

Sustainable Food Consumption

Overview

The food system substantially contributes to GHG emission. For the Indian diet, much of the higher carbon footprint is associated with animal-source foods, dairy products, and heavily irrigated crops like rice, wheat, and sugar.

Agriculture accounts for **18%** of India's GHG emissions

In cities, growing consumption of packaged, imported, and unseasonal food contributes to this challenge. Specifically looking at high-income populations, shifting people's dietary patterns, preferences, and cooking patterns demands a behavioural approach.

The Low Carbon Lifestyles (LCL) programme by CSBC leverages behavioural science for sustainable lifestyle choices. Through a detailed literature review, diagnostic field work, and design ideation workshops, we identified behavioural pathways and interventions to increase sustainable food consumption in urban India.

Behavioural Barriers

Target behaviour

Shifting consumption habits towards local, fresh, seasonal, and plant-based food

Target population

Urban households in high-income groups

- **Confusion regarding terminology:** lack of clarity on local produce and seasonal foods leads to misconceptions about the availability and benefits
- **Year-round availability of foods:** continuous availability of produce has disrupted the association with seasonal food, making it challenging to perceive the benefits
- **Convenience of delivery apps:** food delivery platforms significantly influence people's preference for processed or packaged food due to the ease of services
- **Preference for packaged food:** popularity and perceived cost-effectiveness due to a longer shelf life results in a general reliance on processed food
- **Familiarity and culinary preference:** dietary habits and social significance attached to foods, like meat-based dishes or dry fruits, results in a preferences over plant-based or fresh produce
- **Beliefs around health benefits:** strong beliefs around the nutritional value of meat leads to hesitancy in adopting plant-based diets



Behavioural Pathways

BEHAVIOURAL PATHWAY

INTERVENTION IDEA



Provide accessible information about food choices

Run campaigns that communicate the nutritional and environmental advantages of consuming seasonal and local foods to address misconceptions



Initiate a norm shift campaign

Develop a campaign around practical examples and recipes using fresh, seasonal, and plant-based food through social media or with influencers



Redesign food menus

Highlight sustainable options in menus at restaurants, catered events, and delivery apps to make these options more visible and accessible



Defaulting to eco-friendly packaging

Use biodegradable or reusable container over single-use plastic packaging for food, groceries, and delivery services



Collaborate with local farmers and suppliers

Establish partnerships with farmers and suppliers to make local and seasonal options accessible and create a link between consumers and producers