

# Report on Assessment of Wastage of Food and Ostentatious Behaviour During Social Gathering (Marriages/Parties/Meetings, etc) in National Capital Region Delhi



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**Report**  
on  
**Assessment of Wastage of Food and Ostentatious  
Behaviour During Social Gatherings  
(Marriages/Parties/Meetings, etc)  
in National Capital Region Delhi**



*Sponsored by*

**Department of Consumer Affairs  
Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution  
Government of India**



*Conducted by*

**Centre for Consumer Studies  
Indian Institute of Public Administration  
IP Estate, Ring Road, New Delhi - 110002**

**Assessment of Wastage of Food and Ostentatious  
Behaviour During Social Gatherings  
(Marriages/Parties/Meetings, etc)  
in National Capital Region Delhi**

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## Preface

*India has made rapid progress in food production and achieved near self-sufficiency in the food grain production. In fact the attainment of self-sufficiency in food grains at the national level is one of the major achievements of the country in the post-independence era. India has also formed enough buffer stocks to cope-up with year-to-year variations in the food grain production. But, at the same time, a staggeringly higher percent of food grains is also being wasted at different stages of food supply chains. It is estimated that this wasted quantity of food grains is enough to feed our hungry population, including those who are starving and malnourished. It must be understood that food losses not only have an impact on food security for poor people, but also have a grater repercussion on economic development of the country.*

*Though the issue of food wastage is much more rooted in the actual handling, storage, transport of food grains and vegetables before they even reach the consumer's plate, the matter of food waste and the amount of food thrown away at the consumption level, especially at the social gatherings can't be ignored. India is often called the land of feasts, fasts and festivals. Celebrating social functions is a part of Indian tradition since ages. We observe seasonal and harvest festivals and life transitions such as weddings, births, deaths, where food is prepared on large scale on these occasions. With globalization and liberalization the economic prosperity of the nation has seen an upward trend which has pumped huge quantity of wealth into the country. Social events particularly weddings have turned into extravagant show of flaunting social status, wealth and prestige. Wedding celebrations seem too lavish, juxtaposed against the extreme poverty in India. However, in a country like India, where thousands of marriages take place in a single day the amount of food wastage seems to be significantly high.*

*In the past, in social gatherings limited number of traditional food items were prepared and served by the family members. But today among the rich and the rising middle class it is a fashion to hire event managers/wedding planners to organise such gatherings in hotels, restaurants, farm houses or clubs. Both the number of dishes and the number of guests on such occasions has increased considerably. People's tastes, preferences and food habits have also changed. The wealthy especially the new rich who have benefited due to rapid economic growth are staging extravagant culinary displays. As a result the problem of food wastage is growing. It is impossible for anyone to taste this wide array of dishes and hence large quantity of food is wasted which is either thrown into the municipal dustbins or at some occasions sold away as feed to the cattle. This is a social crime as millions in*

*the country are malnourished and go to bed hungry. Therefore now it is being argued that there must be some limit to these wasteful expenditures and ostentatious behavior during social functions should be curtailed.*

*The present report has been commissioned by the Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India, to have an in-depth study of food wastage and ostentatious behavior during social gatherings like marriages, parties, seminars, conferences etc. The study is of NCR Delhi and has been conducted in Delhi, Gurgaon, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Noida.*

*We are thankful to the Department of Consumer Affairs for sponsoring this study to IIPA. We are grateful to Shri Rajiv Agarwal, Secretary, Shri Pankaj Agrawala, Additional Secretary, Shri Manoj Parida, Joint Secretary, Shri G.N. Sreekumaran, former Joint Secretary and Shri G.N. Singh, Director (ECR&E) Department of Consumer Affairs for their valuable inputs and help at various stages in completing this study. We are also thankful to the State Governments and respective District Officials of Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh for their help in completing this study.*

*We will be failing in our duty if we do not acknowledge the support and cooperation of the members of the hospitality industry who in spite of initial hesitation provided all the required information. But for their cooperation this study could not have been conducted. Various sections of the society were also very helpful in completing this study, our thanks to them. The members of the research team Dr. Amit Kumar Singh, Shri Virendra Nath Mishra, Shri Pankaj Kumar Singh and Shri Ashutosh Dixit and Dr. Yatish Mishra who worked tirelessly as the time to complete the study was too short, need to be complimented for their consistent and sincere efforts.*

*Dr. Rakesh Hooja, Director, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi has been a source of inspiration and we would like to thank him as well as other members of the administrative staff of IIPA for their support. We are also thankful to our colleagues in the Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA particularly Shri R.C. Mangla, Ms. Deepa Bisht and Ms. Hema Rautela for their support. Our thanks are to all those who directly or indirectly supported us in carrying out this study.*

