

Food Expenditure in Rural India: A Geographical Perspective

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Abstract

For the present research paper only rural areas of major states have been considered as the share of food items in total consumption expenditure is higher in rural areas than the urban. The objective of the present paper is to examine the spatial patterns of food expenditure on various food groups in rural areas of the country. To achieve this objective the secondary data published in NSS 68th round report entitled Household consumption of various goods and services in India (2011-12) has been used. The results of the study shows that the less the variation in the expenditure on different food groups the more will be the nutrition diversity in the state.

Keywords: Consumption, Foodgrains, Household, Malnutrition, Rural

I. Introduction:

The household food consumption and expenditure survey is being conducted by National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) since 1950. So far NSSO has conducted eight quinquennial surveys (27th, 32nd, 38th, 43rd, 50th, 55th, 61st and 68th) in this regard. This survey provides information on consumption expenditure on various food and non- food items of rural as well as urban areas. For the present research paper only rural areas of major states have been considered as the share of food items in total consumption expenditure is higher in rural areas than the urban.

Table 1. Percentage Composition of Consumption Expenditure in Rural India

Item Group	1993-94	1999-2000	2004-05	2009-10	2011-12
Cereals	24.2	22.2	18.0	15.6	12.0
Gram	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
Cereal Substitutes	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Pulses & Products	3.8	3.8	3.1	3.7	3.1
Milk & Products	9.5	8.8	8.5	8.6	9.1
Edible Oil	4.4	3.7	4.6	3.7	3.8
Eggs, Fish and Meat	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.5	3.6
Vegetables	6.0	6.2	6.1	6.2	4.8
Fruits & Nuts	1.7	1.7	1.9	1.6	1.9
Sugar	3.1	2.4	2.4	2.4	1.8
Salt & Spices	2.7	3.0	2.5	2.4	1.8
Beverages, etc.	4.2	4.2	4.5	5.6	5.8
Food Total	63.2	59.4	55.0	53.6	48.6

Source: NSS Report No. 555, July 2011-June 2012

As per the previous survey reports of NSSO the share of food in total expenditure has declined from 73 percent in 1972-73 to 55 percent in 2004-05 and this percentage further declined to 48.6 percent in 2011-12 (Table 1). The monthly per capita expenditure in values on various food groups has also shown in Fig. 1.

Monthly Per Capita Expenditure (Rs.) on various Food Groups in Rural Areas (2011-12)

