

Trends and patterns in consumption of foods among Indian adults Insights from National Family Health Surveys, 2005-06 to 2019-21

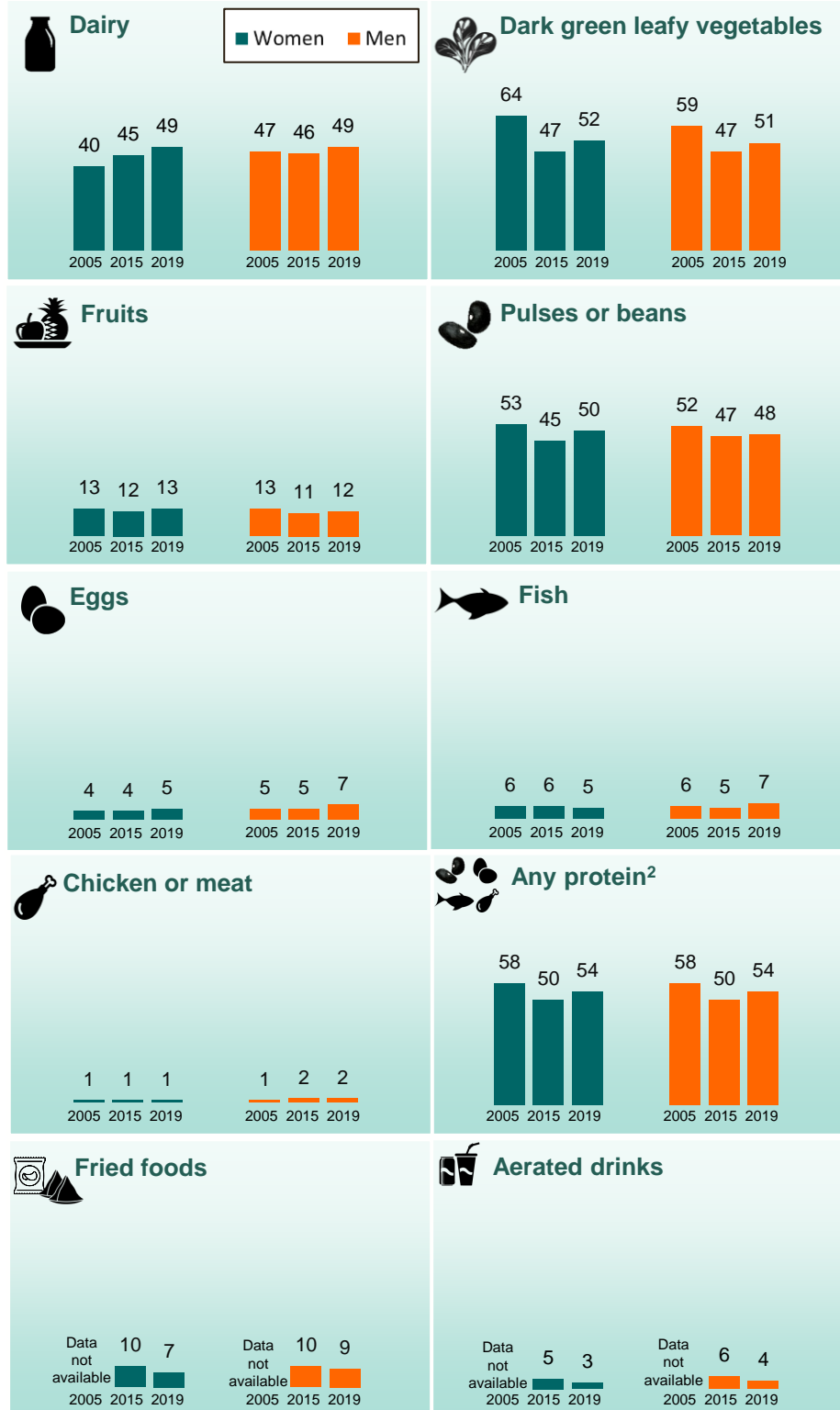
ABOUT THIS DATA NOTE

BACKGROUND | Healthy diets are necessary for optimal growth and to carry out daily mental and physical tasks. Unhealthy diets drive all forms of malnutrition and dietary risks are the number one risk factor globally for deaths and disability (Global Burden of Disease collaborators, 2019). Given the importance of diet as a key driver of health and wellbeing, this Data Note examines available data from three rounds of India's National Family Health Surveys (NFHS) on food consumption patterns of adult men and women.

MEASUREMENT | NFHS asks women (15-49 years) and men (15-54 years) how frequently (daily, weekly, occasionally or never) they consume nine food groups including two unhealthy food groups (Figure 1). The 2020 *Nutrient Requirements for Indians* outlines the quantity per day of vegetarian foods to be consumed as part of a balanced diet (ICMR-NIN, 2020). The guidelines indicate that pulses can be replaced with animal-source foods for non-vegetarians. Thus, for this Data Note we constructed an additional indicator – daily consumption of pulses or egg or fish or chicken or meat – to estimate any protein consumption (Figure 1). Estimates are first presented at the national level to provide an overall view of how diets have changed from 2005-06 to 2019-21. On subsequent pages, we show trends between 2015-16 and 2019-21 by state and district.

USE | This data note provides a broad view of diet patterns among adults and should be used for further inquiry by stakeholders including researchers, policymakers, and program staff at multiple levels. We recognize that NFHS is not a detailed dietary survey and does not ask about individual food items or the quantity of food consumed. Thus, this data note should be used as a starting point for discussion and to identify major areas of improvement in consumption and measurement.

FIGURE 1: Percentage of women and men who consumed food groups daily, from 2005-06 to 2019-21¹



¹Source: NFHS-3 (2005-06), NFHS-4 (2015-16), and NFHS-5 (2019-21) unit-level data [IFPRI estimates]

²This indicator is the percentage of adults who consume pulses or beans or eggs or fish or chicken or meat daily.

FIGURE 2: Daily intake of dairy by women at the state level, 2015-16 and 2019-21



States/UTs that increased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
Lakshadweep	+33
Ladakh	+24
Jammu & Kashmir	+22
Kerala	+19
Arunachal Pradesh	+18

States/UTs that decreased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
DNH & DD	-13
Chandigarh	-12
Sikkim	-12
Punjab	-6
Haryana	-5

- Andaman & Nicobar Islands
- Andhra Pradesh
- Arunachal Pradesh
- Assam
- Bihar
- Chandigarh
- Chhattisgarh
- Delhi
- DNH and DD
- Goa
- Gujarat
- Haryana
- Himachal Pradesh
- Jammu & Kashmir
- Jharkhand
- Karnataka
- Kerala
- Ladakh
- Lakshadweep
- Madhya Pradesh
- Maharashtra
- Manipur
- Meghalaya
- Mizoram
- Nagaland
- Odisha
- Puducherry
- Punjab
- Rajasthan
- Sikkim
- Tamil Nadu
- Telangana
- Tripura
- Uttar Pradesh
- Uttarakhand
- West Bengal

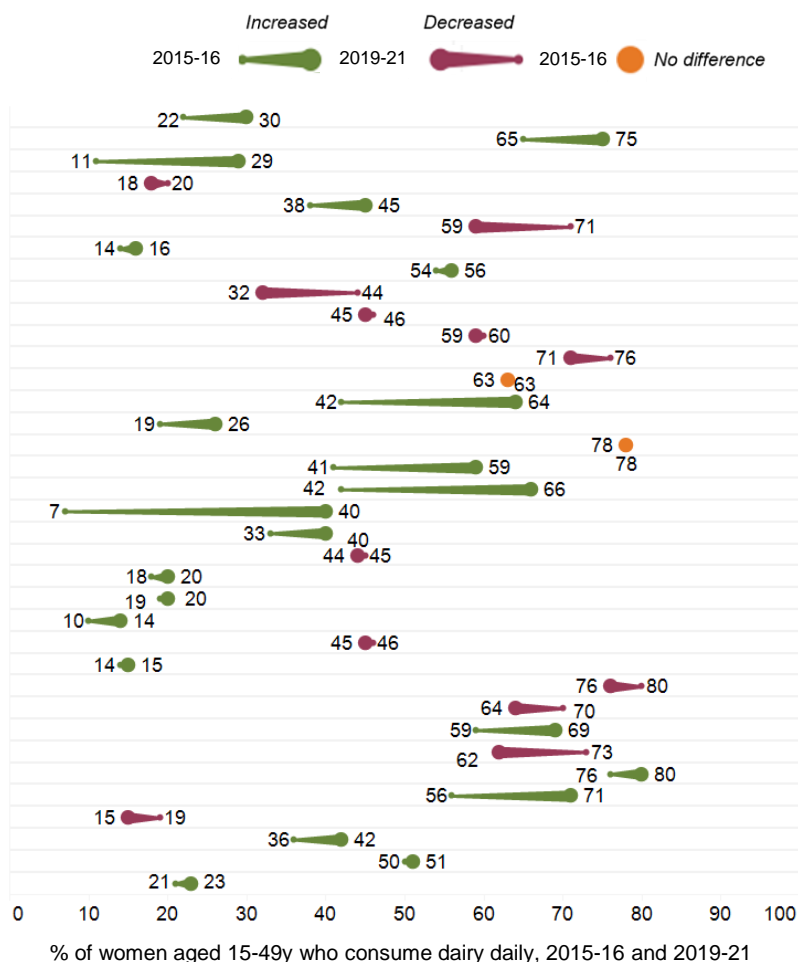


FIGURE 3: Daily intake of dairy by men at the state level, 2015-16 and 2019-21



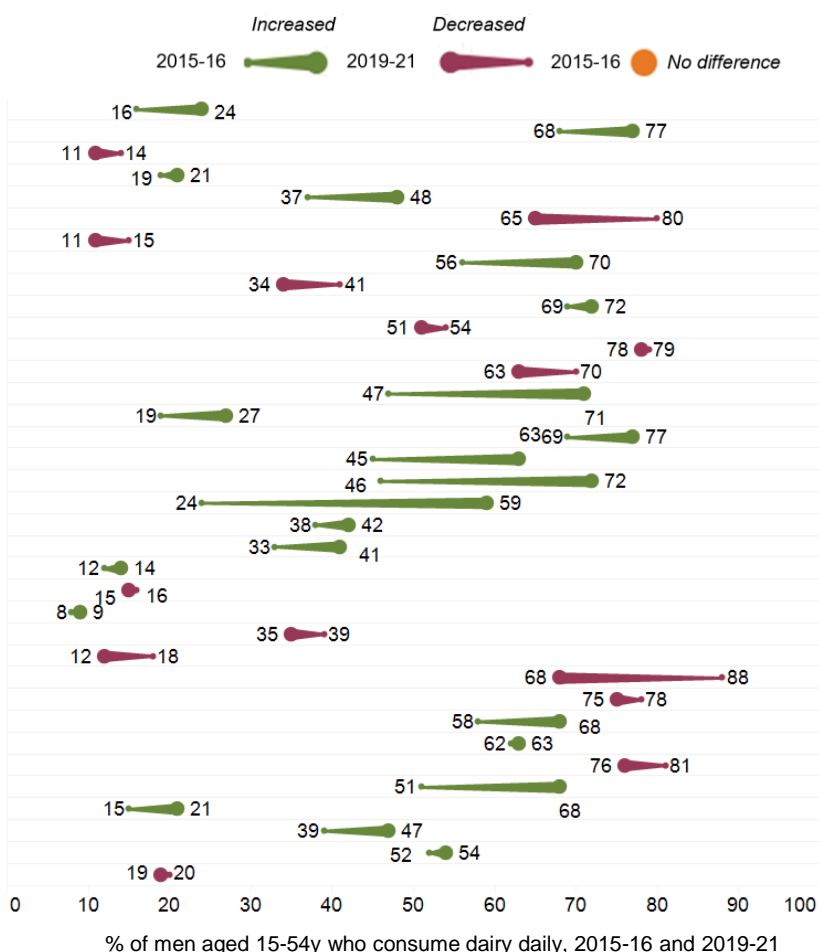
States/UTs that increased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
Lakshadweep	+35
Jammu & Kashmir	+24
Kerala	+19
Telangana	+18
Delhi	+15

States/UTs that decreased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
Puducherry	-19
Chandigarh	-15
Himachal Pradesh	-7
Tamil Nadu	-5
Odisha	-5

- Andaman & Nicobar Islands
- Andhra Pradesh
- Arunachal Pradesh
- Assam
- Bihar
- Chandigarh
- Chhattisgarh
- Delhi
- DNH and DD
- Goa
- Gujarat
- Haryana
- Himachal Pradesh
- Jammu & Kashmir
- Jharkhand
- Karnataka
- Kerala
- Ladakh
- Lakshadweep
- Madhya Pradesh
- Maharashtra
- Manipur
- Meghalaya
- Mizoram
- Nagaland
- Odisha
- Puducherry
- Punjab
- Rajasthan
- Sikkim
- Tamil Nadu
- Telangana
- Tripura
- Uttar Pradesh
- Uttarakhand
- West Bengal



Source: NFHS-4 and NFHS-5-unit level data [IFPRI estimates].

