CHANGES IN CONSUMPTION PATTERNS AMONG SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED GROUPS IN INDIA DURING POST REFORM PERIOD

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ABSTRACT

The present study explores the trends in consumption patterns and disparity (and /or convergence) in diet diversifications among socially disadvantaged groups (Scheduled Caste & Scheduled Tribe) in India by rural-urban divide during post-reforms period using data from different rounds (50th, 55th, 61st, 66th) of survey of National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO). Disparity ratio, trend lines, measures of dispersion, growth rates and Engel expenditure elasticity are used to examine the dynamic nature of the relevant variables of the study. The technique of dummy variable regression is used to analyze the factors which influence the expenditure on cereals, non-food items and total MPCE. It is observed that inter-social group disparities in consumption expenditure are widened from 1993-94 to 2004-05 in both rural and urban India and thereafter narrowed in rural India in 2009-10 but remain same in urban India. Real expenditure on cereals gradually decreases over time in the post liberalization period in all social groups but rate of declining is highest for ST households. The gap between rural and urban sector in non-food consumption is increasing over time. Inequality in consumption expenditure declines in rural areas, while it is increasing in urban areas. Besides income of the households, the size of land holdings (land possessed) and social status (castes) are important factors which explain the variations in consumption expenditure across rural households. Engel expenditure elasticity coefficient for most of the non-food items is observed as greater than one. It is interesting to note that expenditure elasticity on education and medical shows that as income increases rural people are trying to access better quality high cost education and health facilities.

KEYWORDS: Consumption Disparity, Consumption Patterns, Engel elasticity, Dummy variable, Scheduled Caste & Scheduled Tribe.

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