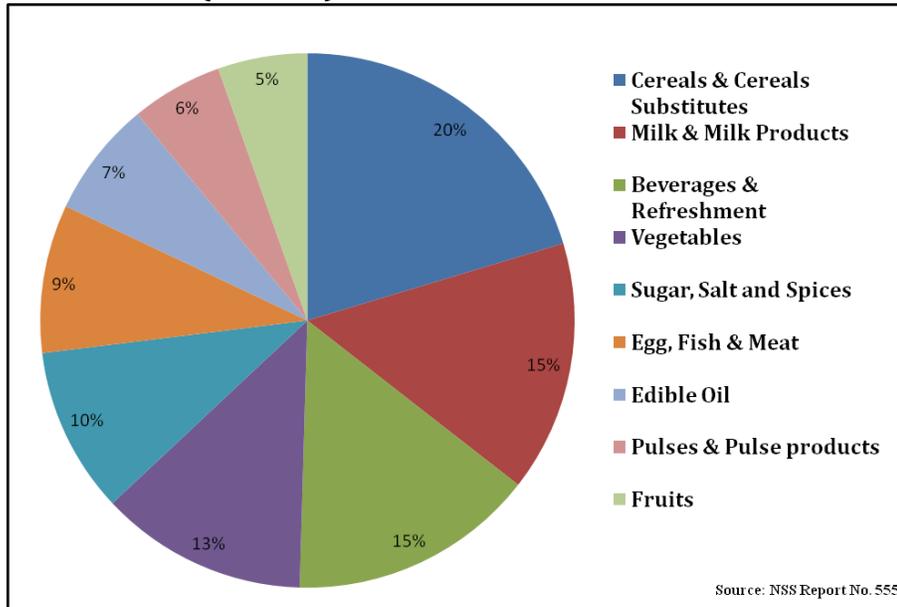


Fig. 1

At present in rural areas the share of food in total consumption expenditure varies from 44 percent in Kerala to 61 percent in Assam. In various food groups the dietary energy intake varies from 57 percent in cereals, 15 percent in milk and milk products, 12 percent in pulses and oil seeds, 7 percent in fruits and vegetables and 3 percent in eggs, fish and meat. The share of protein intake also varies from 58 percent in cereals, 10 percent in milk and milk products and to 7 percent in eggs, fish and meat.

This research paper is divided into five sections as follows; I. Introduction, II. Objective, III. Data Sources and Methodology, IV. Results and Discussion and in the last V. Conclusions and Suggestions.

II. Objectives: The objectives of the present paper are:

1. To examine the spatial patterns of food expenditure on various food groups in rural areas of the country.