FIGURE 4: Daily intake of dairy by women at the district level, 2015-16 and 2019-21

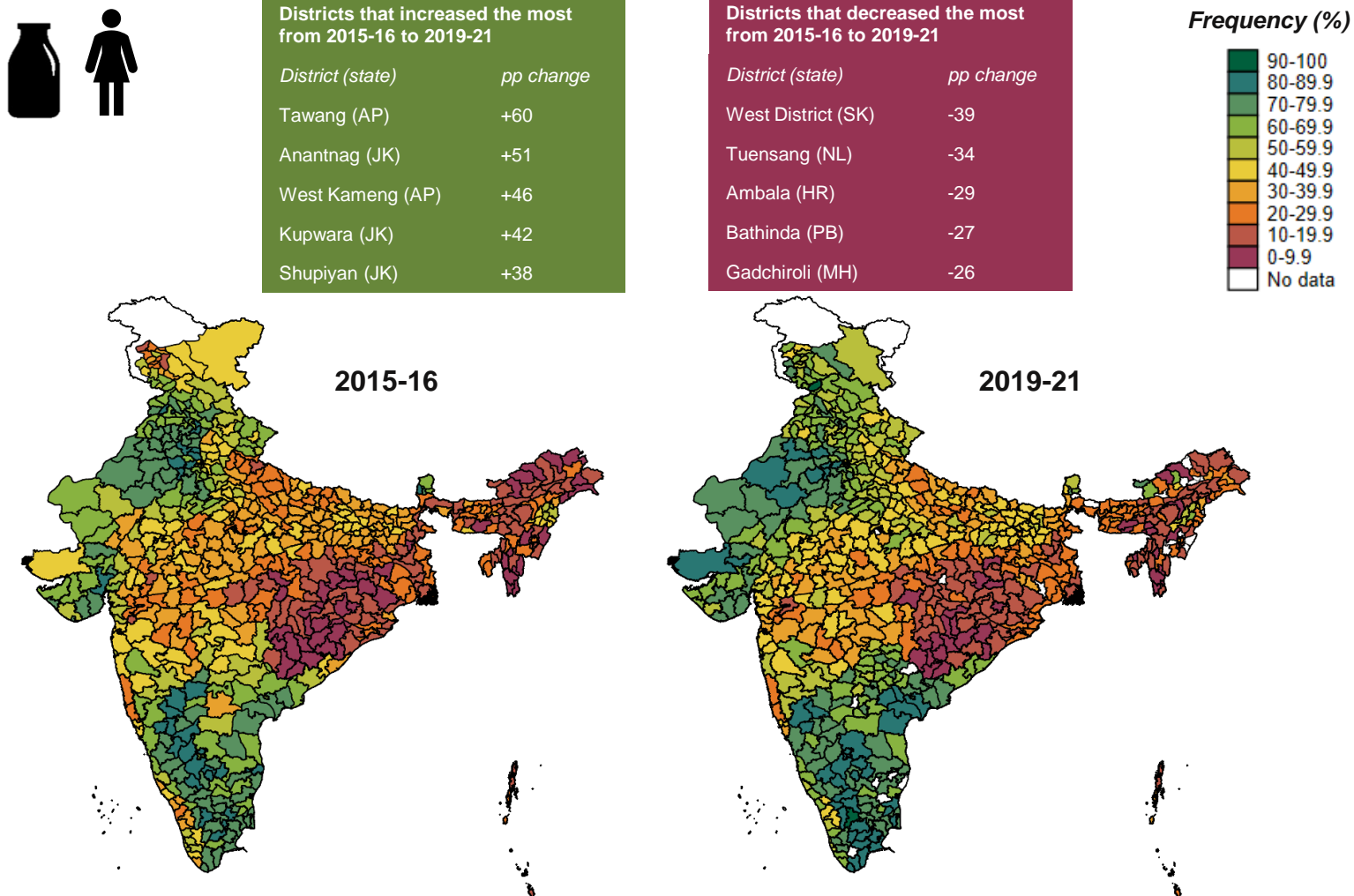
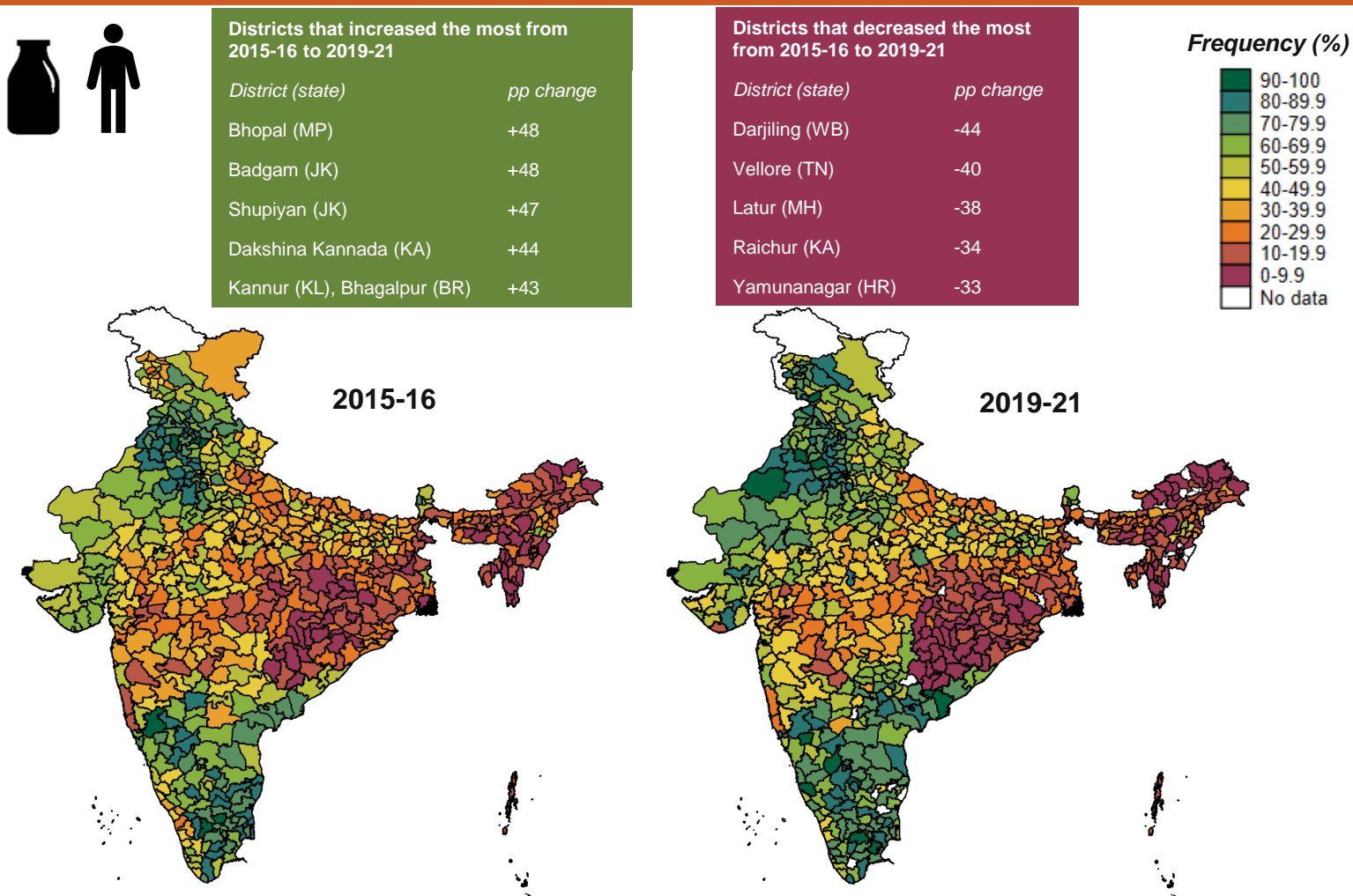


FIGURE 5: Daily intake of dairy by men at the district level, 2015-16 and 2019-21



Source: NFHS-4 and NFHS-5-unit level data [IFPRI estimates]. Note: *There are 575 districts that are comparable between NFHS-4 and NFHS-5.

FIGURE 6: Daily intake of dark green leafy vegetables by women at the state level, 2015-16 and 2019-21



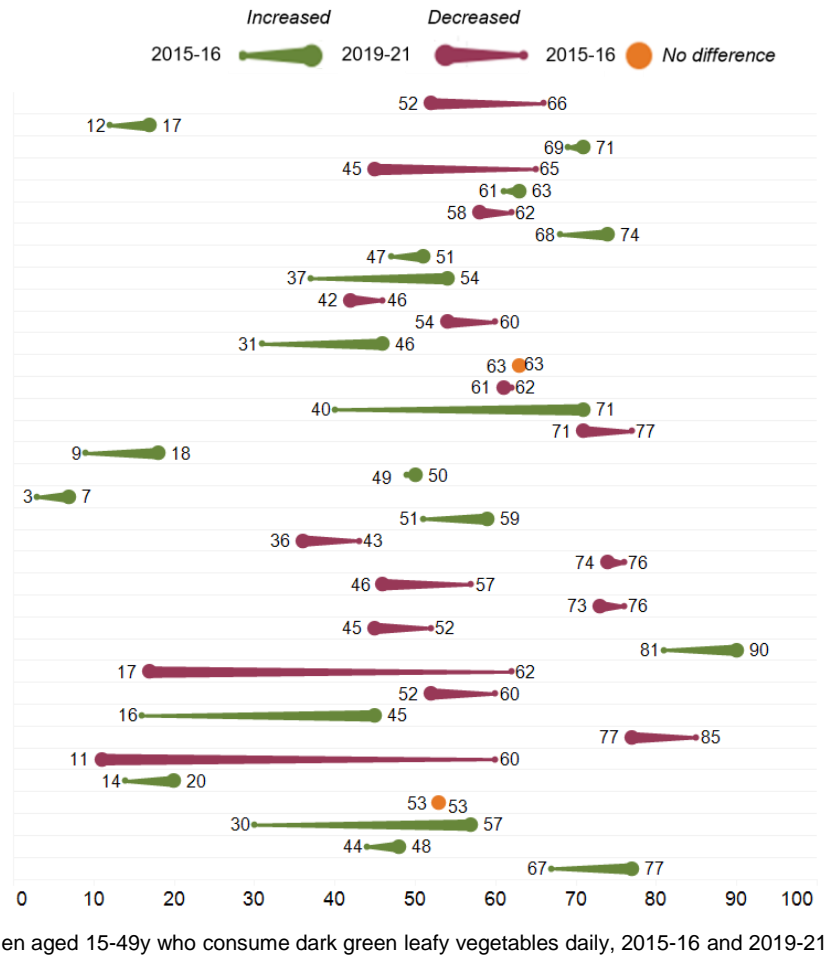
States/UTs that increased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
Jharkhand	+31
Rajasthan	+29
Uttar Pradesh	+27
DNH & DD	+17
Haryana	+15

States/UTs that decreased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
Tamil Nadu	-49
Puducherry	-44
Assam	-20
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	-14
Meghalaya	-11

- Andaman & Nicobar Islands
- Andhra Pradesh
- Arunachal Pradesh
- Assam
- Bihar
- Chandigarh
- Chhattisgarh
- Delhi
- DNH and DD
- Goa
- Gujarat
- Haryana
- Himachal Pradesh
- Jammu & Kashmir
- Jharkhand
- Karnataka
- Kerala
- Ladakh
- Lakshadweep
- Madhya Pradesh
- Maharashtra
- Manipur
- Meghalaya
- Mizoram
- Nagaland
- Odisha
- Puducherry
- Punjab
- Rajasthan
- Sikkim
- Tamil Nadu
- Telangana
- Tripura
- Uttar Pradesh
- Uttarakhand
- West Bengal



% of women aged 15-49y who consume dark green leafy vegetables daily, 2015-16 and 2019-21

FIGURE 7: Daily intake of dark green leafy vegetables by men at the state level, 2015-16 and 2019-21



