

FOOD CONSUMPTION PATTERN IN PAKISTAN: RECENT INTERPROVINCIAL EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE.

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ABSTRACT

Food consumption pattern of households living in Pakistan has attained great importance by the researchers. Hence the said study is to analyze the food consumption pattern to conduct descriptive statistics through the adult equivalent (AE) approach by calculating the average monthly consumption per AE for 13 food items and average monthly relative share of each food items. Using the cross sectional household level data (PSLM: round 1 (2004-2005) collected by the Federal Bureau of Statistics, Islamabad,

We come to know that the sequence of the use of 13 food items in Pakistan is very close to the natural phenomenon of prevailing conditions in Pakistan. As Milk, Meat and Cereals are used as major food items by the majority of the households in Pakistan. On other hand the use of Jams and Biscuits is very small in four provinces of Pakistan. All these results have been estimated keeping in view the average relative share and per adult equivalent approach.

Keywords:

INTRODUCTION

Food plays a basic part for the existence of human being that enables the body to perform economic activity. In other words, food may be eaten or drunk, which can be absorbed by the body as a source of energy. So food is very essential for good health and also important by economic viewpoint. Since human body needs various food items for maintaining good health. That's why it is also necessary to study the food consumption pattern. For this reason, we are interested in knowing the food consumption pattern adopted by the different provinces of Pakistan; we intend to know whether the food consumption pattern is different among the provinces. This reason has motivated us to undertake the study of food consumption pattern across the provinces.

Food consumption pattern is considered by two aspects: one to estimate the average food expenditure per adult equivalent, and other is to estimate the relative share of these food items. Almost all the earlier studies takes into account the food

consumption pattern on per capita basis by giving equal weight to all family members irrespective of the age and gender of the household members. It is not very realistic approach because the food consumption is different for different household members based on the age and gender. Therefore, we used adult equivalence (AE) approach to assess the food consumption pattern. AE approach does not give equal weight to each member of the household, but considers each member equivalent to adult. There are different scale of adult equivalence used in the literature, but we adopted the AE scale used by Qureshi and Arif (2001)

In a developing country like Pakistan, consumption pattern undergoes significant changes over time as real income increases. Hence investment decisions also changes with the change in consumption pattern. (Siddiqi 1982)

According to Engel's law, with an increase in income, share of expenditure on food items in total expenditure of household tends to decrease (Siddiqi 1982). Moreover in poor

family greater proportion of total expenditure is spent on food.¹

As far as supply of the food stuff is concerned, Government of Pakistan makes a number of decisions about the supply of essential food items and often intervenes in the market to regulate the prices of such food items. Furthermore government can also generate more revenues by levying taxes on commodities with inelastic demand. However, all these aspects can be covered by considering and pondering over food consumption pattern by different angles that are left for further analysis by the other researchers.

The very next section describes the earlier studies about the food consumption behavior. Section 3 tells us the methodology used in the paper. Data and estimation are outlined in section 4. Discussion of results in shown follows the section 4. Conclusion comes at last.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE.

Research on estimating consumer preferences for food items in Pakistan has been growing. Over past three decades, numerous studies have estimated household consumption pattern in Pakistan. Much have been explored in this context. For instance, Burki (1997) and Ali (1982) have discussed the urban and rural composition of food for Pakistan. Further discussion is also done in estimating food demand in Pakistan by Ali (1982) Burki (1997) and Cheema (1984). The need to reduce dependency on food imports and to meet gap between consumption and production is crucial for a country with a high population growth rate. It is highlighted by (Zulkifly et al. 1986).

They have used cross section data from the Household Income and Expenditure surveys (HIES). Most studies tested for the validity of Engel's law using double log specification on a single equation [Burney

and Khan (1991)]. The inconsistent nature of the double logarithmic specification to consumer's utility maximization is well documented in Deaton and Muellbauer (1980). It is supported by Barki (1997) that the idea, only changes in relative incomes and expenditures do not fully explain the observed food consumption pattern in Pakistan. So the existence and the nature of structural change in consumer preferences must be tested by using generalized axioms, of revealed preference and (LAI AIDS) (Almost Ideal Demand System) The argument that growth and equality are two opposite objectives. Available evidence from the developing countries does not seem to support of the trickle down theory. Hence redistribution of income among different groups is therefore emerging as an important policy objective in Pakistan too. (Cheema and Malik 1984)

As available land and water resources dwindle in many developing countries, future growth in food production will have to come from further intensification of agriculture in both the high and low potential areas. Hence **Mohayidin M'Ghazali and Zaitan Samdin** conducted a study that Malaysia in take is relatively high then that of other developing countries and quiet close to that of many developed countries. The objective of the said study is to estimate food availability through the use of the food balance sheet to appraise the sources and use of food. In the other studies like Lu, jia rui (2000), Haq Mahbu bul (1976) also stress estimation of consumption pattern using per capita income but no one showed the effect of economies of household size and also about differences between rich and poor countries in the effect of household size on food demand. Therefore it was not possible to estimate average monthly

¹ Siddiqi 1982.

expenditure on food items, without considering adult equivalent. This initiative motivated us to conduct a study on the basis of adult equivalent and relative share of 13 food items.

