expenditure on milk	Equal variances assumed	.964	58	.339	34.500	35.804	-37.170	106.170
	Equal variances not assumed	.964	50	.340	34.500	35.804	-37.409	106.409

source: sample survey

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