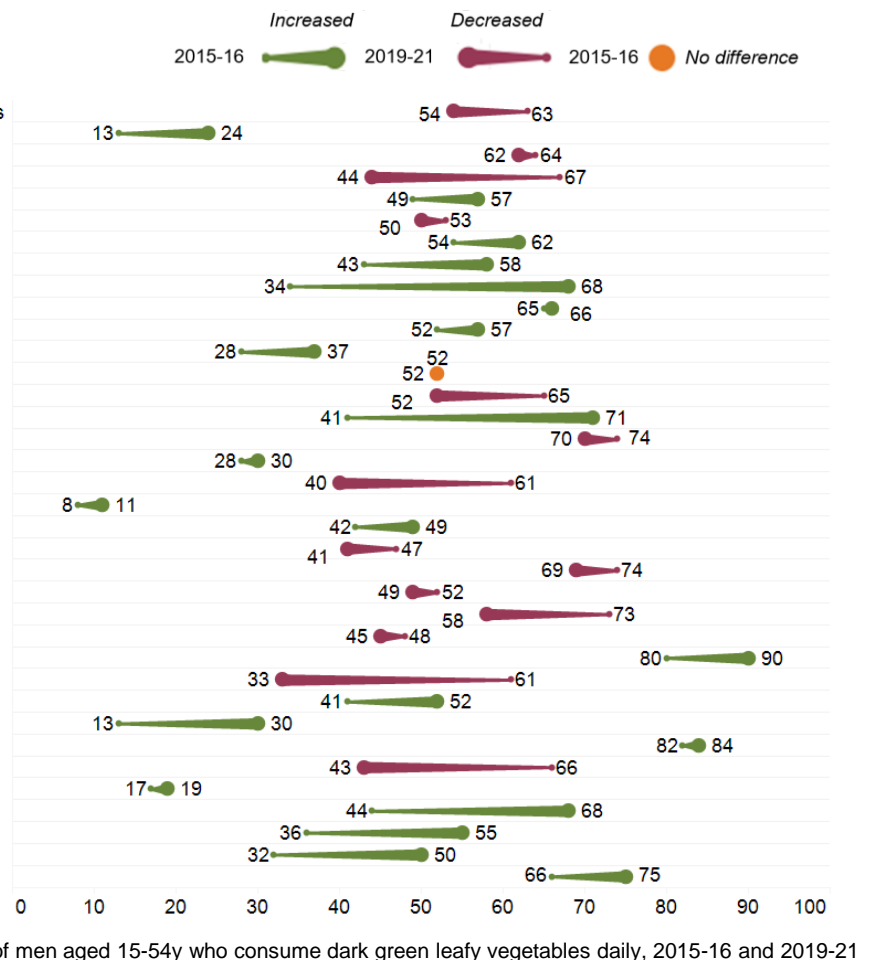
States/UTs that increased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
Jharkhand	+29
Tripura	+24
Uttar Pradesh	+19
Uttarakhand	+18
Rajasthan	+17

States/UTs that decreased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
Puducherry	-28
Tamil Nadu	-23
Assam	-23
Mizoram	-16
Jammu & Kashmir	-13

- Andaman & Nicobar Islands
- Andhra Pradesh
- Arunachal Pradesh
- Assam
- Bihar
- Chandigarh
- Chhattisgarh
- Delhi
- DNH and DD
- Goa
- Gujarat
- Haryana
- Himachal Pradesh
- Jammu & Kashmir
- Jharkhand
- Karnataka
- Kerala
- Ladakh
- Lakshadweep
- Madhya Pradesh
- Maharashtra
- Manipur
- Meghalaya
- Mizoram
- Nagaland
- Odisha
- Puducherry
- Punjab
- Rajasthan
- Sikkim
- Tamil Nadu
- Telangana
- Tripura
- Uttar Pradesh
- Uttarakhand
- West Bengal



% of men aged 15-54y who consume dark green leafy vegetables daily, 2015-16 and 2019-21

Source: NFHS-4 and NFHS-5-unit level data [IFPRI estimates].

FIGURE 8: Daily intake of dark green leafy vegetables by women at the district level, 2015-16 and 2019-21

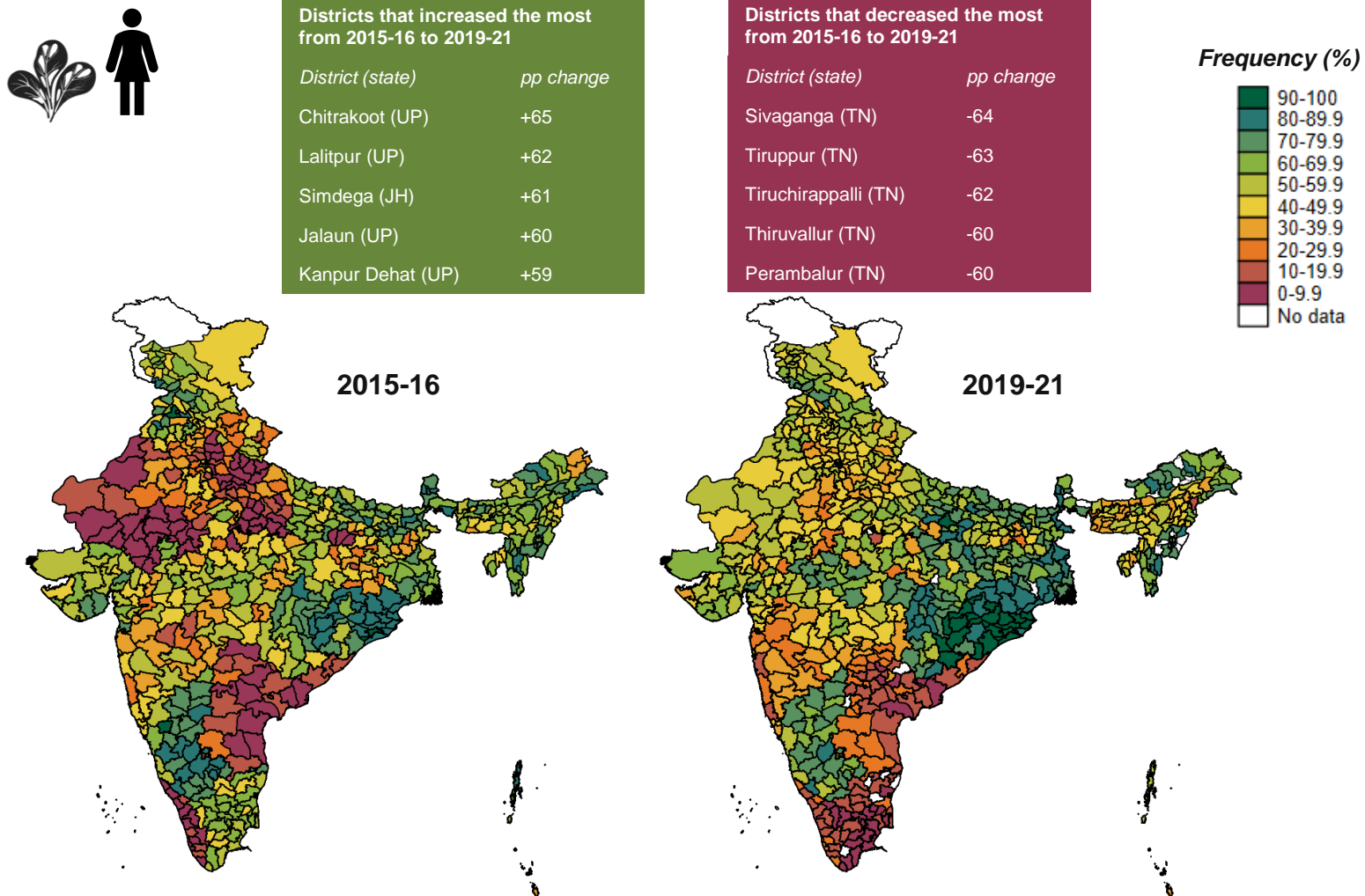
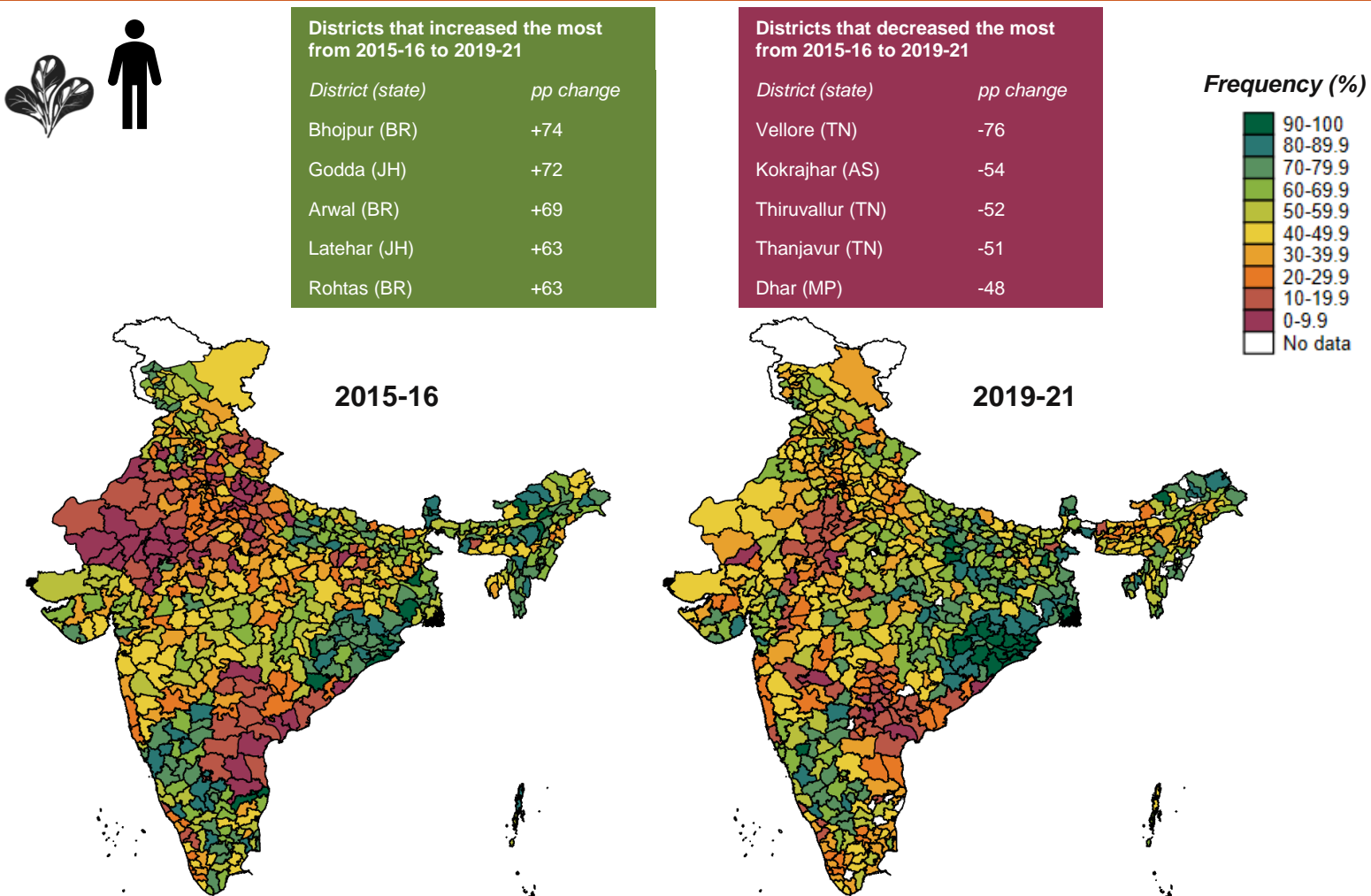


FIGURE 9: Daily intake of dark green leafy vegetables by men at the district level, 2015-16 and 2019-21



Source: NFHS-4 and NFHS-5-unit level data [IFPRI estimates]. Note: *There are 575 districts that are comparable between NFHS-4 and NFHS-5.