2. To identify the factors responsible for variations in food expenditure.

III. Data Sources and methodology:

This study is based on the secondary data published in NSS 68th round report entitled Household consumption of various goods and services in India (2011-12). This paper covers the major food groups viz; foodgrains (cereals and pulses), milk and milk products, fruits and vegetables, egg, fish & meat and edible oil. These food items are necessary for the healthy life. Therefore, the food expenditure data of these food groups has been analysed and presented through maps.

IV. Results and Discussion

This section has been divided into two parts. The first part depicts the spatial patterns of food expenditure on various food groups and the inferences based on these spatial patterns are further discussed in the second part.

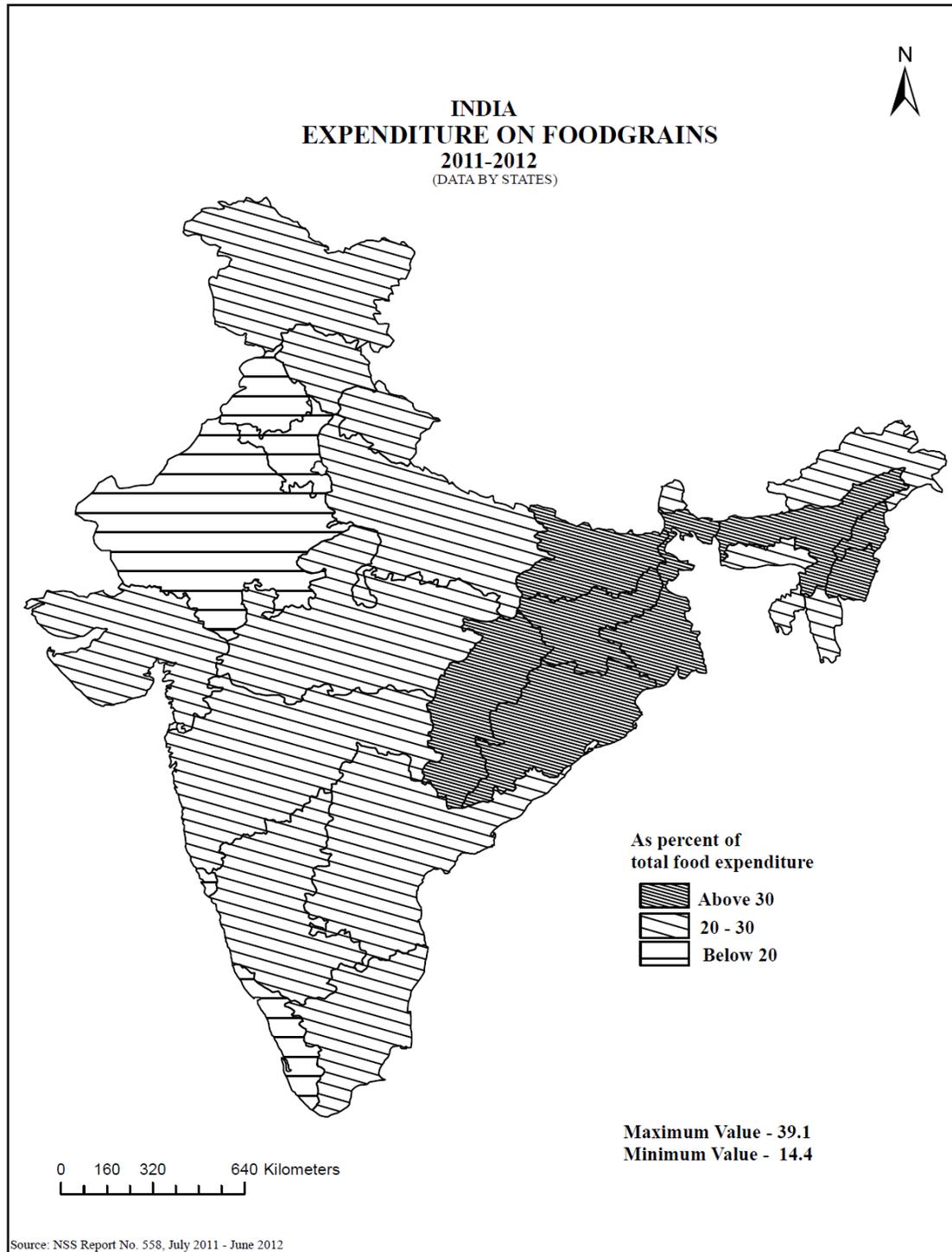
a) Spatial Patterns of Food Expenditure on Various Food Groups:

