Hierarchical Shifts and Convergence in Food Consumption Pattern
Implications for Food Security Strategy
(Based on results of a FAO study on select Asian countries)

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The Database and Limitations

- Large Sample data from the 50th Round (1993-94) and 66th Round (2009-10) of National Sample Survey in India and similar national surveys in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines, and Vietnam.

- Commodity classification made roughly similar for all countries, twelve categories.

- Analysis through percentage share and per capita consumption of different items.
Multi Layered Commodity Classification

**Aggregative Level:** 1. Food, (a) cereal, (b) non-cereals and 2. Non food


Factors of Differentiation/Deprivation in Food Security

- Levels of eco development of countries/provinces
- Place of residence: rural and urban
- Expenditure Categories of HHs – Bottom 30%, middle 40% and top 30%
- Religious groups - Hindu, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs & Others
- Social groups – SC, ST & Others
- The Year of the information
Shares of Food and Items in MPCE & in Food Expenditure

- Share of food in MPCE declined - rural from 64 to 54, urban 54 to 43; cereal - rural 26 to 16, urban 15 to 9: Greater shift from cereal to non cereal in rural & from food to nonfood in urban 1987-88 and 2009-10
- Decline in cereal rural (R) 13.4 kg to 11.3 kg, urban (U) 10.6 kg to 9.4 kg; all expenditure categories 1993-94 - 2009-10
- Increase in processed food, vegetables, milk, pulses, egg-fish-meat-beef and in fruits & spices in both R & U
- Decline R & U in alcohol-pan-tobacco, edible oil & sugar other drinks
- Increase in dining out and processed food
Empirically determined postulates/hypotheses on pattern of Food consumption in the countries and provinces under study

- Share of cereal is high in a) less developed countries & states – Vietnam Bangladesh etc. within India Bihar, UP, Orissa, b) rural areas c) socially marginalised communities and d) bottom 30 per cent households.

- Developed countries/states high on non cereal, milk, vegetables.

- With economic growth, urbanisation modernisation & shift from lower to higher exp category, the share of cereal falls and there is trend towards convergence. Differentiation manifest in non food consumption.

- Strong correspondence between rural and urban both in level and change in consumption pattern.
Issues of Concern

- Indeed there is convergence. Cereal and pulses declined more in rural than urban areas; in poorer than richer states; for bottom 30% than top 30%, bringing the former to alarmingly low level of nutritional deficiency.

- Increase in Gourds, milk, vegetables, pulses and non-food but not always adequate to compensate calorie deficit: shift for taste and convenience than nutrition.

- No regional dimension in decline in cereals; high decrease in dev states but also less dev states.

- Increase in processed food and eating out.

- Per capita calorie decline? Difficult to establish without knowing calorie in processed food and shift to root veg. and other food items. Calorie fundamentalism? High health inequality (UNDP) can be linked to this.
Hierarchical shift in per capita consumption of food items 1993-94 to 2009-10

- Aggregation into commodity groups reduces the variation. Low shift across the categories. Substitution within group.
- Within cereals, better quality, more expensive
- Within vegetables, decline in leafy & other veg but increase in gourds. More for convenience than nutrition
- Within non-veg. beef, pork & even mutton decline but increase in chicken and egg & edible oil. Increase sharper for bottom 30%

Need for proper assessment and mechanism for monitoring
Share of food items in food expenditure for religious groups 1993 and 2009-10

- Cereal highest for Muslims, least for Sikhs; negatively linked to economic wellbeing
- Egg-meat-fish, highest for Christians, then Muslims, least for Sikhs. Also, alcohol & processed food highest for Christians
- Milk highest for Sikhs then Hindus, least for Christians
- Pulses highest for Hindus
- Edible oil, veg. & others similar across groups
Caveats in the thesis of Convergence: Need for Regionally Differentiated Strategy

- Rural Urban convergence in consumption pattern
- Convergence across expenditure categories
- Limited convergence across socio-religious groups
  Meat consumption for Muslims not going down, cheap meat, religious social events associated with non veg food.
- Dissimilarity in consumption pattern across states being retained: no convergence
The End