FIGURE 10: Daily intake of fruits by women at the state level, 2015-16 and 2019-21



States/UTs that increased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
Sikkim	+12
Jammu & Kashmir	+12
Delhi	+8
Himachal Pradesh	+7
AP, PY	+6

States/UTs that decreased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
Kerala	-11
Chandigarh	-11
DNH & DD	-9
Manipur	-4
LD, KA	-3

- Andaman & Nicobar Islands
- Andhra Pradesh
- Arunachal Pradesh
- Assam
- Bihar
- Chandigarh
- Chhattisgarh
- Delhi
- DNH and DD
- Goa
- Gujarat
- Haryana
- Himachal Pradesh
- Jammu & Kashmir
- Jharkhand
- Karnataka
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- Lakshadweep
- Madhya Pradesh
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- Odisha
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- Punjab
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- Tripura
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- Uttarakhand
- West Bengal

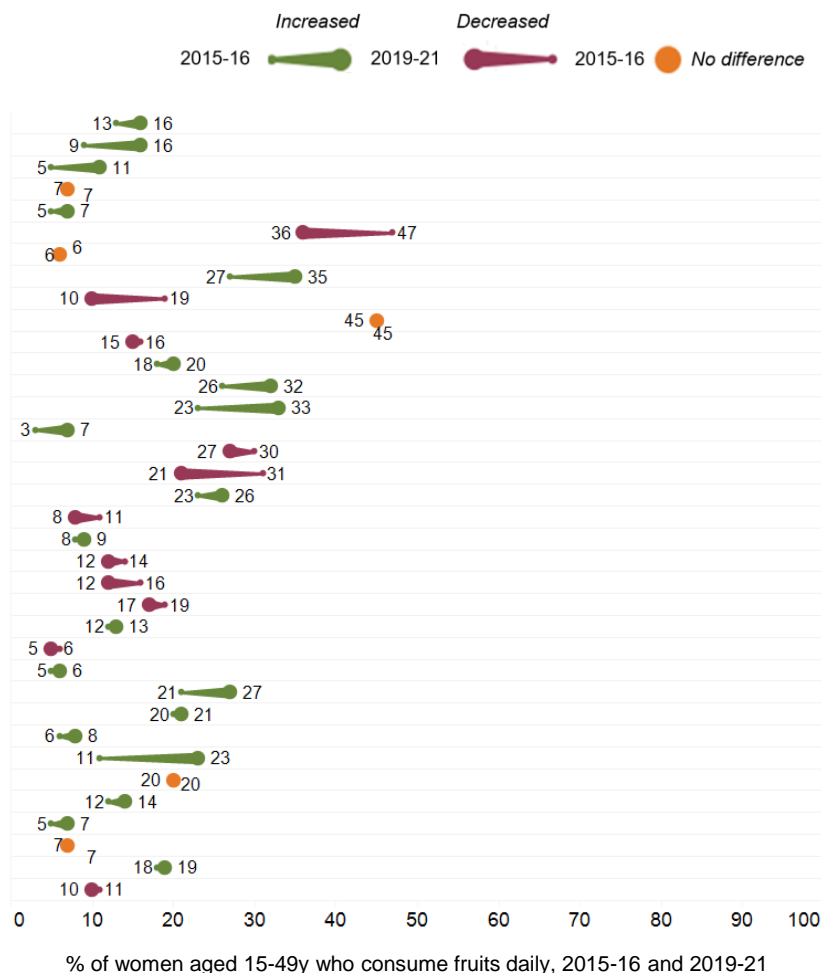


FIGURE 11: Daily intake of fruits by men at the state level, 2015-16 and 2019-21



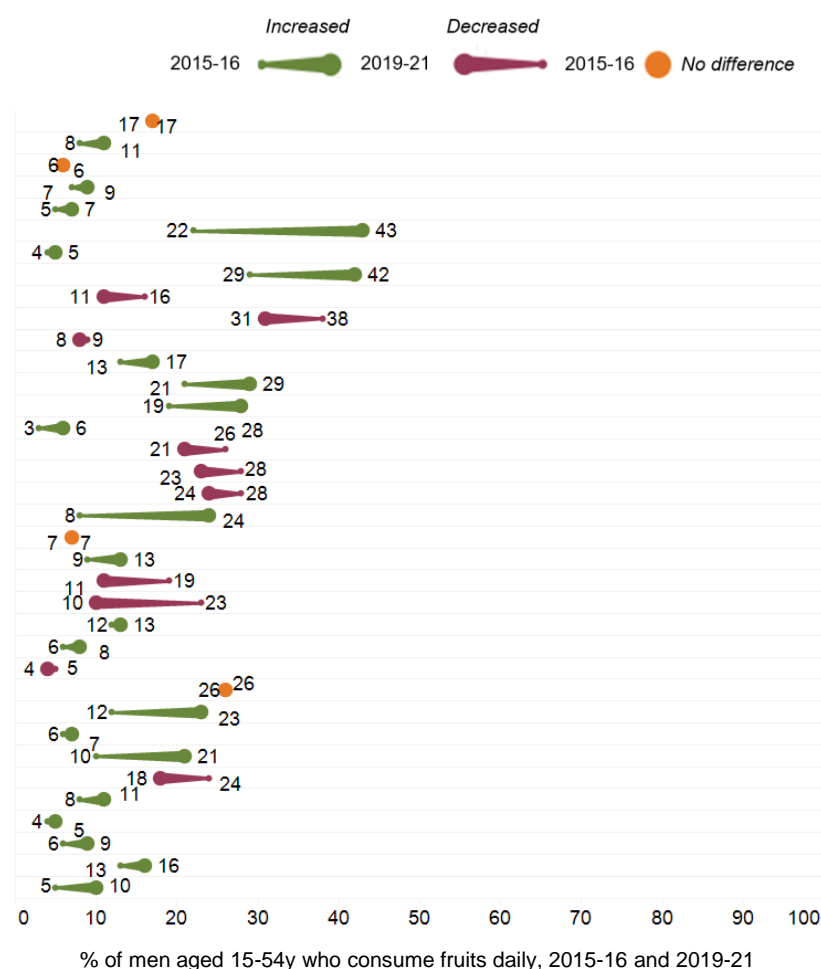
States/UTs that increased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
Chandigarh	+21
Lakshadweep	+16
Delhi	+13
Sikkim	+11
Punjab	+10

States/UTs that decreased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
Meghalaya	-13
Manipur	-8
Goa	-7
Tamil Nadu	-6
KA, KL	-5

- Andaman & Nicobar Islands
- Andhra Pradesh
- Arunachal Pradesh
- Assam
- Bihar
- Chandigarh
- Chhattisgarh
- Delhi
- DNH and DD
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- Gujarat
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- Odisha
- Puducherry
- Punjab
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- Sikkim
- Tamil Nadu
- Telangana
- Tripura
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- West Bengal



Source: NFHS-4 and NFHS-5-unit level data [IFPRI estimates].

FIGURE 12: Daily intake of fruits by women at the district level, 2015-16 and 2019-21

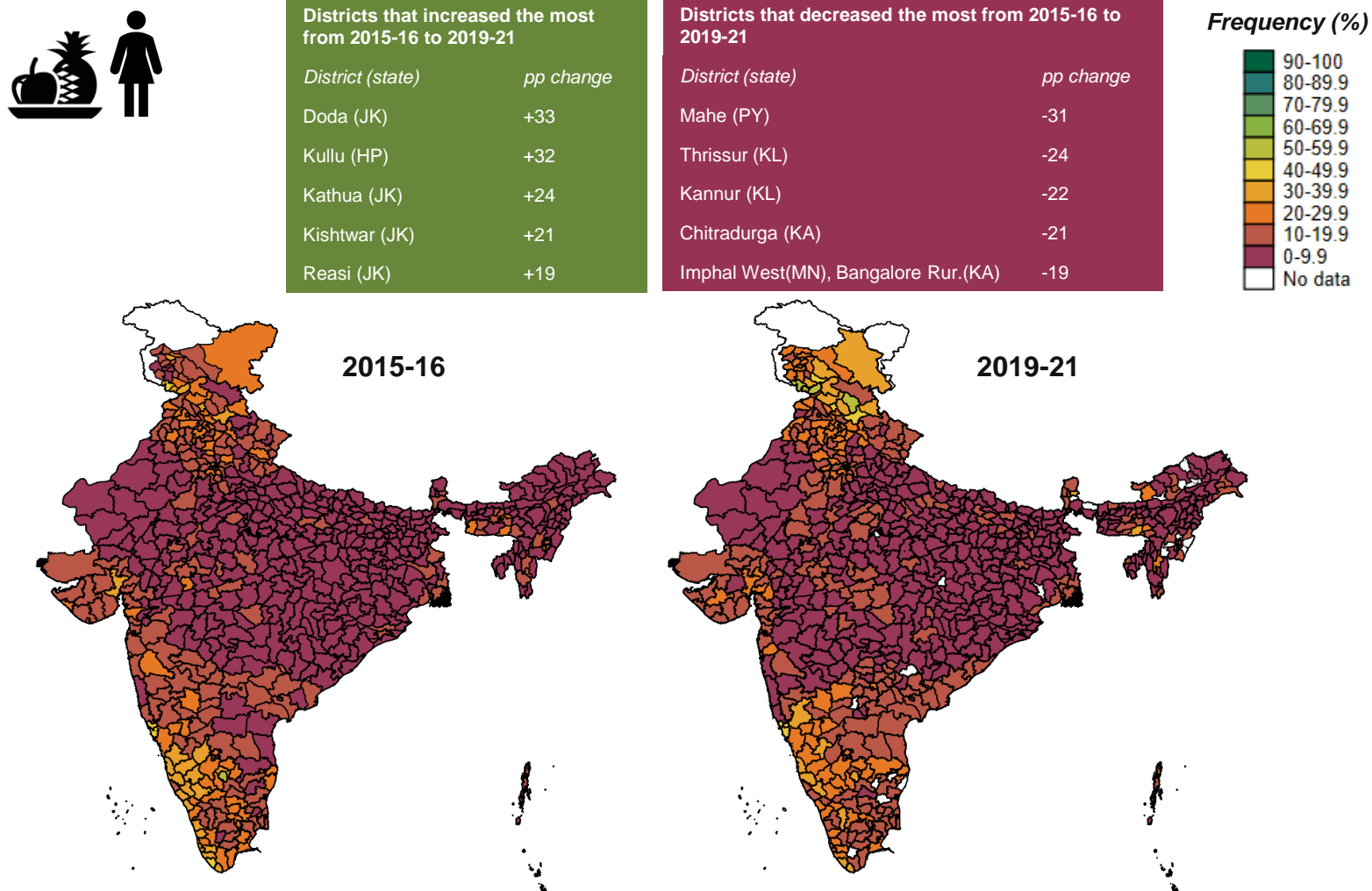
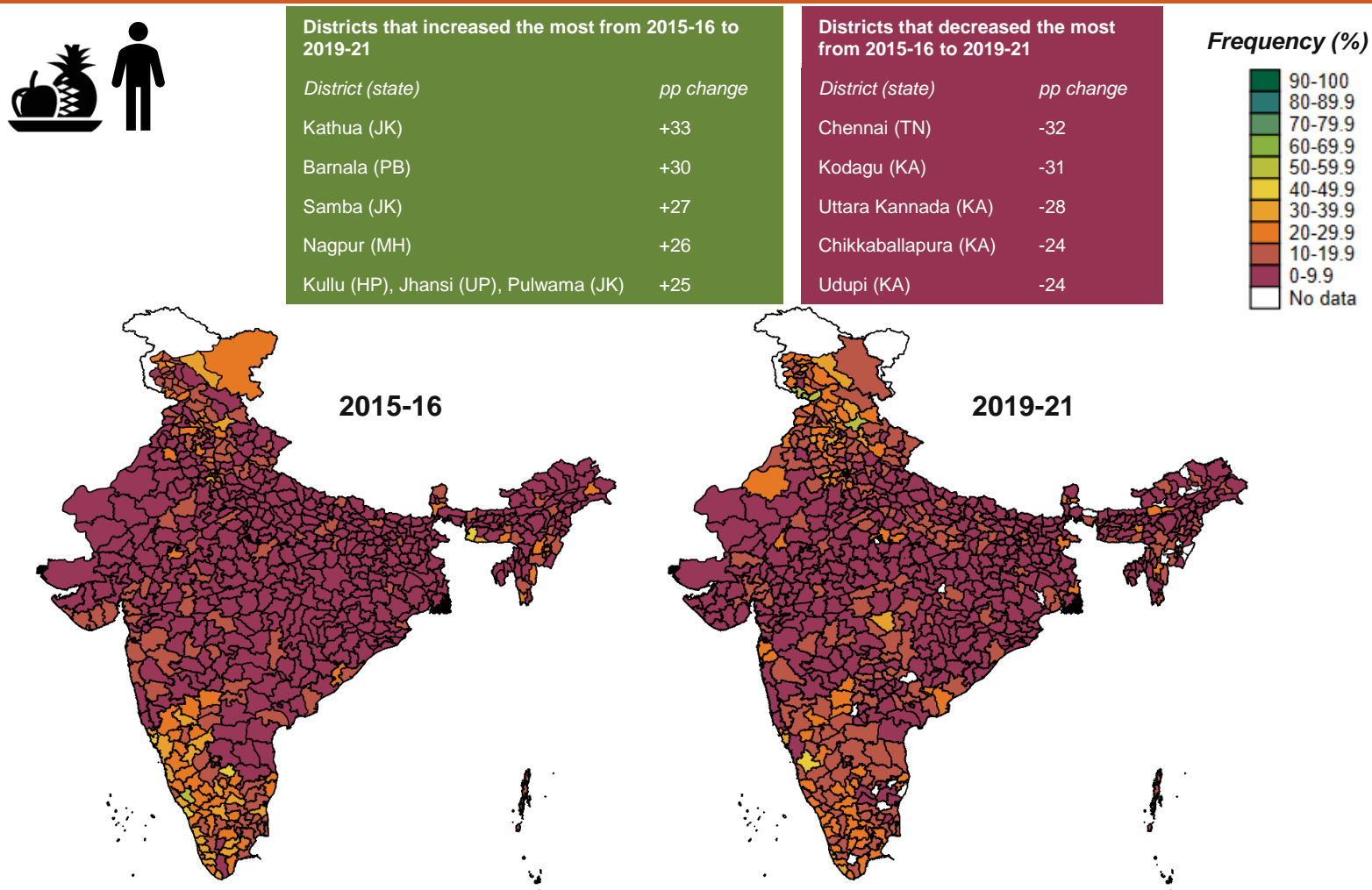


FIGURE 13: Daily intake of fruits by men at the district level, 2015-16 and 2019-21



Source: NFHS-4 and NFHS-5-unit level data [IFPRI estimates]. Note: *There are 575 districts that are comparable between NFHS-4 and NFHS-5.