METHODOLOGY

Since the households consumes many food items, but we have included the major food items including cereals, pulses, ghee, tea, Biscuits, jams, milk, meat, fruits, vegetables, sugar, squashes and other.² Since we are interested to estimate inter provincial food consumption pattern. So we have considered two aspects: one is the average monthly expenditure on different food items on the basis of per adult equivalent (AE) in four provinces of Pakistan. Other is the estimation of the relative share of each of the 13 food items out of total food expenditure. However we have compared the behavior of food consumption of all the four provinces in terms of both aspects.

DATA AND ESTIMATION

This study documents the research results for food consumption behavior by using Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey (PSLM 2004-2005) Round 1. The Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey is one of the main mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the PRSP. Information was collected from households on a range of social sector issues. These are primarily focused on the sectors covered under Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) It provides a set of representative, population-based estimates of social indicators and their progress under the PRSP. These include intermediate as well as .output measures, which assess what is

being provided by the social sectors. This survey offers rich information and data for estimating food demand in Pakistan. We will continue our collaborative efforts to learn about inter provincial food consumption behavior from the unique data source.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As already mentioned, our study is being made through Adult equivalence, hence keeping it in view, we come to know that the milk and cereals are the food items having the highest monthly expenditure on average in four provinces of Pakistan. Details are given in the Table 1. When we look across the provinces, Milk has the highest expenditure in monthly food expenditure that is Rs.187.73 in Punjab. Whereas, in all other provinces, Cereals has the highest monthly expenditure, as Rs 153 in Sindh, Rs. 169 in NWFP and Rs 179 in Baluchistan. Similarly all food items are also compared across the provinces. Pulses, ghee, milk, fruit and other food items have the highest expenditure in Punjab. Cereals, Tea, meat and vegetables are highly consumed in Boluchistan. Jams, squashes and biscuits have the highest expenditure in Sindh. While sugar is highly consumed in NWFP, it is the customary habit of this province.

² All the remaining four items are grouped together in this category.

TABLE 1: Provincial Monthly Expenditure per AE

Items	Provinces			
	Punjab	Sindh	NWFP	Boluchistan
Cereals	145.79	153.15	168.96	179.54
Pulses	20.61	16.35	18.14	19.79
Ghee	74.04	63.42	72.58	69.06
Tea	15.93	27.70	25.91	29.97
Biscuits	17.59	24.68	23.19	14.31
Jams	12.85	13.78	10.44	12.42
Milk	187.73	148.75	128.05	125.99
Meat	102.86	126.44	88.55	145.11
Fruits	44.05	34.30	36.63	35.37
Vegetables	99.37	102.40	83.43	114.55
Sugar	46.54	45.02	60.88	50.15
Squashes	25.42	39.47	26.91	26.03
Other food items	112.04	81.24	84.50	61.78

Note: Results are calculated by the authors

The above table is depicting actual phenomena of the facts existing in four provinces of the Pakistan in two-folds. One is the horizontal and other is the vertical.

After a complete discussion on the average monthly expenditure per AE, another aspect being considered in our research is average relative share on each food item out of total expenditure. While looking the matter minutely, another way to perceive consumption pattern is, to check provincial average relative share of each food item. In this concern the Table 2 depicts that in Punjab, Average relative share on Milk is 23%, but in all other provinces the greatest

average relative share is of Cereals i.e. 22%, 26% and 25% for Sindh, NWFP and Boluchistan, respectively. When we study this aspect to compare the provincial use of 13 food items horizontally, Cereals has the greatest relative share in NWFP (26%); in Baluchistan it is 25%, in Sindh and Punjab it is 22%. Ghee in NWFP, Milk and its products are being consumed highest in Punjab. Meat, vegetables are in Boluchistan. Sugar and other food items are in NWFP. On the other hand, fruits, jams, biscuits and tea are almost equally consumed in all the provinces. The rest of the details are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Average Relative Share of Food Items

Food items	Provinces			
	Punjab	Sindh	NWFP	Boluchistan
Cereals	22%	22%	26%	25%
Pulses	3%	2%	3%	3%
Ghee	10%	9%	11%	9%
Tea	2%	4%	4%	4%
Biscuits	2%	2%	3%	2%
Jams	2%	2%	1%	2%

Milk	23%	19%	18%	15%
Meat	11%	15%	11%	17%
Fruits	5%	4%	5%	4%
Vegetables	14%	14%	12%	15%
Sugar	6%	6%	9%	7%
Squashes	3%	3%	2%	3%
Other food items	9%	8%	10%	6%

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

An empirical analysis of 13 food items in Pakistan comes to the conclusion that Milk is the most preferred food item consumed in Punjab, while Cereals are the most preferred food items consumed in each month in the rest of the provinces in Pakistan. So we can recommend that Cereals as major food item being used by the 75 percent households in Pakistan as a top priority. And we have the robust results for the relative share of food items. That is, milk has the highest relative share in all the food items in Punjab. Further, in Sind, NWFP and Baluchistan, Cereals have the highest relative share. In other words, we can say that except Baluchistan all the people spend the highest relative share on Cereals.

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