Major five food groups i.e. foodgrains (cereals and pulses), milk and milk products, fruits and vegetables, egg, fish & meat and edible oil have been discussed in this section.

Group 1: Foodgrains (Cereals & Pulses)

This food group constitutes cereals and pulses. Foodgrains constitutes a major part in food consumption in the country and the share of total food expenditure is also highest on foodgrains.

The areas of **high** (above 30 percent) foodgrains expenditure cover the states of Manipur (39.1 percent), Orissa (34.9 percent), Jharkhand (34.6 percent), West Bengal (31.4 percent), Assam (30.7 percent), Bihar (30.6 percent), Chhattisgarh (30.4 percent) and Nagaland (30 percent) (Map 1.). Almost half of the states fall in the **medium** (20 - 30 percent) category, where expenditure varies from 28.7 percent in Madhya Pradesh to 20.7 percent in Gujarat. The other states of this category are Uttaranchal, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Jammu and Kashmir, Mizoram, Tamil Nadu, Sikkim and Himachal Pradesh. The **lowest** category (below 20 percent) consists of only five states of the country having foodgrain expenditure below 20 percent of the total food expenditure. These states are Rajasthan (19.7 percent), Goa, Punjab, Kerala and Haryana (14.4 percent).

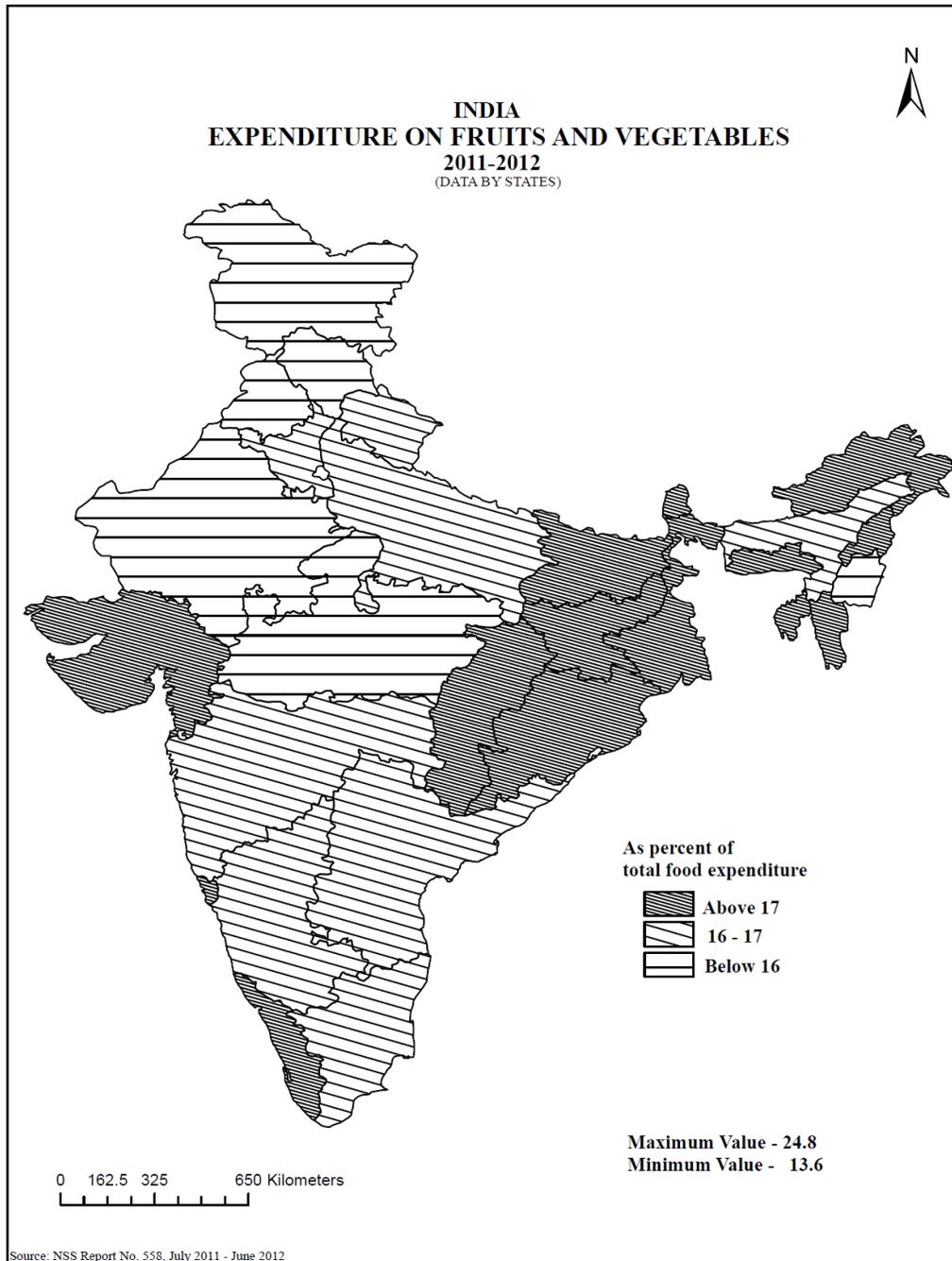


Map 1.

Group 2. Fruits and Vegetables

The **highest** share (above 17) of expenditure on fruits and vegetables lies in eight states where this figure varies from 24.8 percent in Mizoram to 17.2 percent in Jharkhand (Map 2). The other states falling in this category are Chhattisgarh, Tripura, Orissa, Goa, Sikkim, Arunachal