FIGURE 14: Daily intake of any protein by women at the state level, 2015-16 and 2019-21



States/UTs that increased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
Jharkhand	+16
Delhi	+16
Odisha	+14
Ladakh	+13
Rajasthan	+13

States/UTs that decreased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
Goa	-14
Chandigarh	-9
Punjab	-8
Gujarat	-7
Meghalaya	-6

Andaman & Nicobar Islands
 Andhra Pradesh
 Arunachal Pradesh
 Assam
 Bihar
 Chandigarh
 Chhattisgarh
 Delhi
 DNH and DD
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 Gujarat
 Haryana
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 Telangana
 Tripura
 Uttar Pradesh
 Uttarakhand
 West Bengal

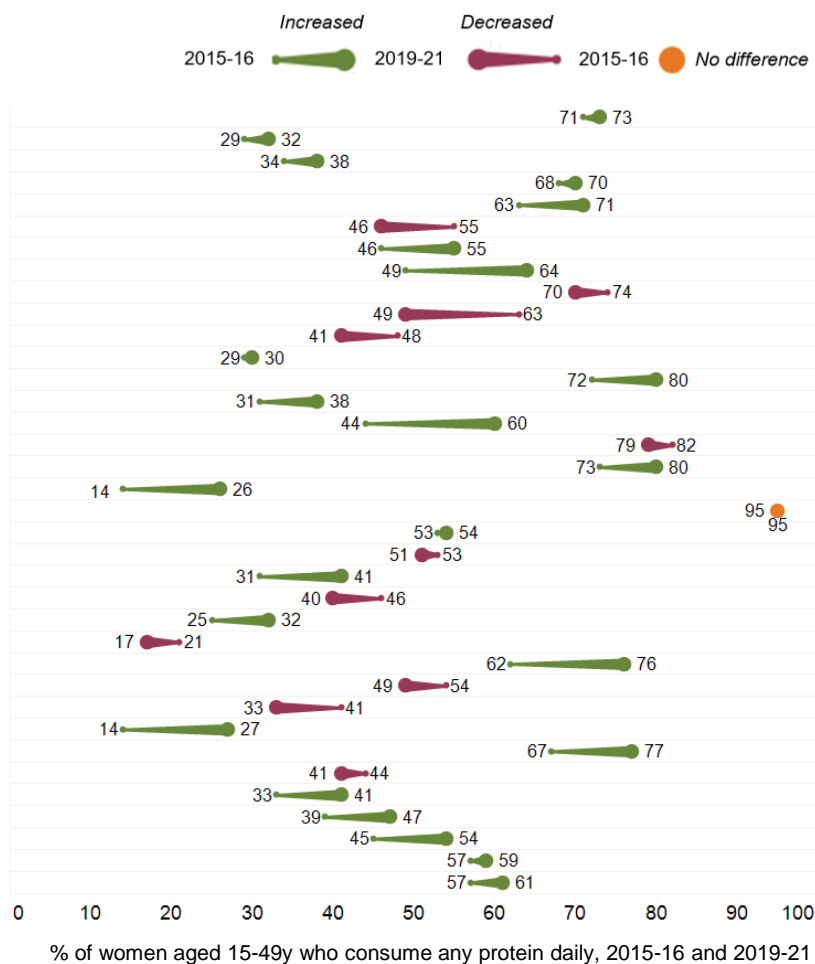


FIGURE 15: Daily intake of any protein by men at the state level, 2015-16 and 2019-21



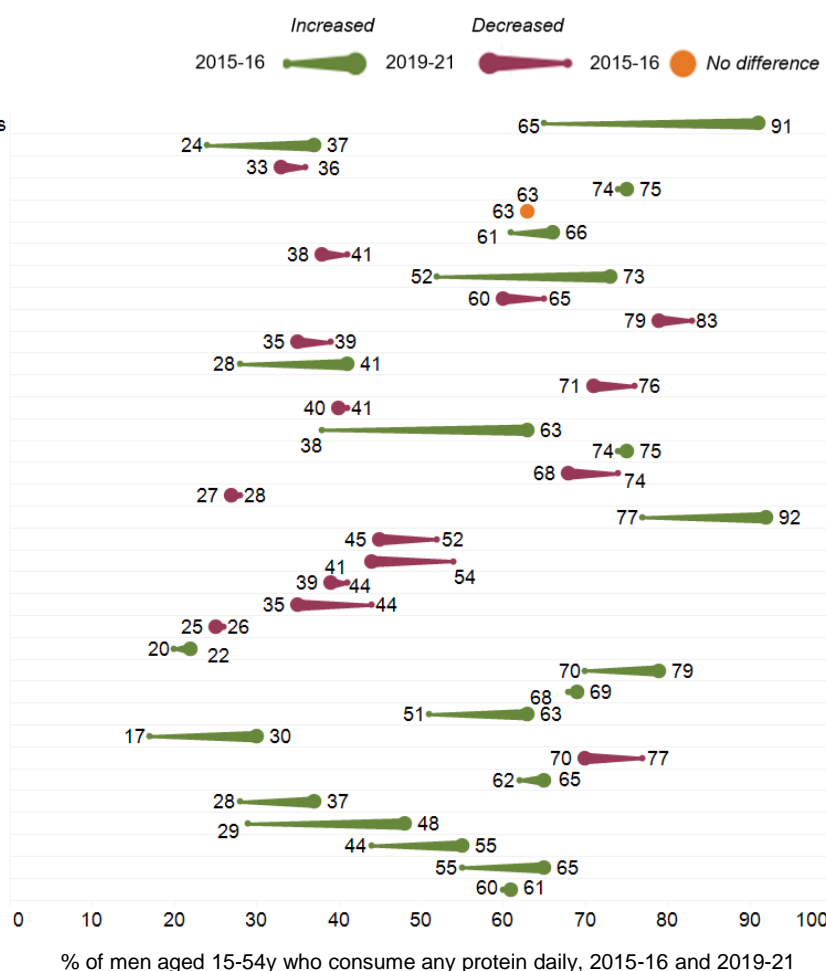
States/UTs that increased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
A&N Islands	+26
Jharkhand	+25
Delhi	+20
Tripura	+18
Lakshadweep	+15

States/UTs that decreased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
Maharashtra	-10
Meghalaya	-9
Sikkim	-8
Madhya Pradesh	-7
Kerala	-6

Andaman & Nicobar Islands
 Andhra Pradesh
 Arunachal Pradesh
 Assam
 Bihar
 Chandigarh
 Chhattisgarh
 Delhi
 DNH and DD
 Goa
 Gujarat
 Haryana
 Himachal Pradesh
 Jammu & Kashmir
 Jharkhand
 Karnataka
 Kerala
 Ladakh
 Lakshadweep
 Madhya Pradesh
 Maharashtra
 Manipur
 Meghalaya
 Mizoram
 Nagaland
 Odisha
 Puducherry
 Punjab
 Rajasthan
 Sikkim
 Tamil Nadu
 Telangana
 Tripura
 Uttar Pradesh
 Uttarakhand
 West Bengal



Source: NFHS-4 and NFHS-5-unit level data [IFPRI estimates].

FIGURE 16: Daily intake of any protein by women at the district level, 2015-16 and 2019-21



Districts that increased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

District (state)	pp change
Lalitpur (UP)	+67
Chitrakoot (UP)	+60
Mahoba (UP)	+47
Fatehpur, Jalaun (UP)	+46
Kanpur, Dehat, Banda (UP)	+46

Districts that decreased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

District (state)	pp change
Khandwa (MP)	-37
Allahabad (UP)	-32
Udhampur (JK)	-29
Almora (UK)	-27
Porbandar(GJ)	-26

Frequency (%)

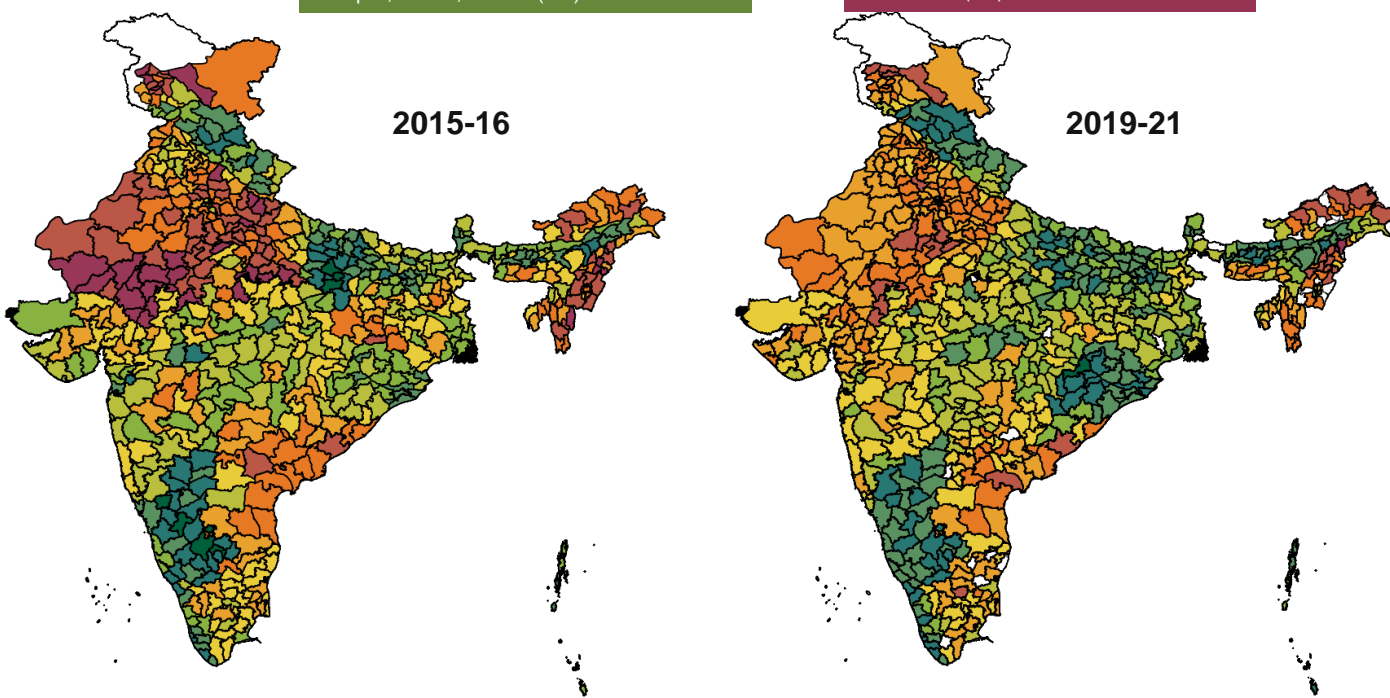
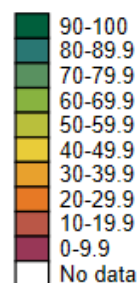


FIGURE 17: Daily intake of any protein by men at the district level, 2015-16 and 2019-21



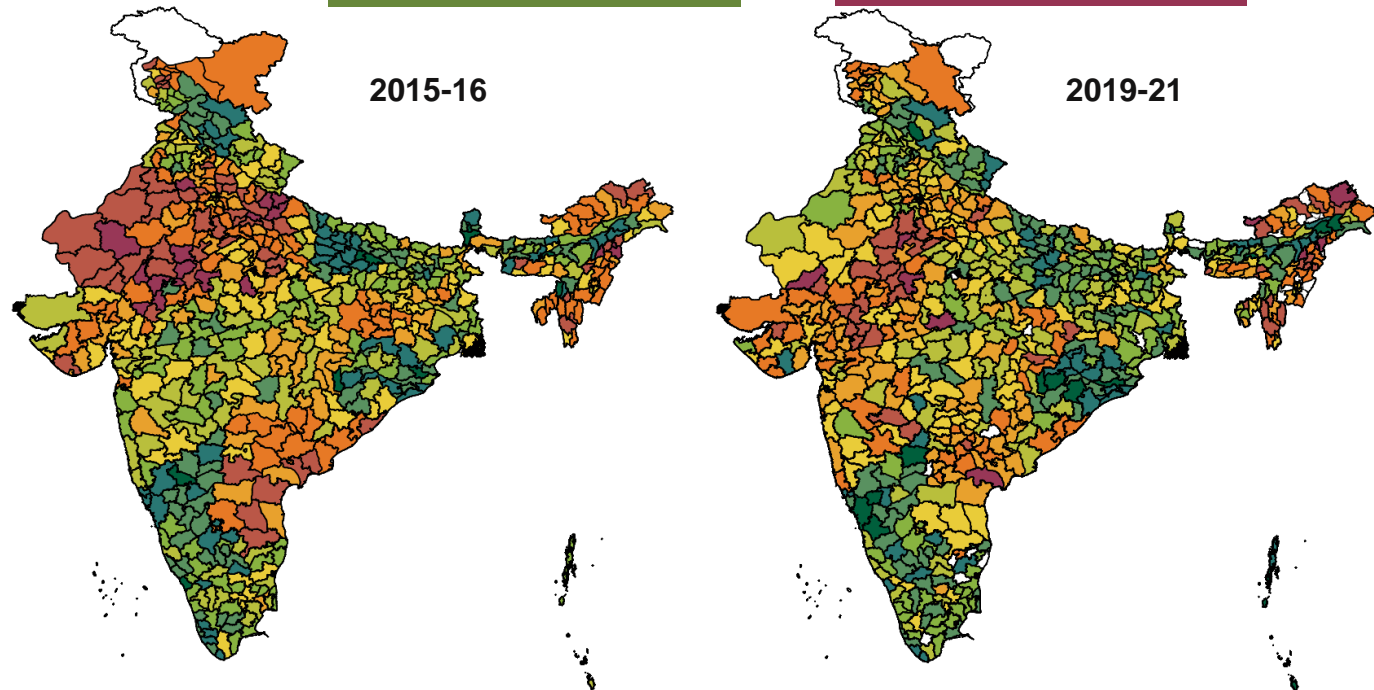
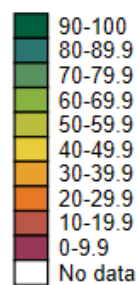
Districts that increased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

District (state)	pp change
Lalitpur (UP)	+60
Bikaner (RJ)	+52
Ganganagar (RJ)	+49
Jalaun (UP)	+47
Ranchi, Godda (JH)	+47

Districts that decreased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

District (state)	pp change
Dhar (MP)	-61
Raisen (MP)	-52
Mau (UP)	-51
Bid (MH)	-50
The Nilgiris (TN)	-44

Frequency (%)



Source: NFHS-4 and NFHS-5-unit level data [IFPRI estimates]. Note: *There are 575 districts that are comparable between NFHS-4 and NFHS-5.

