

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR OF CEREALS IN WEST BENGAL* (1939-61) WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CALCUTTA

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1. *Introduction :*

THE present study is devoted to an examination of the nature and course of the consumption of cereals for West Bengal in general and Calcutta in particular for the years between 1939 and 1960-61. The period covered by the study is significant in many ways so far as the consumer behaviour of cereals in West Bengal is concerned. In 1942, the Government of India promulgated the Foodgrains Control Order, 1942, in respect of wholesale trade. This order was, however, deemed inadequate in the wake of the famine in 1943 and had to be replaced by the Bengal Rationing Order, Statutory rationing of cereals in Calcutta was in existence during the years between 1944 and 1954. Meanwhile, with the declaration of independence of India and Pakistan in 1947, the province of Bengal was partitioned. The State of West Bengal has been deficit in cereals ever since. There has been a great increase in the population of the State, especially in that of Calcutta, during the post-independence years. However, various programmes of industrialisation, construction and development taken up during the Five-Year Plans helped to increase substantially the per capita income of the State, and more so of Calcutta. These factors contributed to bring about a change in the consumer behaviour of the State, as also of Calcutta, in the course of the period covered by the present study.

2. *The Data :*

Two types of data, viz., cross-section and time series have been used. The source of the former has been generally the reports of

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