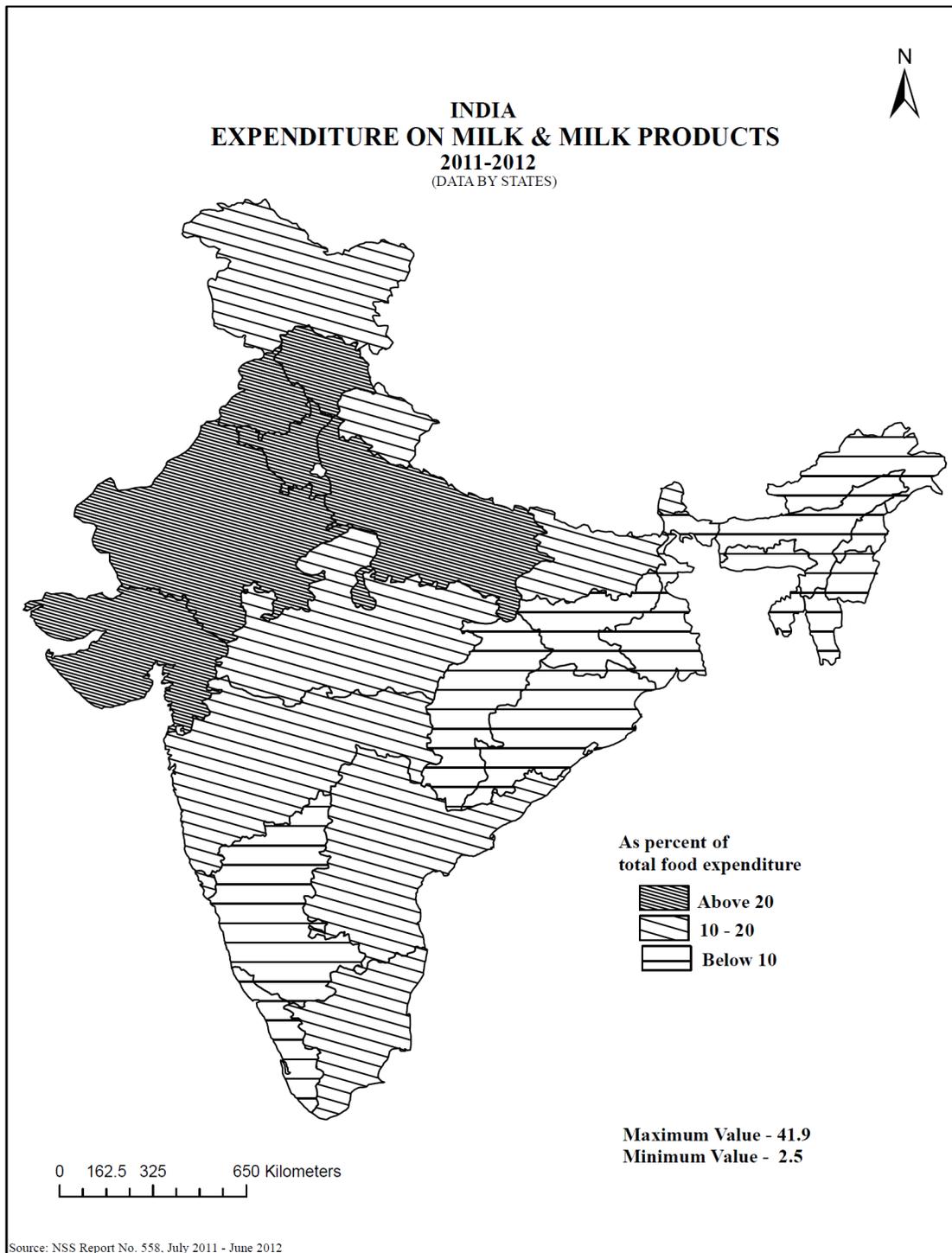
Pradesh and Nagaland, Bihar, Kerala, Gujarat, Meghalaya and West Bengal. Karnataka (16.7percent), Assam, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Uttaranchal and Maharashtra (16.1 percent) states have **moderate** (16 to 17 percent) share of food expenditure on this food group. Only six states of the country spend below 16 percent of their total food expenditure on fruits and vegetables. States falling in this category are Manipur (15.8%) Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan (13.6%).



Map 2.