FIGURE 18: Daily intake of fried foods by women at the state level, 2015-16 and 2019-21



States/UTs that decreased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
Odisha	-39
Goa	-10
Chandigarh	-10
West Bengal	-9
Assam	-9

States/UTs that increased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
Sikkim	+9
Ladakh	+8
Jammu & Kashmir	+7
Meghalaya	+5
A&N Islands, AP, KR, RJ	+3

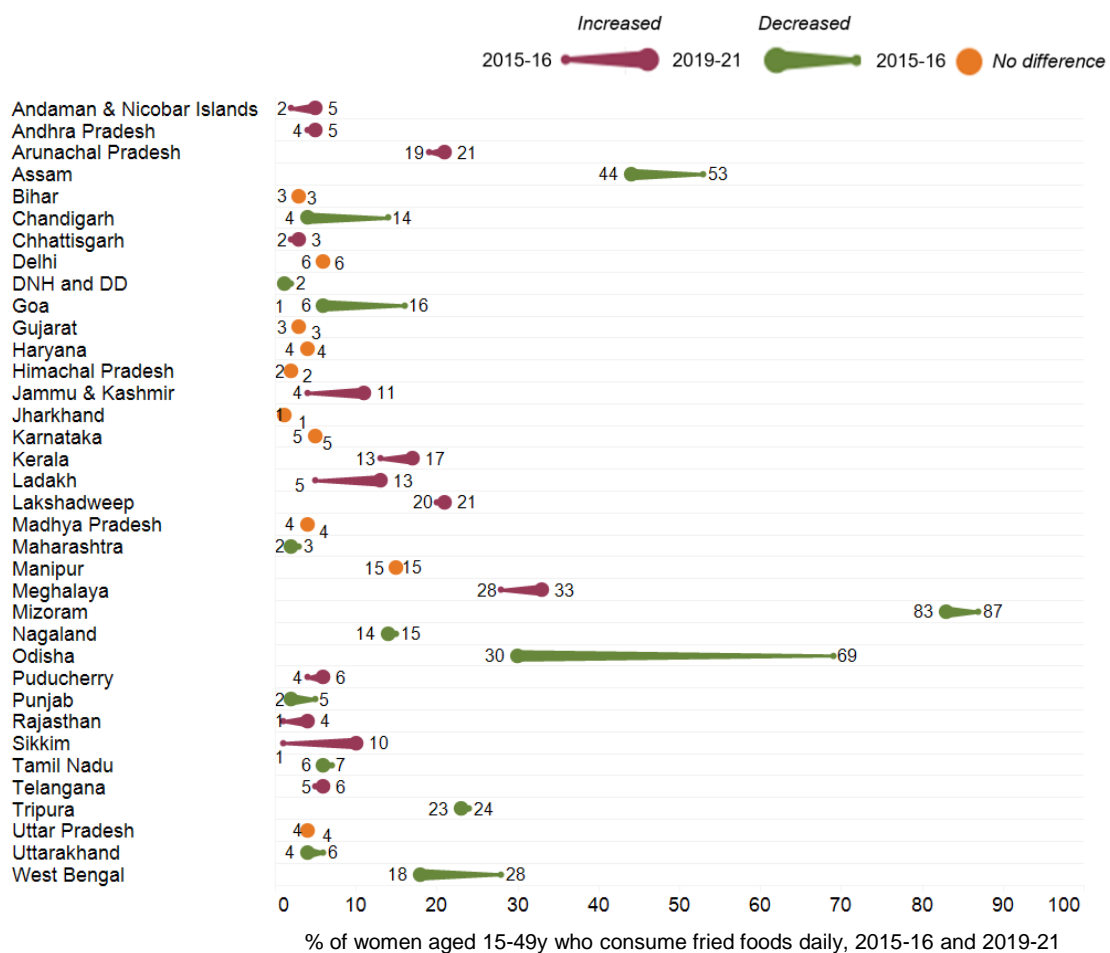


FIGURE 19: Daily intake of fried foods by men at the state level, 2015-16 and 2019-21

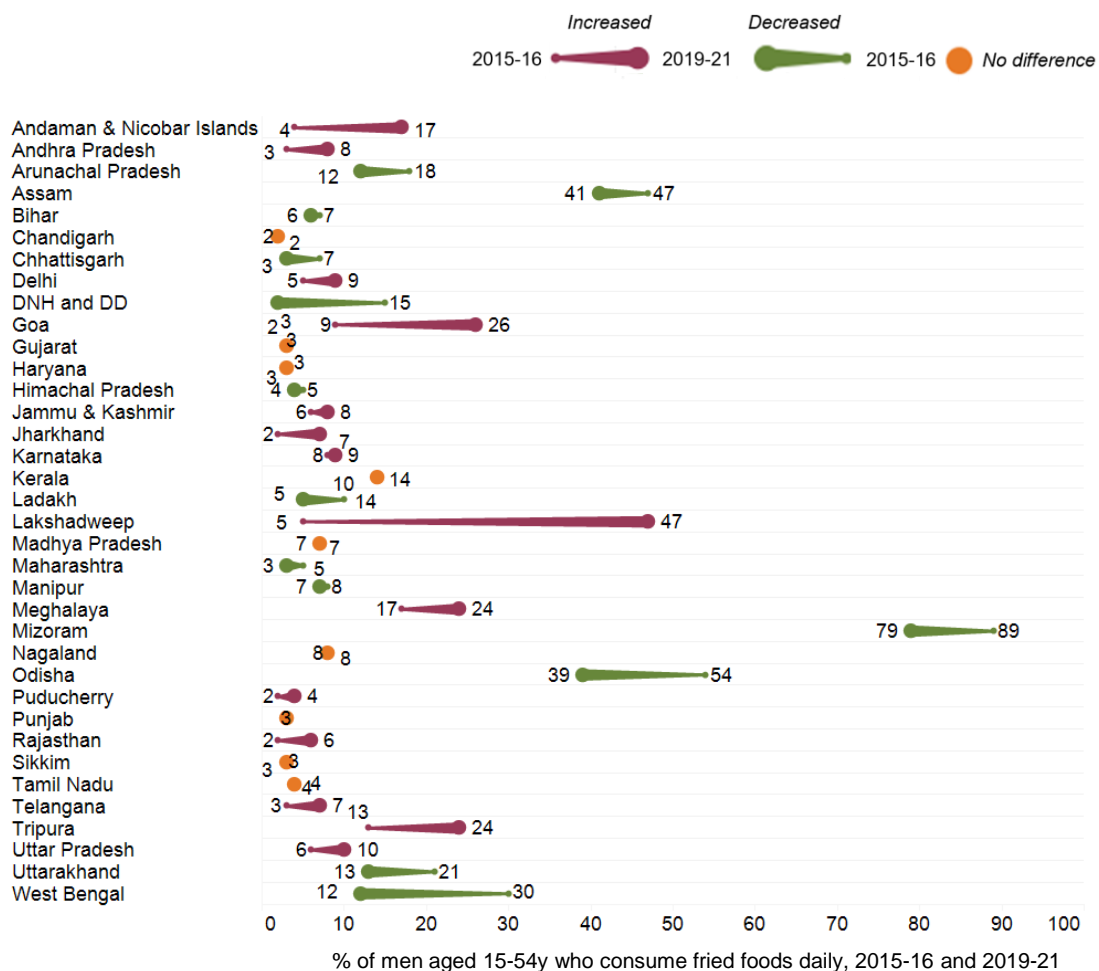


States/UTs that decreased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
West Bengal	-18
Odisha	-15
Mizoram	-10
Uttarakhand	-8
Assam	-6

States/UTs that increased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
Lakshadweep	+42
Goa	+16
A&N Islands	+13
Tripura	+10
Meghalaya	+6



Source: NFHS-4 and NFHS-5-unit level data [IFPRI estimates].

FIGURE 20: Daily intake of fried foods by women at the district level, 2015-16 and 2019-21