Place: New Delhi  
Date: 21 December 2011

Suresh Misra  
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# Executive Summary

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## 1. Background

India has made rapid progress in food production and achieved near self-sufficiency in the food grain production but it is also a fact that India is home to the largest number of hungry people in the world and about 214 million people of the country are chronically food insecure. It is estimated that 46% of children below three years are underweight, 79% of children aged 6-35 months have anaemia, 23 per cent have a low birth weight and 68 out of 1000 die before the age of one year, and 33% of women and 28% of men have a Body Mass Index (BMI) below normal just because they do not have enough food to eat. Unfortunately, the problem of hunger and food scarcity becomes serious because a staggeringly higher percent of food grains is being wasted at different stages of food supply chains. Various studies have shown that the issue of food wastage in India is much more rooted in the actual handling, storage, transport of food grains and vegetables before they even reach the consumer's plate or find themselves in shopper's baskets. However the matter of food waste and the amount of food thrown away at the consumption level, specially at the social gatherings also can not be ignored.

India is often called the land of feasts, fasts and festivals. We passionately and frequently observe seasonal festivals, religious holidays and life transitions such as weddings, births, deaths etc. Among all the social gatherings, weddings are one of the most special occasions for us and we celebrate it with great enthusiasm. On this occasion, food is prepared on a large scale and relatives, fellow villagers/ neighbours and friends are invited for the feast. Though in the past, especially in rural areas, wedding celebration continued for several days but limited numbers of traditional food items were prepared for the same. Therefore, the quantum and the incident of food waste were negligible. If some food remained uneaten or unserved, it was either consumed by the members of the household themselves or distributed to the fellow villagers, extended families and relatives for consumption.

But after 1990s, the economic boom has pumped in huge quantity of wealth into the country. Social gatherings particularly weddings have turned into extravagant show of flaunting social status, wealth and prestige. Even in rural areas, the wedding celebrations to be getting extremely lavish, especially in contrast to the extreme poverty of rural Indian life. Now a days many weddings seem less influenced by norms in the village than by patterns in cities, and celebrations of poor families imitate the more extravagant patterns common in richer families. In the case of urban areas, the number of wealthy persons and families particularly the rising middle class surging with rapid economic growth are staging extravagant displays of food on the occasion such as celebration of marriage, birth in a family and even at the event of death to show off their newfound wealth and affluence. At many lavish marriages, more than 10,000 people are invited at the receptions where 300 to 350 dishes are served. It is impossible for anyone to taste this wide array of dishes. This is a social crime as millions in the country are malnourished and go to bed hungry. Therefore now it is being argued that there must be some limit to these wasteful expenditures and ostentatious behavior during social functions should be curtailed. However the problem is that there are no studies to assess the magnitude of the problem.

Therefore, on the request of the Department of Consumer Affairs, Gol, the Centre for Consumer Studies, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi conducted a study to “Assess the extent of food wasted in social gatherings like marriages/parties/conferences, etc and suggest policy guidelines to minimize food wastage in social gatherings”. The present study has been conducted in five cities of Delhi NCR region, i.e. Delhi, Gurgaon, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and NOIDA. The important features of the study are as follows:

## **2. Objectives of the Study**

In this backdrop the objectives of the present study are:

1. To assess the amount of food wasted in social gatherings like marriages, parties, etc,

2. To find out the attitudes and behaviour of the individuals that might be related to food wastage,
3. To assess the socio-demographic and economic impact of food wastage during social functions,
4. To suggest policy guidelines to minimize food wastage in social gatherings.

### **3. Methodology of the Study**

Food waste can be differentiated into four groups: original food, partly used food, leftovers (plate waste) and preparation residues. The quantum of original food waste is being analysed by different countries, organizations and researchers. They could also be potentially prevented by different measures. Rest of the three occurs at consumption level which can further be divided into two groups: (i) food wastes at household level and (ii) food wastes at social gatherings. As mentioned earlier, India has a long tradition of organizing large scale feast, especially during marriage ceremonies in which wastage takes place on a larger scale. As far as quantifying the food wastage at social gatherings is concerned. It has to be borne in mind that till now no study has been done so far in India to assess food wastage at social gatherings and this study is the first attempt in this direction. Therefore, before formulating the problem of study consultation were held with various experts, persons and groups such as people from wedding industries, event management and waste management staffs. Focus group meetings and discussions with stakeholders as well as experts in this field have also been held.

For the collection of relevant data three interview schedules were prepared. The questionnaires were subjected to reliability test by pre-testing the constructed tools by administering it to 80 respondents. The questionnaires were modified based on the responses received.