Group 3. Milk and Milk Products

This food group covers both milk as directly obtained from livestock (cow, buffalo, goat or any other) and milk sold in bottle. Milk transformed at home into curd, ghee, butter, etc. for the purpose of household consumption is also included in this category.

**Map 3**

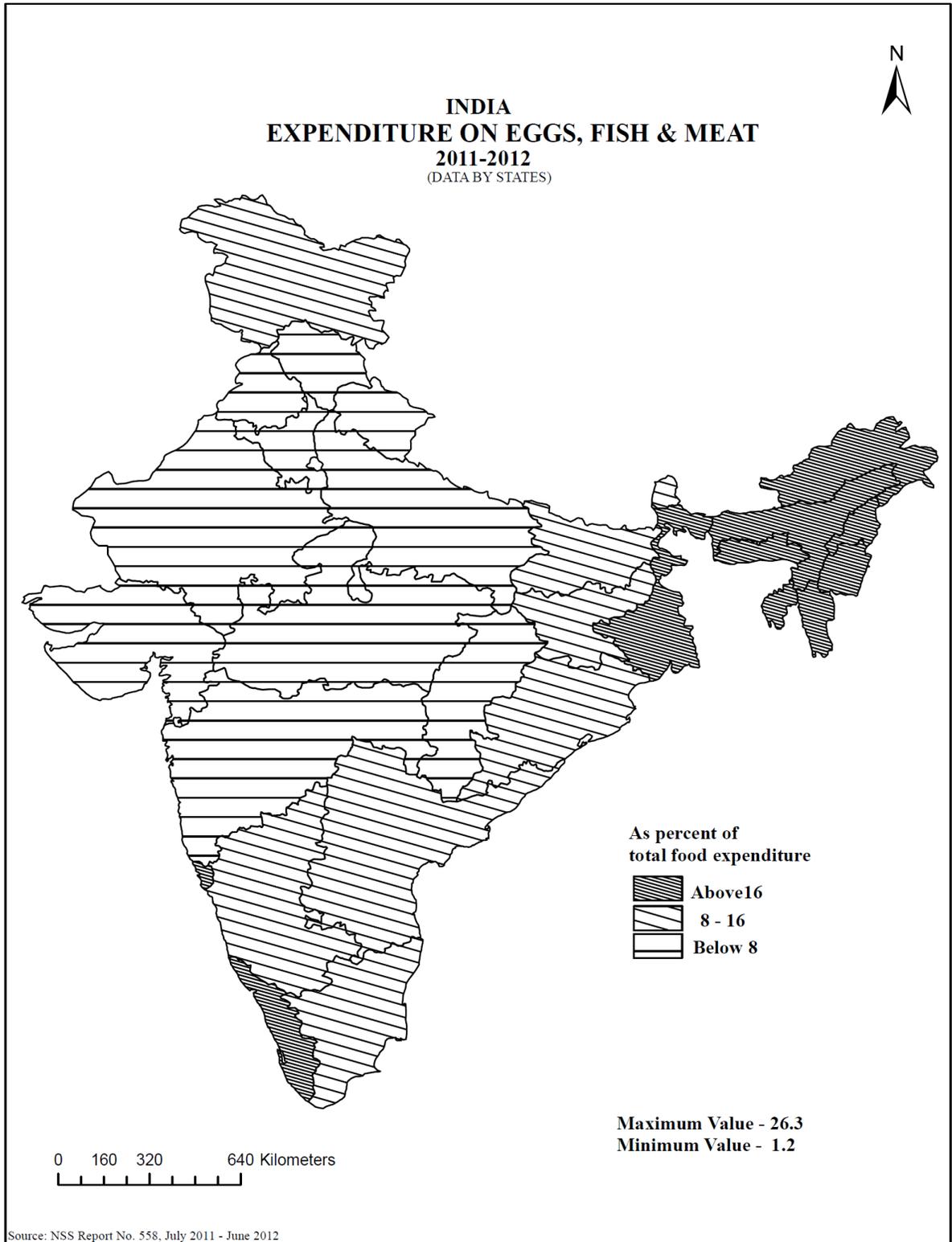
The states having highest share (above 20 percent) in this category are Haryana (41.9 percent), Rajasthan (32.6 percent), Punjab (32.3 percent), Himachal Pradesh (24 percent), Gujarat (23.2 percent) and Uttar Pradesh (22 percent) (Map 3). The states having moderate (10 - 20 percent) share of expenditure on milk and milk products are Jammu and Kashmir (19.6 percent), Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Sikkim, Bihar, Goa, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. On the other hand almost half of the states of the country spend less than 10 percent of their total food expenditure on milk and milk products. These states are Karnataka, Jharkhand, Nagaland, Kerala, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Orissa, Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Tripura, Chhattisgarh and Manipur.