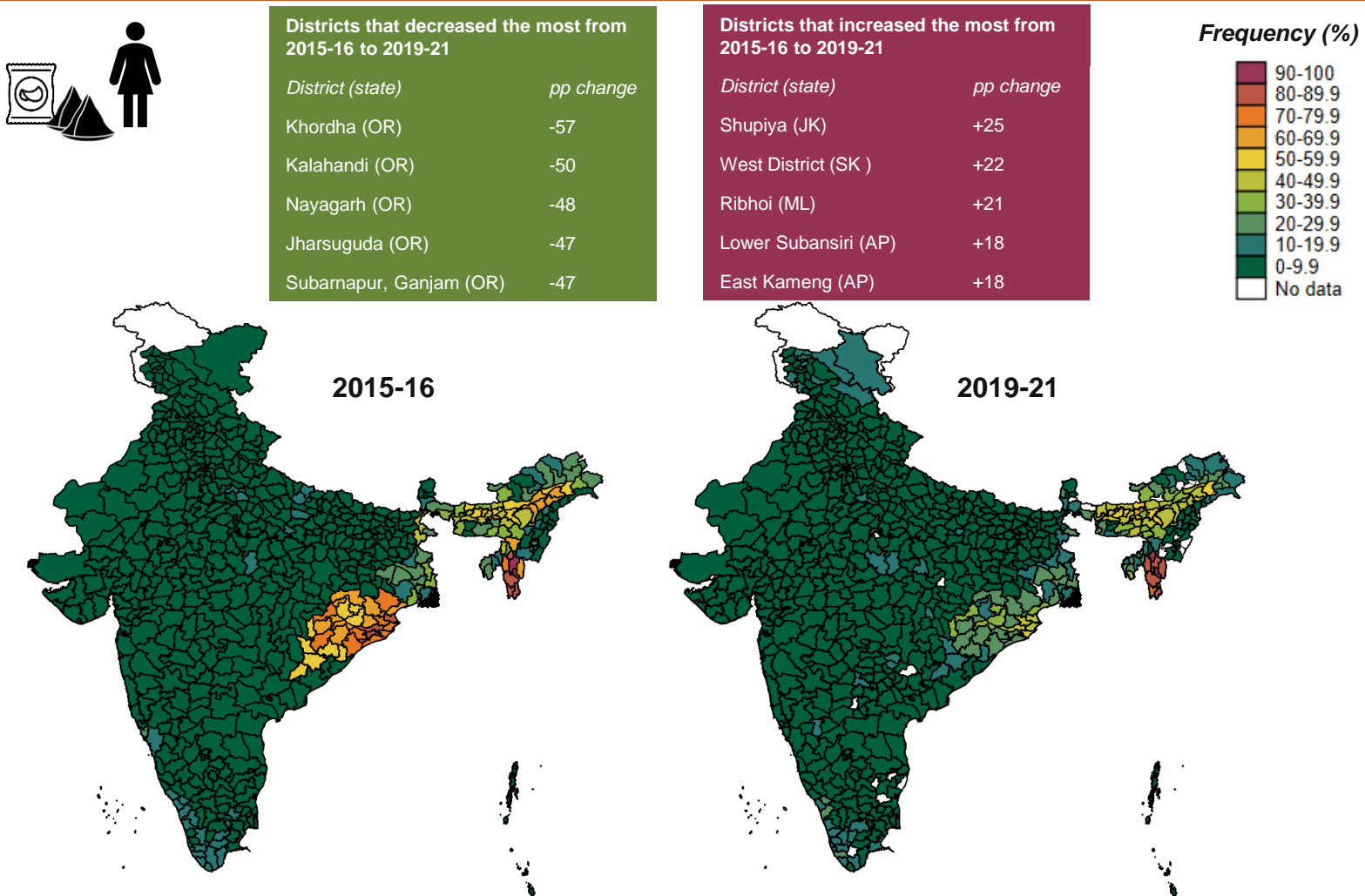
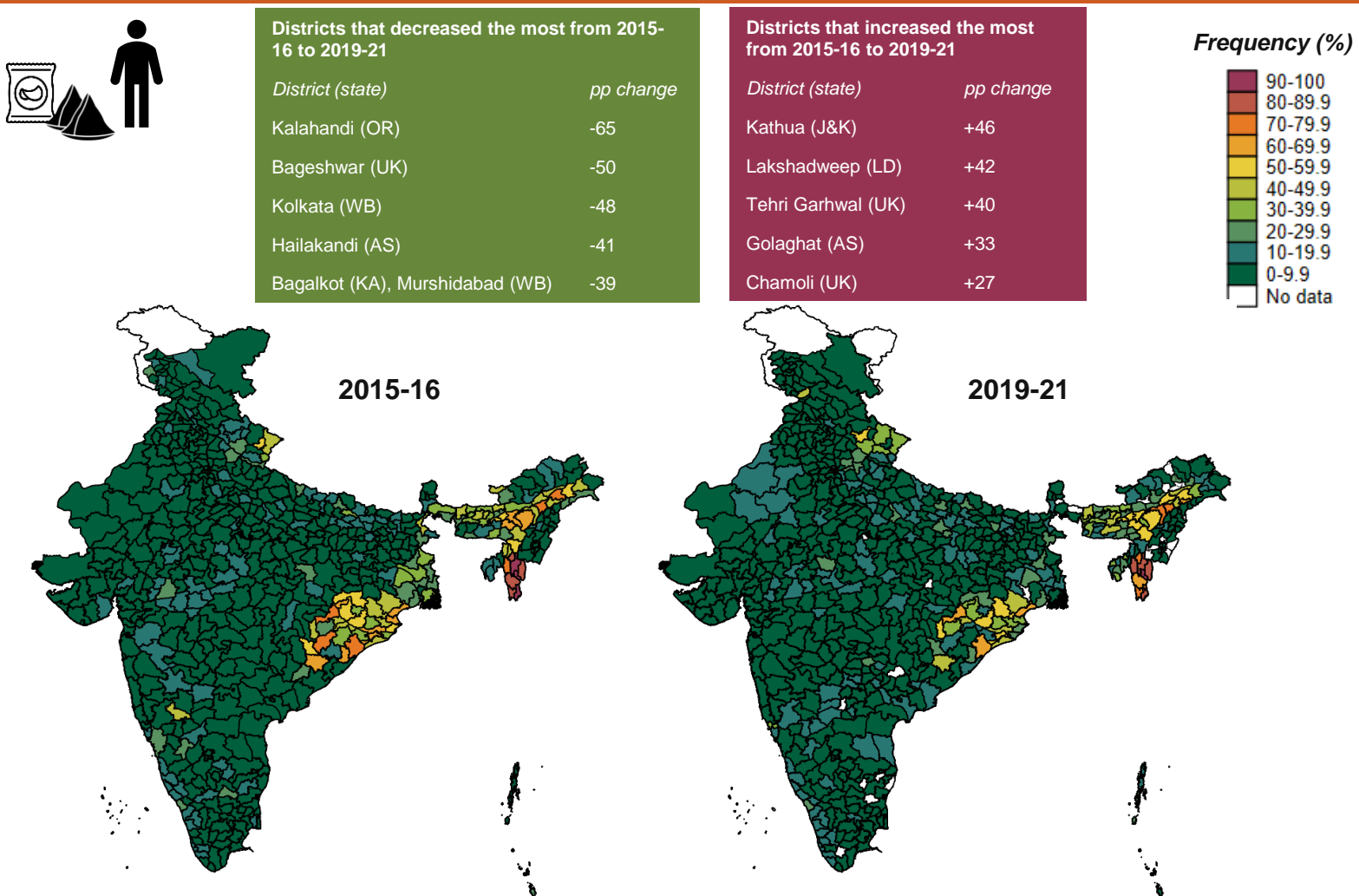


FIGURE 21: Daily intake of fried foods by men at the district level, 2015-16 and 2019-21



Source: NFHS-4 and NFHS-5-unit level data [IFPRI estimates]. Note: *There are 575 districts that are comparable between NFHS-4 and NFHS-5.

FIGURE 22: Daily intake of aerated drinks by women at the state level, 2015-16 and 2019-21



Increased 2015-16 2019-21 Decreased 2015-16 No difference

States/UTs that decreased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
Odisha	-25
Chandigarh	-20
Haryana	-8
Delhi	-8
Punjab, Goa	-6

States/UTs that increased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
Lakshadweep	+7
A&N Islands	+5
J&K	+4
Assam	+4
Ladakh, HP, CH	+3

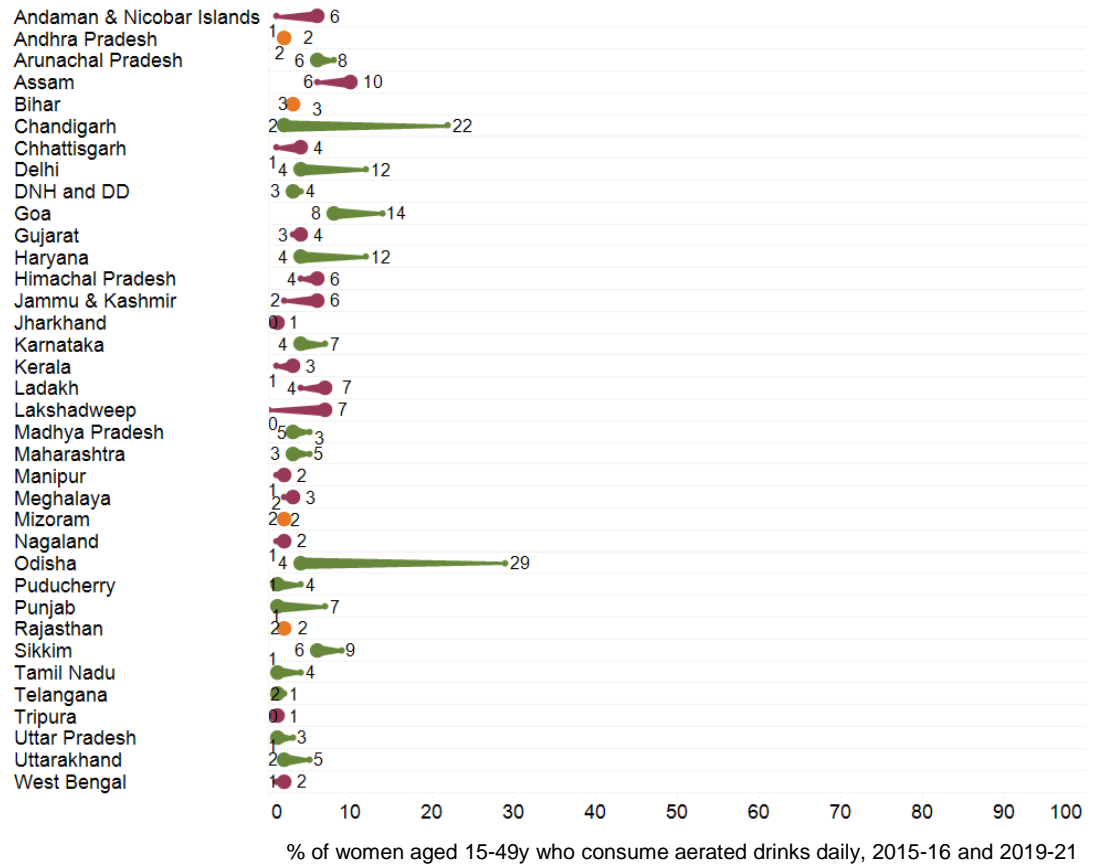


FIGURE 23: Daily intake of aerated drinks by men at the state level, 2015-16 and 2019-21



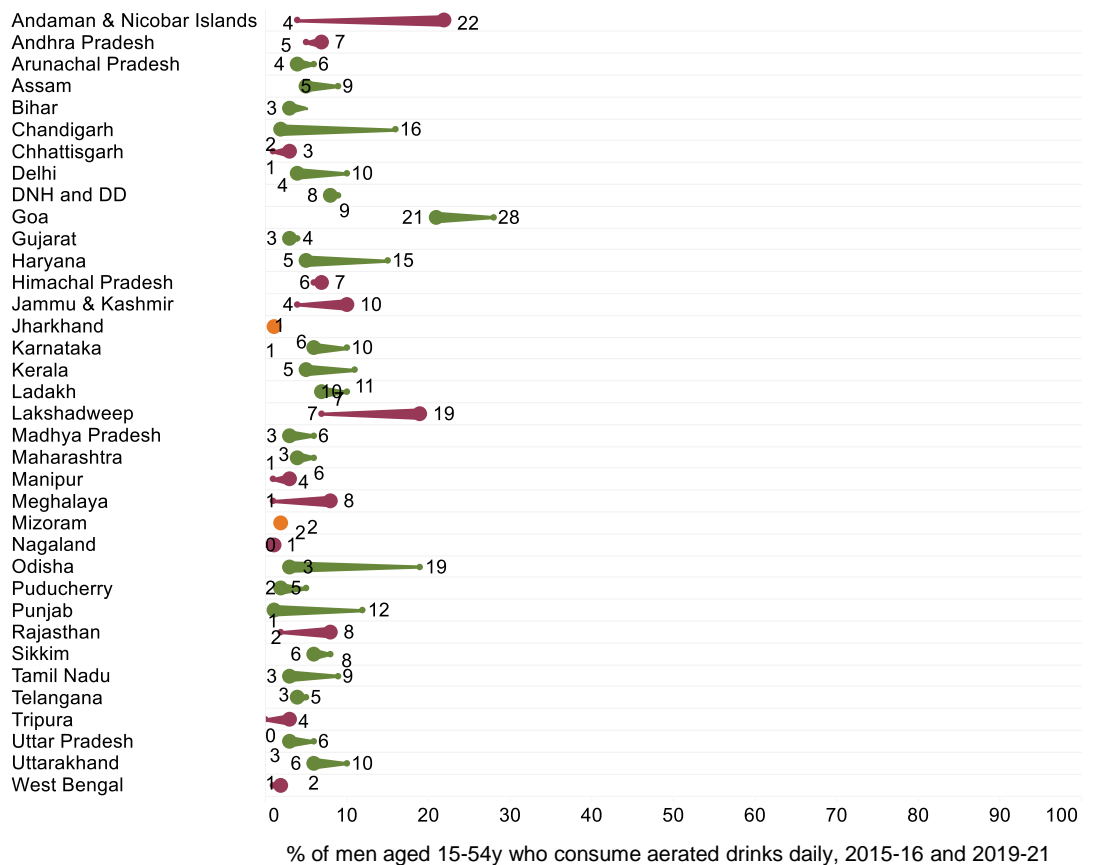
Increased 2015-16 2019-21 Decreased 2015-16 No difference

States/UTs that decreased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
Odisha	-16
Chandigarh	-15
Haryana	-11
Punjab	-11
Goa	-7

States/UTs that increased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

State/UT	pp change
A&N Islands	+17
Lakshadweep	+12
Meghalaya	+7
J&K, Rajasthan	+5
Tripura	+3



Source: NFHS-4 and NFHS-5-unit level data [IFPRI estimates].