### **4. Sampling Plan**

A stratified Random Sampling technique has been used to find out the level and extent of food wastages in social gathering in NCR Delhi. Though the quantity of food consumption or wastage of food is very much related with individual capacity but there are many who are responsible or linked with food wastages. Therefore, for this study, three stakeholders were approached for

data collection. For convenience we have clubbed the food service sector as the hospitality industry.

1. Hospitality Industry (caterers, chefs, wedding planners and hotel/club/ banquet halls)
2. People from different sections of the society (Cross Section of Society)
3. Waste Management Staff (Supervisors of Delhi Waste Management Ltd.)

As no study has been conducted before there was a lack of primary as well as secondary data. Apart from this information has also been collected from various websites and blogs on the internet which was quite useful.

The study covered NCR Delhi and was conducted in Delhi, Gurgaon, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Noida. For the sake of convenience Ghaziabad and Noida were taken as one unit. The sample size included 410 respondents from the hospitality industry (food services sector like hotels, restaurants, banquets halls, barat ghars, farm houses and institutions). Apart from this 410 respondents from a cross section of the society were also approached to elicit their views. The supervisory officers of Delhi Waste Management Company, those has been assigned the task of solid waste management in Delhi were also approached. The Sample size consisted of 18 Field Supervisors out of 45. The sample size consisted of 838 respondents

**Table-I**  
**Sample Size**

S. No.	Respondents	Delhi	Gurgaon	Ghaziabad	Faridabad	Total
1	Hospitality Industries	200	65	80	65	410
2	Cross section of Society	205	65	75	65	410
3	Waste management staff	18				18
<b>Total sample size</b>						<b>838</b>

Since no secondary data or estimates are available regarding food wastages at social gatherings; therefore the present study is wholly based on primary data. The data analysis and tabulation has been done by using SPSS. International experiences have also been studied to understand the concept and trends regarding food wastage in various countries.

**Table II**  
**Time Frame**

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Work Plan</b>	<b>Days</b>
<b>I</b>	Preliminary work (Manpower Planning, Identification of Respondents & Developing Interview Schedule)	15
<b>II</b>	Collection of Primary and Secondary Data	30
<b>III</b>	Data Compilation & Analysis	15
<b>V</b>	Report Writing and Preparation	15
Total Days		75

## **5. Limitations of the Study**

As previously stated, this is the first exploratory research which tries to assess the wastage of Food and Ostentatious Behaviour during Social Gatherings (Marriages/Parties/Meetings, etc) in India. As we know, India especially NCR Delhi, is a mosaic of cultures. People of different socio-economic, religious and regional backgrounds are residing in NCR Delhi. Moreover, the region has benefited immensely due to economic reforms and the living standard of the people has gone up. The number and size of social gatherings has increased but it is difficult to quantify the amount of food wasted at Social Gatherings. Therefore the study has certain limitations. Some of them are as follows:

- Difficult to quantify food wastage at social gatherings
- Stakeholders hesitant to reveal facts
- Inadequate secondary data
- No previous study on food wastage
- Weddings are not registered, hence difficult to assess total number of weddings

## 6. Findings and Recommendations

### General Observations

- 1) Due to the rising economic prosperity in the country, the Indian middle class is getting more and more affluent. As a result the number of social functions is also growing both in terms of volume and extravagance. Globalisation has changed the taste and preferences of the people hence more number of dishes in a social gathering.
- 2) Due to the booming economy the elites organise social functions especially weddings, where money is not a hindrance. Due to the extravagance of social functions the hospitality industry has grown by leaps and bounds and is providing employment to lakhs of people. Event managers, wedding planners and professionals are now being hired to organize social functions.
- 3) Social functions, particularly marriages, are now opportunities for the elites to showcase their wealth and status. Greater aspirations have also fuelled the trend to have luxurious weddings and the middle class is trying to emulate the elite.
- 4) The expenditure pattern of the Indian middle class on social functions is changing. Those who belong to the top economic class have a tradition to spend lavishly. But now the rising middle class is also spending freely on social gatherings due to the rise in disposable income. The economically lower strata of the society are forced to imitate the middle class in terms of expenditure and extravagance in social functions.
- 5) The trend of organizing the social functions at homes and by the family members is changing. People's taste's and preferences are changing and now more and more of them organize social functions at hotels, restaurants, fast food chains, farm houses or clubs. People prefer to hire caterers and event managers to organize their functions, which increases the expenditure on social functions.

