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Popular Article

A comparative analysis of fish production and consumption across different states in India

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Abstract

India's average per capita fish consumption is 8 to 9 kg which is only half of the global average. Fish consumption among high literacy rate states and low-income states is high irrespective of their fish production. Union territories and Northeastern states are found as better fish consuming states in India. The other states have to still improve their per capita fish consumption status.

Introduction

Fish is a healthy, balanced, and widely accepted diet worldwide due to its nutritional advantage viz., protein and essential fatty acids. Global average fish consumption has increased from 9.9 kg in 1961 to 20.5 kg in 2019 (FAO, 2022). The coastal countries of Iceland (92 kg) and Maldives (85 kg) are leading in per capita fish consumption. While landlocked countries such as Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Tajikistan are the least in per capita fish consumption with less than 1 kg of fish per annum. Nevertheless, the leading fish producers China (39) and India (6.8 kg) could position only 7th and 15th place respectively in 2019 (World Economic Forum, 2022).

It has been estimated that 60 % of the Indian population consumes fish with varying consumption patterns. The annual per capita fish consumption among fish-eating population was found to be 8-9 kg (Shyam et al., 2015). To expand the supply, India produced 163 lakh tons of fish where 121 lakh tons from inland, and 42 lakh tons from the marine sector during 2021-22 (Handbook of Statistics, 2022).

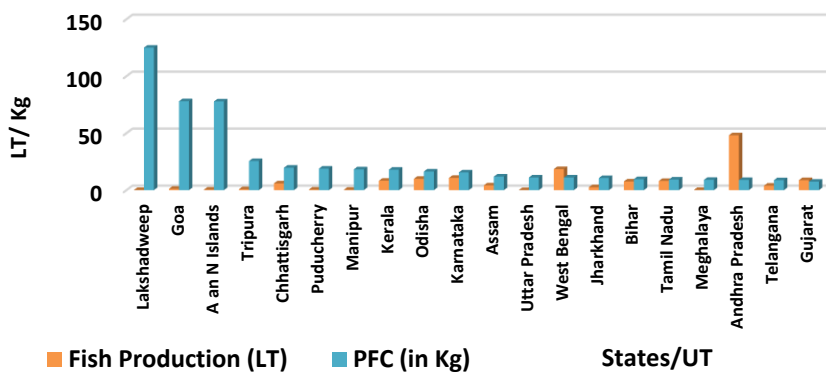
Disparity of fish consumption across different states in India

Lakshadweep tops in fish consumption, there a person consumes around 125 kg of fish per year. Followed by Goa (78 kg), Andaman & Nicobar Island (77.8 kg), Tripura (26 kg), Chhattisgarh (19.7 kg), Puducherry (19 kg), Manipur (18 kg), Kerala (17.9 kg), Odisha (16 kg), and Karnataka



(15.5 kg). Interestingly, among the leading fish-consuming states, UTs and Northeastern states viz, Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland are producing just nearly a lakh ton, and Assam produces 4

Fish production vs fish consumption in India (2020-21)



Source: Handbook of fisheries statistics, 2022

dominate India’s fish production, especially the shrimps but have only 9 kg of per capita fish consumption. Another fish-loving state West Bengal consumes only 11 kg of fish with a production of 18 LT. The states like Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Odisha, and Karnataka are having appreciable fish consumption with an average of 18 kg over its production (6 to 11 LT). While, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Bihar are having balanced fish consumption with respect to their production (8 to 9 LT) with an average consumption of 8-9 kgs.

Other NE states viz., Arunachala Pradesh, Mizoram, and Sikkim are having less than 4 kg of per capita fish consumption with the production of 0.05 LT. Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Delhi, and Ladakh are the least consuming states of fish with less than a Kg per year. It is predominantly due to the large vegetarian population (Kumar and Kumar, 2022).

Fish consumption Vs Literacy rate

According to the Ministry of Education – India’s Census 2011, the Average literacy rate in India is 74.04 %. The high fish-consuming states are positively correlated with their literacy rate. Kerala has the highest literacy rate in India at 94%, followed by Lakshadweep (91.85%), Mizoram at 91.33%, Goa (88.7 %), A & N islands (87 %), Tripura (87 %), Puducherry (86 %), and states like Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland has the literacy rate between 70 to 80 %.

Bihar has the lowest literacy rate in India at 61.8%, followed by Arunachal Pradesh at 65.3%, Rajasthan at 66.1%, Jharkhand at 66.4 %, and Andhra Pradesh at 67 % which are negatively correlated with the per capita fish consumption. However, Jharkhand and Bihar have better fish consumption than other states in this category.

Fish consumption Vs Per capita income

According to the MOSPI, 2023 India’s annual per capita income at a constant price is Rs. 91,481 during 2021-22. Goa tops in per capita income with Rs. 3,10,201 and Bihar secured the last

lakh tons of fish, however, leading in fish consumption due to their traditional consumption (Barman, 2012), and touristic activities that act as evidence for the global spread knowledge on eating fish. Whereas states like Andhra Pradesh (48 Lakh tons)



position with Rs. 30,779. The dominant fish-consuming NE states viz., Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, and other fish-consuming states viz, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal has a moderate per capita income between nearly an Rs. 50,000 to a Lakh per annum. This would represent fish as a highly affordable and alternative commodity to other competitive non vegetarian food like mutton and chicken in these states.

Conclusion

The study would say by knowing the nutritional advantage, fish consumption has a positive relation with the high literacy and low-income states in India. However, India's per capita fish consumption is lower than the global average perhaps the second largest fish producer next to China. Unorganized domestic marketing in major parts of the states to supply quality products at a reasonable price is found to be the major constraint. The government and private institutions are working vigorously to further enlarge the fish supply through effective infrastructure development, awareness programs with fish stalls & exhibitions, fish price information system, and mobile apps viz., Fishwaale, Marine Fish Sales, Daily Fish India, and Healthyfish to make avail of fish at door steps in targeting the people in cities and high-income group who hesitates to buy directly from fish markets. Also, this rudimentary study found that many high-literacy states prefer fish irrespective of their fish production and income levels. Hence, improving the literacy level among low fish-consuming states and increasing fish production in high fish-consuming states would further improve the per-capita fish consumption in India.

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