FIGURE 24: Daily intake of aerated drinks by women at the district level, 2015-16 and 2019-21



Districts that decreased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

District (state)	pp change
Mayurbhanj (OR)	-59
Jagatsinghapu (OR)	-51
Puri (OR)	-49
Nabarangapu (OR)	-43
Kandhamal (OR)	-40

Districts that increased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

District (state)	pp change
Bongaigaon (AS)	+21
Chirang (AS)	+17
East Kameng (AP)	+17
Lakhimpur(AS)	+15
Rohtas(BR)	+15

Frequency (%)

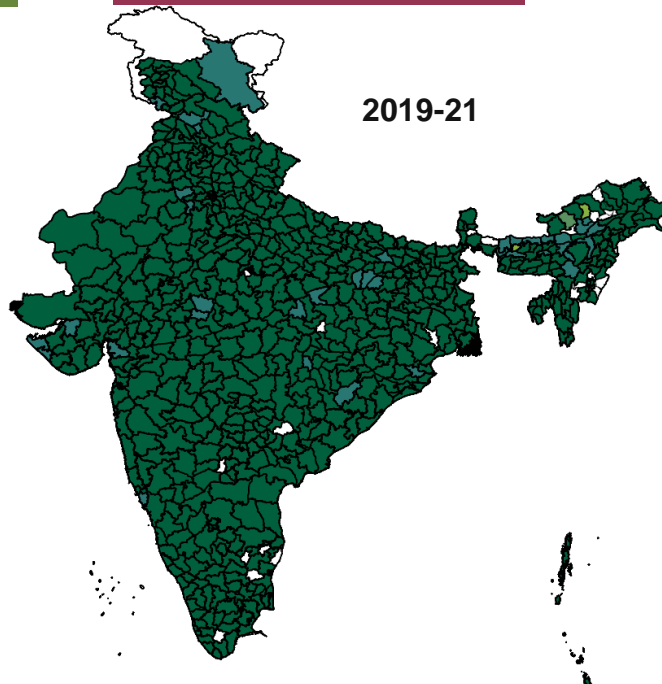
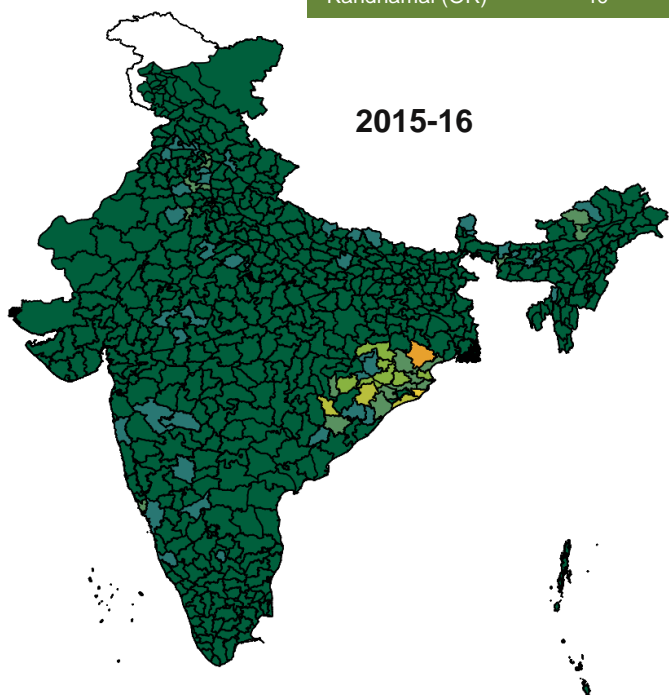
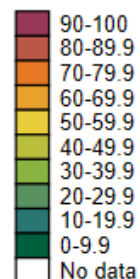
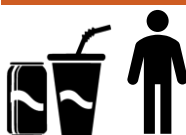


FIGURE 25: Daily intake of aerated drinks by men at the district level, 2015-16 and 2019-21



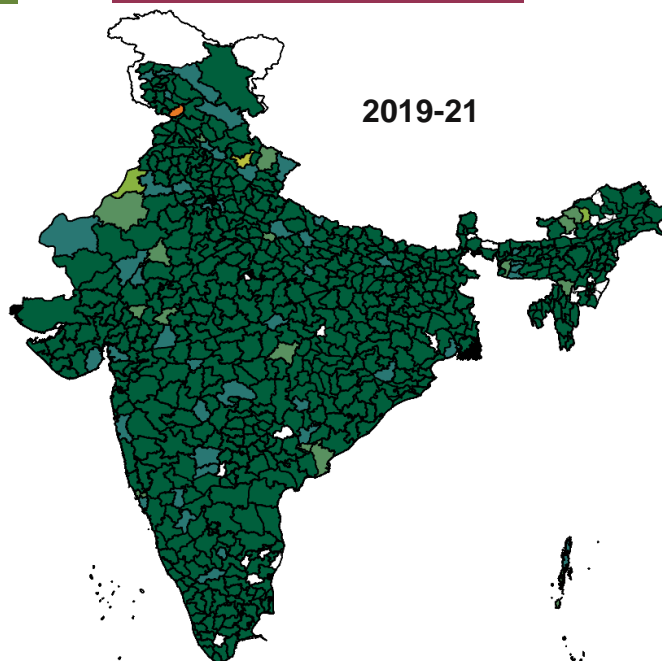
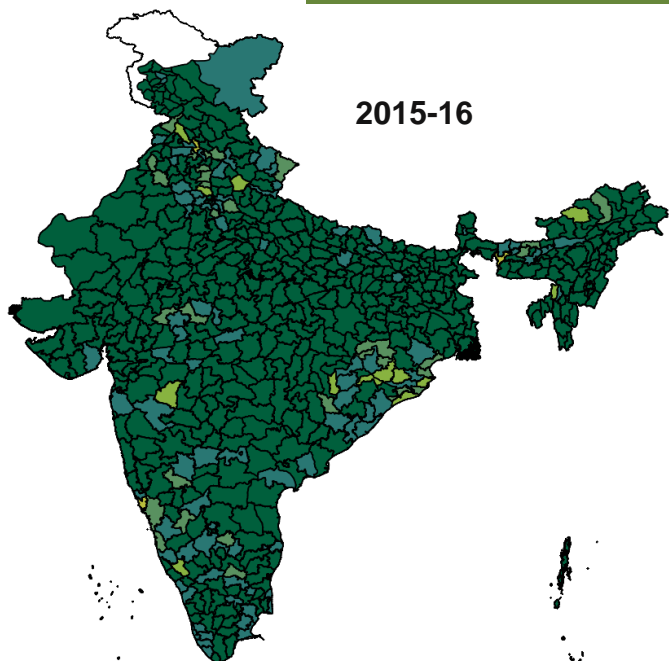
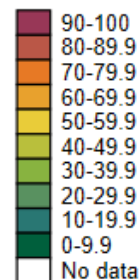
Districts that decreased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

District (state)	pp change
Rupnagar (PB)	-47
Baudh (OR)	-38
Hoshiarpur (PB)	-38
South Goa (GA)	-37
Sonipat (HR)	-32

Districts that increased the most from 2015-16 to 2019-21

District (state)	pp change
Kathua(JK)	+68
Tehri Garhwal(UK)	+44
Ganganagar(RJ)	+30
East Godavari(AP)	+25
Bikaner(RJ)	+23

Frequency (%)



Source: NFHS-4 and NFHS-5-unit level data [IFPRI estimates]. Note: *There are 575 districts that are comparable between NFHS-4 and NFHS-5.

Summary of findings

At the national level from 2005-06 to 2019-21, only the daily consumption of dairy has increased. The consumption of dark green leafy vegetables and any protein has declined and consumption of fruits has remained low. Few Indians consume animal source foods daily, but around half consume any protein (either animal source foods or pulses). On a positive note, the consumption of fried foods and aerated drinks has not increased in the last 4-5 years.



Daily consumption of dairy:

- Improved in most states (Lakshadweep, Jammu & Kashmir, and Kerala among the top three for women and men).
- Declined the most in DNH & DD, Sikkim, Chandigarh, Punjab for women and in Puducherry, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh for men.
- Increased by more than 10% in 166 districts for women and 196 districts for men.



Daily consumption of dark green leafy vegetables:

- Severely declined in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry for women and men.
- Five districts with most decline for women were from Tamil Nadu.



Daily consumption of fruits:

- In Chandigarh and Lakshadweep, declined for women but increased for men.
- Most improvement for men and women in districts from Jammu & Kashmir.



Daily consumption of any protein:

- Most improvement in Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Jharkhand and Delhi.
- Five districts with most improvement for women were from Uttar Pradesh.



Daily consumption of fried foods:

- Most improvement in Odisha, West Bengal and Mizoram.
- In Goa, improved for women but worsened for men.
- Five districts with most improvement for women were from Odisha.



Daily consumption of aerated drinks:

- Most improvement in Odisha, Chandigarh, Haryana, Goa, Punjab and Delhi.
- Five districts with most improvement for women were from Odisha.



Photo taken in Uttar Pradesh by Shawn Sebastian

LIMITATIONS:

- Data is only available for 9 food groups.
- Seasonal variation in consumption not accounted for.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Need a more comprehensive list of food items within food groups aligned with global standards.
- Large-scale surveys could explore new measurement approaches to capture more detailed dietary information.
- Collect information on diets from multiple family members of different ages at different times throughout the year.

Discussion questions for users

1. How has the daily consumption of all food groups changed for your state/UT or district?
2. Has the trend been similar for women and men?
3. Which food groups for your state/UT or district need to be promoted to increase consumption?
4. Which food groups for your state/UT or district need attention to reduce consumption?
5. What are locally available foods in each food group that can be promoted in your state/UT or district?

ANNEX 1. NFHS questions on consumption

आप स्वयं निम्न नलिखित खाद्य पदार्थों को प्रायः कितनी बार खाती हैं: रोजाना, हफ्ते में एकबार, कभी-कभी, या कभी नहीं खाते हैं? How often do you yourself eat the following food items: daily, weekly, occasionally, or never?	DAILY	WEEKLY	OCC.	NEVER
a. दूध या दही? Milk or curd?	1	2	3	4
b. दालें या फलियाँ? Pulses or beans?	1	2	3	4
c. गहरी हरे पत्तेदार सब्जियाँ? Dark green leafy vegetables?	1	2	3	4
d. फल? Fruits?	1	2	3	4
e. अण्डे? Eggs?	1	2	3	4
f. मछली? Fish?	1	2	3	4
g. मुर्गी या गोश्त? Chicken or meat?	1	2	3	4
h. तला हुआ खाद्य पदार्थ? Fried foods?	1	2	3	4
i. शीत पेय? Aerated drinks?	1	2	3	4

ANNEX 2. Indicators used in this data note

Dairy	Percentage of women (15-49 years) / men (15-54 years) who consume milk or curd daily
Dark green leafy vegetables	Percentage of women (15-49 years) / men (15-54 years) who consume dark green leafy vegetables daily
Fruits	Percentage of women (15-49 years) / men (15-54 years) who consume fruits daily
Pulses or beans	Percentage of women (15-49 years) / men (15-54 years) who consume pulses or beans daily
Eggs	Percentage of women (15-49 years) / men (15-54 years) who consume eggs daily
Fish	Percentage of women (15-49 years) / men (15-54 years) who consume fish daily
Chicken or meat	Percentage of women (15-49 years) / men (15-54 years) who consume chicken or meat daily
Any protein	Percentage of women (15-49 years) / men (15-54 years) who consume either pulses or beans, or eggs, or fish, or chicken or meat daily
Fried foods	Percentage of women (15-49 years) / men (15-54 years) who consume fried foods daily
Aerated drinks	Percentage of women (15-49 years) / men (15-54 years) who consume aerated drinks daily

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AUTHORS

Sharvari Patwardhan, Research Analyst, IFPRI

Rati Kapoor, Data Manager, IFPRI

Samuel Scott, Research Fellow, IFPRI

Phuong Hong Nguyen, Senior Research Fellow, IFPRI

Sylvie Chamois, Nutrition Specialist, UNICEF

S.K. Singh, Professor, IIPS

L. K. Dwivedi, Professor, IIPS

Sarang Pedgaonkar, Assistant Professor, IIPS

Parul Puri, Senior Data Analyst, IIPS

Alka Chauhan, Data Analyst, IIPS

Avula Laxmaiah, Scientist 'G', National Institute of Nutrition

Purnima Menon, Senior Director, Food and Nutrition Policy, CGIAR & IFPRI

SUGGESTED CITATION

Patwardhan, S., R. Kapoor, S. Scott, P.H. Nguyen, S. Chamois, S.K. Singh, L.K. Dwivedi, S. Pedgaonkar, P. Puri, A. Chauhan, A. Laxmaiah, and P. Menon. 2022. *Trends and patterns in consumption of foods among Indian adults: Insights from National Family Health Surveys, 2005-06 to 2019-21*. POSHAN Data Note 91. New Delhi, India: International Food Policy Research Institute.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Financial support for this Data Note was provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation through POSHAN, led by the International Food Policy Research Institute. We would also like to thank all funders who supported this research through their contributions to the CGIAR Trust Fund: <https://www.cgiar.org/funders/>. The funders played no role in decisions about the scope of the analysis or the contents of the Note. We are grateful to NITI Aayog for their valuable contributions.

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ABOUT POSHAN

Partnerships and Opportunities to Strengthen and Harmonize Actions for Nutrition in India (POSHAN) is a multi-year initiative that aims to support the use of data and evidence in decision-making for nutrition in India. It is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and led by IFPRI in India.

ABOUT DATA NOTES

POSHAN Data Notes focus on data visualization to highlight geographic and/or thematic issues related to nutrition in India. They draw on multiple sources of public ally available data.

CONTACT US

Email: IFPRI_POSHAN@cgiar.org

IFPRI-NEW DELHI INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

NASC Complex, CG Block,
Dev Prakash Shastri Road,
Pusa, New Delhi 110012, India
T+91.11.66166565
F+91.11.66781699

IFPRI-HEADQUARTERS INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

1201 Eye Street, NW,
Washington, DC 20005 USA
T. +1.202.862.5600
F. +1.202.467.4439
Skype: IFPRIhomeoffice
ifpri@cgiar.org
www.ifpri.org

This publication has been prepared by POSHAN. It has not been peer reviewed. Any opinions stated herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the policies of the International Food Policy Research Institute.

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