Group 4. Eggs, Fish and Meat

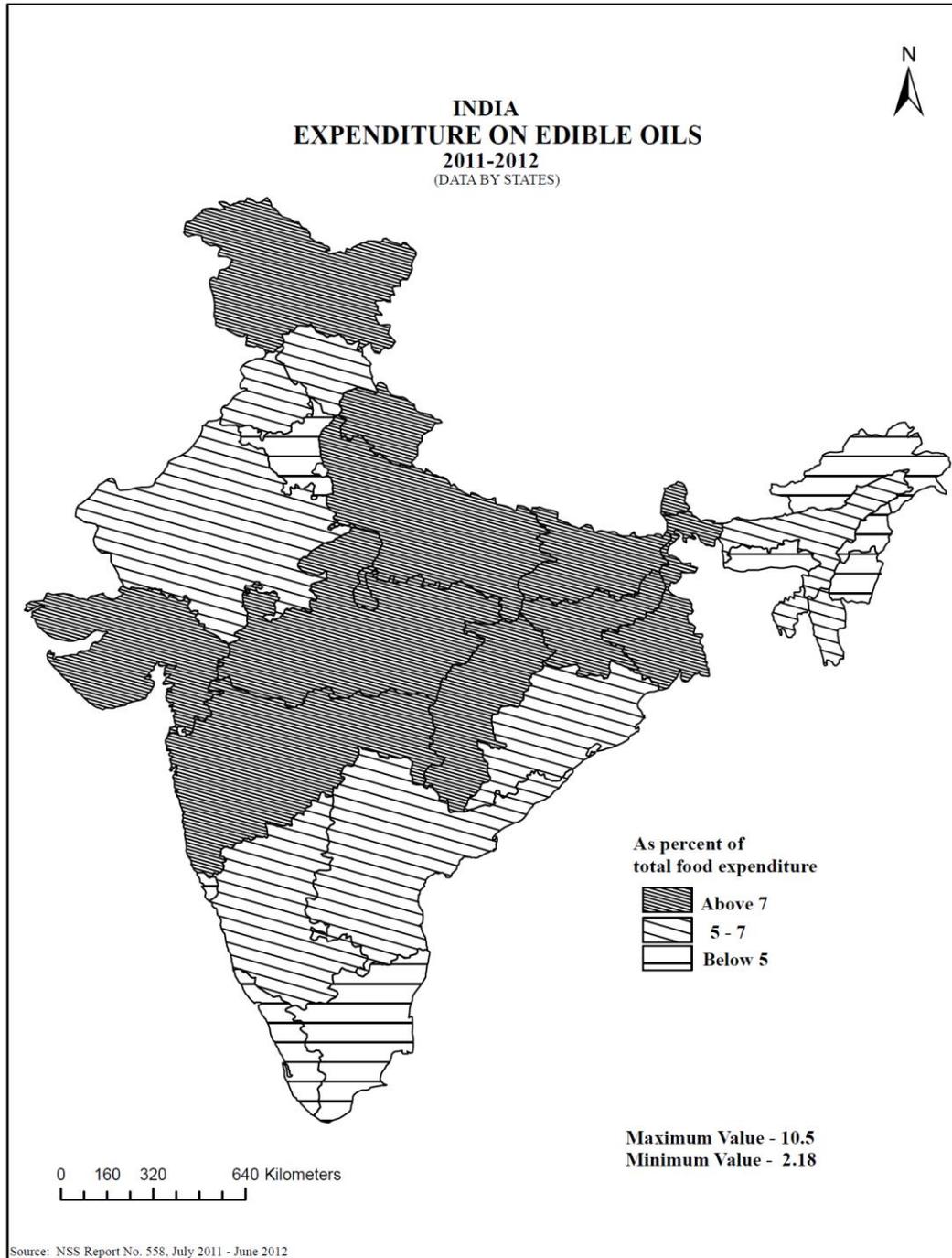
Ten states of the country have more than 16 percent of total food expenditure on these food items. Entire North eastern states along with West Bengal, Kerala and Goa fall in this category, where this expenditure value varies from 26 percent in Nagaland to 17.5 percent in West Bengal (Map 4). States falling in the medium category (8-16 percent) are Andhra Pradesh (13.9 percent), Tamil Nadu, Jammu and Kashmir, Sikkim, Orissa, Karnataka, Bihar and Jharkhand (8.7 percent). Entire centre and north western states of the country i.e. Chhattisgarh (7.8 percent), Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana and Punjab (1.2 percent) spend lowest percent of the total food expenditure on this food items.

