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## Transition in Nutrition and Marketing of Agro Products

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Transition in nutrition broadly refers to changes in diet & dietary practices of a person or community. Presently nutritional transition is, to a large extent, influenced by marketing of agro products which in turn is considerably dependent on food habits of people in the region. Human species has the distinction of being very widely scattered in different parts of the world & extremely adaptable in dietary habits, to the surroundings. Human nutrition is greatly influenced by individual or community characteristics, the religion, seasons, festivals, personal beliefs and likes & dislikes etc. consequently transition in nutrition is quite common in human being. Transition in nutrition can be mainly classified as -

### 1) Based on Duration :

**Short Term transition:** - Evident in seasonal changes in diet, festivals affecting food intake, illness like fever etc. Personal needs related to food, during such circumstances, are inter-linked to their availability in the market.

**Long term transition:** - Evident at personal level, in diet related disorders like diabetes, cardiac disorders, hypertension etc. also seen at larger scale in population migration.

### 2) Based on intent :-

**External:** - External intent like aggressive & sustained advertisements of food products influenced by business interest or profit making e.g. processed foods like noodles, chocolates, jams, cakes etc.

**Internal:** - Internal intent like desire of a youngster to enhance body physique e.g. a Bollywood actor. Similarly personal wish of an obese woman to slim down & that of a short stature child to gain height are examples of this category.

### 3) Based on its effect :-

**Beneficial** :- Beneficial effect is exemplified by changes in diet by a diabetic person or adoption of proper nutritional changes by a pregnant woman, willful giving - up of junk food by a group of youngsters, or consumption of appropriate fat rich foods during winter season are some of the other examples.

**Detrimental:** - Detrimental effect is exemplified by consumption of alcohol containing beverages or by blind following of advertisements in print or electronic media.

Understanding and analyzing types of nutritional transitions is beneficial in planning & execution of marketing of agro products. Similar importance needs to be given to major factors that affect dietary practices of a person or population thereby leading to their nutritional transition.

### Factors Affecting Transition in Nutrition :-

1) **Economical status** :- There is significant and mainly upward shift in economical status in India. Generally there is more money that can be spent on food & hence a positive influence on marketing of agro products is evident. e.g. wide spread consumption of cold drinks, Ice-creams,

Cakes, Pizza etc. in mushrooming food outlets in cities, is mainly money driven.

2) **Availability of agro products** :- Upsurge in economy in addition to food & industrial technology has positively affected availability of agro products. Easy availability of relatively cheap nutritional products influences nutritional transition in either way – positive or negative from nutritional point of view e.g. wide publicity & distribution of easy to prepare (2 minutes) noodles has had undesirable impact on nutrition transition. Availability of processed soyabean aatta (flour) has had beneficial effect.

3) **Advertisements** :Trendy advertisements in print & electronic media have considerable impact on dietary practices of children, adolescents & college students more than that in case of older people. There is considerable transition, especially in the contents of break fast & evening snacks because of advertisements. Agro products with tangy taste, when marketed in attractive packages, backed up by advertising, are known to influence dietary practices significantly.

4) **Individual needs** :- Diet related disorders like diabetes, hypertension, heart ailment, obesity etc are showing increasing prevalence in India. With better education and awareness, through doctors, newspapers, nutritionists, etc. increasing number of people are feeling the need of specific nutritive products. e.g. diabetic persons require availability of agro products like Karella juice/powder, Jambhul Powder, Sugarfree sweets, diabetic biscuits etc. People with cardiac ailments prefer safflower oil, oat meat, roasted food items etc. Well planned marketing of such products coupled with educative advertisements can bring about healthy transition in nutrition, which is likely to be sustained.

5) **Convenience** :- In today's modern & fast life, convenience is the key word & is a factor influencing considerable shifts in nutrition. Contents of Tiffin, not only in school but even in offices are convenience driven. Agro products like gulpatti/Chikki, if properly marketed can induce healthy nutritional transition in school children, helping in prevention of protein deficiency as well as iron deficiency. Ice-creams, especially following meals, jams, fried wafers etc though tasty and convenient, are responsible for unfavorable nutritional transition leading to obesity & associated problems.

6) **Peer culture**:- In urban population, peer culture has considerable influence on dietary practices. Friends & friendship is no longer restricted to the young. Nutritional trends, many times, influenced by peer group & at times by peer pressure are observed in society e.g. consumption of junk food, alcohol etc. Agro products marketing targeted at different peer groups can adversely or even favorably affect significant transition in nutrition.

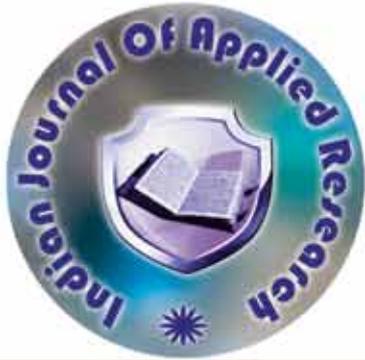
7) **Education & Knowledge** :- Nutrition related education &

information through newspaper articles, public lectures, TV programmes, books & booklets and even conferences & exhibitions have steadily increased awareness about nutritive values and benefits of various agro products. It is mandatory to give nutrition information on every agro product that is marketed. In urban area, particularly, there is a slow but steady transition in nutrition towards 'really healthy' agro products. Proper marketing of such products will boost such transition e.g. Soya products, oats, fortified foods etc.

- 8) **Migration** :- Migration of a significant degree is evident from rural to urban area, from northern states like UP & Bihar to Mumbai, Delhi or Calcutta and from Urban India to USA & Europe etc. There is usually corresponding nutritional transition but many a times, food items of the original regions is the felt dietary need of the migrated persons. Well planned marketing of nutritious food items in such cases is possible & profitable e.g. – agro products by companies like Haldiram, Chitale Bandhu, marketed in western countries and middle east countries. Squashes & syrups processed from fruits & fruit juices, from different parts of India and marketed in metropolitan cities is another example.
- 9) **Seasons & Festivals** :- Seasonal agro products specially those with short shelf life have to be marketed aggressively at an optimum time at the, or just before the, beginning of a season or festival. Hurda (Tender Sorghum), seasonal fruits, fresh mango juice, sesamum (til) & jaggery laddu or wadi around the time of Makarsankranti are some such examples.

There is, indeed, a need of the society as well as agro industry to understand & encourage the inter dependence of nutritional transitions & agro product marketing. If there is a proper balance between nutritional benefits of people & profitability in marketing of agro products, then the dual benefit can be both ways healthy & sustainable. Over a period of time people themselves will induce a boost to the marketing by increased consumption. Persons & agencies professionally involved in marketing of agro products, should be careful not to get lured by short term high profit yielding agro products which are harmful to people to varying degree & over a varied time period. Responsible forces in agro sector, involved in agro product marketing are expected, by the society, to promote healthy changes in nutrition of people in general & specific groups, e.g. children, pregnant women etc., in particular. It is pertinent to take note of the fact that, people are becoming quality and health conscious. In today's world 'Public Sub Janti Hai! ' People take time to differentiate between 'the good' & 'the not so good' in food products, but the time period is progressively getting shorter. In near future, only the 'really good' agro products which are related to nutrition, will survive & sustain for the benefit of industry and society. That is the goal India wants & needs to achieve to become a 'healthy & vibrant nation.' Let us – nutritionists and agriculturists - together play our roles, in tandem.

Jai Hind !!



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