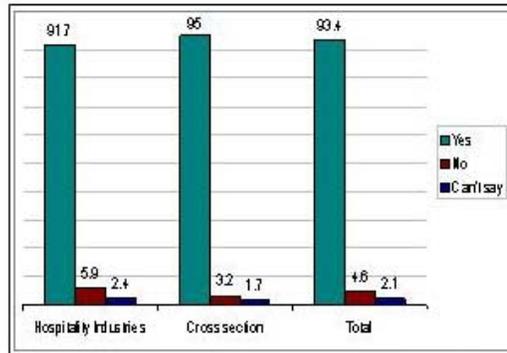
- 6) Weddings in India are known for their lavish décor and unrestrained celebrations. It's an occasion where people display their wealth, social status and standing in the society. Food constitutes a major part of the expenditure and the weddings are known for their sumptuous food. Any wedding is considered incomplete without delicious food. Today the number of dishes at times is 250 – 300.
- 7) But it is also true that one thing which is often neglected at most Indian social gatherings is food wastage. Lot of food is often wasted knowingly or unknowingly. People do not mind throwing away food but the menu has to be extensive during the social gathering as any shortage would affect their honour and respect in the society.
- 8) While millions in the country do not get proper two square meals, the affluent sections of the society are engaging in ostentatious behavior in social gatherings. To display their power, prestige and status in the society they do not bother about wasting money as well as food.

## **7. Major Findings**

To understand the problem the entire report has to be taken into consideration but based on the overall results of the survey the major findings are given below:

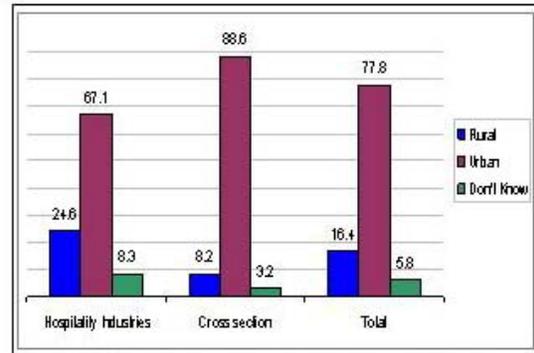
1. 93.4 percent of the respondents say that food is wasted in social gatherings. Food wastage is generally an urban phenomenon according to 77.9 percent of the respondents but catching up in the rural areas.
2. 89.1 percent of the respondents say that food wastage is very high during marriages. 32.5 percent say that food wastage during anniversaries and birthday celebrations is high. And 50 percent say that it is least during seminars and conferences.

**Is Food Wasted in Social Gatherings (in %)**



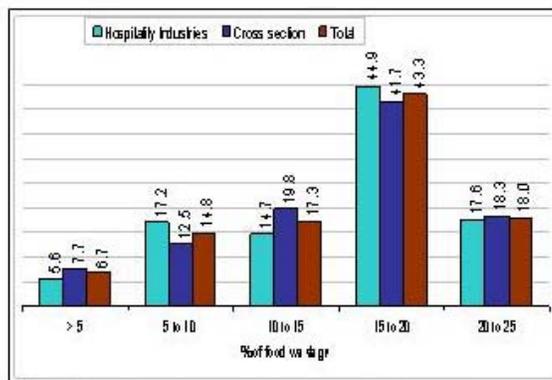
Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

**Is Food Wasted in Social Gatherings in Rural and Urban Area (in %)**



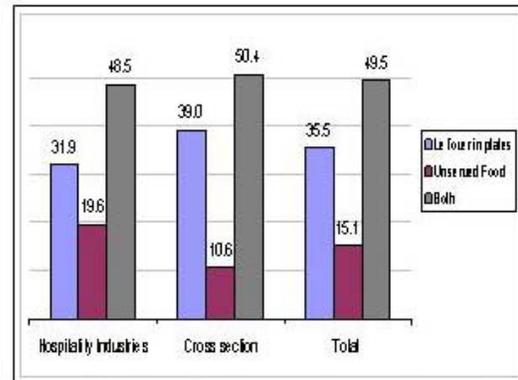
Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

**Quantum of Food Wasted**



Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

**Stage Where More Food Waste Takes Place**



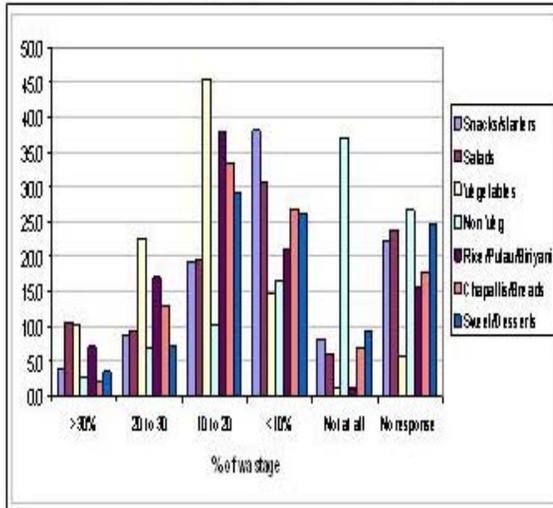
Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

