

Transformation of diets & supply chains in LMICs: policy implications

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Socio-ecological Factors and the Double Burden of Malnutrition Among Children and Adolescents in LMICs

1. Transformation of diets in LMICs: rise of purchased food

- a) **65% of food consumption is now in cities, 35% in rural areas**
- b) **> 85% of national diet is from purchases:**
 - ... nearly 100% of urban diet is purchased**
 - ... at least 65% of rural diet is purchased** (80% in India; 78% in Nigeria; 64% in Tanzania; 76% in Malawi)

2. Rise of processed food: mostly good & a little bad

a) Rural Tanzania, of the 63% of diet that is purchased:

... 29% is unprocessed

... 56% is low-processed (e.g., flour, bread)

... 1% is high processed unpackaged (sweet buns)

... 6% is ultra-processed (soda pop, cookies etc.)

... 5% is meals-away-from-home

b) Urban Tanzania:

... 22% is unprocessed

... 49% is low-processed (e.g., flour, bread)

... 2% is high processed unpackaged (sweet buns)

... 9% is ultra-processed (soda pop, cookies etc.)

... 18% is meals-away-from-home

c) Key points from Tanzania data

c.1) Processed food very important to urban & rural consumers, poor and middle class

... and African data shows been rising for 50 years

c.2) Most processed food is important to women's livelihoods & quality of life

... Most processed food is low-processed → **saves women's time!**

... Lots of urban consumption from food-away-from-home → **saves women's & men's time**

... African data show a woman used to spend 4 hours per day pounding grain!

... US data show a woman used to spend 40 hours a week in all steps of food prep

... in my own home it liberated my mother! Poptart story

c.3) Ultra-processed penetrated rural & urban areas but still very minor in diet

... in many countries an extension of “festival food”, treats that became more accessible

d) Processed food consumption is “here to stay”: it has developed over decades & is deeply rooted in employment and lifestyle needs & patterns

→ Policy & debate implication:

... Policy & education will not uproot processed food consumption in general

... Should focus on reducing incentive for the emerging ultra-processed food consumption but not “reversing consumption of processed food”

3. Consumption of healthy foods in LMICs: trends & policy implication

a) Rapid rise in consumption of healthy foods in LMICs in the past 20 years:

... fruits & vegetables (FV)

... healthy animal products (fish, chicken, milk)

b) These items together now exceed consumption of basic grains/starch staples

c) Middle class AND poor spend 15% of their diet on FV

d) 65-80% of rural FV consumption come from PURCHASES: own gardens/farms only 20-35% of rural, and far less for urban consumption

e) Share of purchases is higher for animal products in rural diets

f) MESSAGE: supply chains (markets) deliver about 90% of FV & animal products consumption in LMICs!

g) Compare 90% of healthy products coming from the market...

... with what I see as about 90% of the international debate on these foods as being on how to promote home gardens in cities and rural areas!

h) The nutrition debate should instead encourage governments to invest in improving WHOLESale MARKETS and ROADS as the central pro-nutrition policy!