Group 5. Edible Oils

States having their food expenditure on edible oils more than the national average are Gujarat (10.5 percent), Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and Sikkim (7.1 percent) (Map 5). The states falling in the medium category are (5-7 percent) are Karnataka, Rajasthan, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Mizoram, Orissa, Assam, Tripura and Himachal Pradesh. Expenditure in these states varies from 5.5 percent to 6.7 percent. Tamil Nadu, Meghalaya, Goa, Manipur, Kerala, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland have below 5 percent of their food expenditure on edible oils.



Map 4



Map 5

B. Discussion

The above spatial patterns of various food groups show that a major share of the expenditure has spent on foodgrains followed by fruits and vegetables, milk and milk products, meat and eggs and the least amount on edible oils. The share of food expenditure on foodgrains is low in agriculturally developed states of Punjab and Haryana where share on milk and milk products is high. The consumption of eggs, fish and meat depends on the easy availability in the

respective area. This statement is true especially for the coastal states of India where fish and other sea food have a huge share in the everyday food consumption.

The results of the study further show that the less the variation in the expenditure on different food groups the more will be the nutrition diversity in the state. At present, in rural areas the problem of malnutrition is prevalent mainly due to uneven consumption of the various food items, signifying unbalanced diet pattern. Due to this, higher levels of malnutrition are seen even in economically prosperous states of Punjab and Haryana. The situation is even worse in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh where child malnutrition is well above the national average of 46%. As a consequence all these states fall in the alarming category of State Hunger Index of India. As shown in Map 1, cheap foodgrains constitute the major part of food consumption in rural areas of these states due to lack of access to expensive foods such as fruits, vegetable, meat and milk products which provide essential proteins, fats and micronutrients. That is why the calorie intake in these states is below 1890 which is less than the standard norm (NSSO, 2014).

V. Conclusions:

The above discussion shows that there are great regional variations in food expenditure in rural areas of the country. The expenditure on various food items vary depending upon the physical and socio-economic conditions of the states such as the consumption of the non-vegetarian food is highest in north-eastern states and coastal states of the country whereas foodgrains consumption is dominant in north western and central states. As compared to the earlier NSS consumption and expenditure surveys the expenditure on food group has shown a declining trend and expenditure on non-food group is slightly increasing. The highest decline has occurred in Kerala followed by Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh. On the other hand the states of Gujarat, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jammu Kashmir have shown a slight decline in food expenditure.

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