

# A REGIONAL APPROACH TO THE CONSUMPTION PATTERNS OF INDIA

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THE few studies that have been made on the consumption patterns of India are very aggregative and restricted to the estimation of the expenditure elasticities from one period cross section data, in order, primarily, to project the future demand for the various five year plans. Such studies ignore the complex diversities of the consumption patterns and assume artificial uniformity. In a vast country like India the homogeneity assumption may not be realistic as a number of factors are likely to contribute to regional variations in the consumption patterns. For example, the wide variations in the climatic conditions, the social customs, the extent of market mechanism, the degree of urbanization are the likely sources for the causation of regional variations in the consumption patterns. It is needless to say that aggregative studies may serve their purpose to a certain extent but their utility will be enhanced if regional studies are made to take into account the differences in the parameters of the behavioural equations.

This paper attempts to analyse the regional variations in the consumption levels and patterns of eight commodity groups, viz., food-grains, milk and milk products, other food, food total, clothing, fuel and light, other non-food, and non-food total, utilizing the 15th round (1959-60) data of the National Sample Survey. It also attempts to classify the States into a few groups by forming clusters on the basis of distance functions. We have treated State (rural/urban) as a unit of analysis due to non-availability of further disaggregative data. The states covered in this study are the following: (1) Andhra Pradesh, (2) Assam, (3) Bihar, (4) Gujarat, (5) Jammu and Kashmir, (6) Kerala, (7) Madhya Pradesh, (8) Madras, (9) Maharashtra, (10) Mysore, (11) Orissa, (12) Punjab, (13) Rajasthan, (14) Uttar Pradesh, (15) West Bengal, (16) Union Territories.

In Section 1, the regional variations in the consumption levels are

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