- Majority of the respondents (67.9 percent) say that food wastage is very high when the number of dishes is more while 57.4 percent of the respondents say that when the number of guests is more, food wastage is high.
- As far as the reasons for food wastage are concerned 72.6 percent of the respondents are of the view that it is mainly due to large number of dishes on the menu. 67.9 percent of the respondents say people take more than they can eat while 67.3 percent say people are insensitive towards food wastage and just don't bother about it. 45.9 percent say miscalculation of invitees results in food wastage to some extent.

5. The stage at which food wastage takes place is important. 49.4 percent of the respondent says food wastage consists of both foods leftover in the plates and food that is unserved. On the other hand 35.5 percent say that food is left over in plates while 15.1 percent are of the view that unserved food is wasted.
6. What percentage of the total food in a social gathering is wasted? 18 percent of the respondents say that food wastage is between 20-25 percent, 43.3 percent say it is between 15-20 percent, 17.3 percent of the respondents say it is between 10-15 percent 14.8 percent say the wastage is between 5-10 percent and a small section of the respondents (6.7 percent) say that food wastage is less than 5 percent. Therefore 63.3 percent of the respondents say that between 15-25 percent of the food in social gatherings is wasted. Taking into consideration the population of the country and the volume of social functions being organized the wastage of food is on the higher side.
7. 88.3 percent of the respondents agree that the nature and pattern of celebrations has changed in the last 10-15 years. 92.7 say that due to this change in the celebrations the expenditure on food has gone up. 84.6 percent say that there has been an increase in the number of continental dishes but by and large there is no change in the traditional dishes that are served in the social functions. 89.7 percent agree that the number of dishes has increased while 41.5 percent say that the number of guests has also increased. However what interesting is that 51 percent of the respondents say that inspite of this increase, the food consumption level has decreased.
8. A majority of the respondents, i.e. 83.2 percent say that during social functions at present more food is wasted and people indulge in ostentatious behavior. The way the food is served also leads to wastage. 75. percent of the respondents say that food wastage is high in the buffet system which is generally the western system. 44.1 percent say there is no wastage in food that is cooked and served by the family members as used

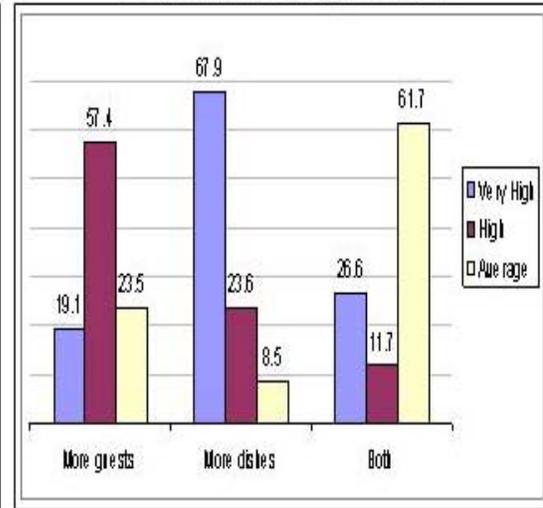
to happen traditionally. Similarly 60.1 percent are of the view that food is not wasted when it is served by the caterers or the staff members.

**Item wise Quantum of Wastage**



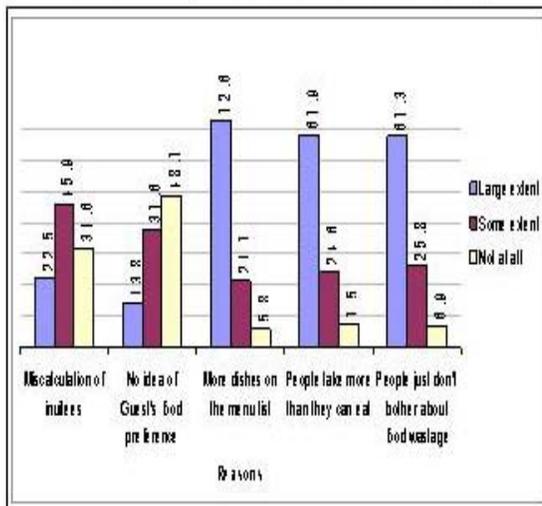
Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

**When Food Wastage is More**



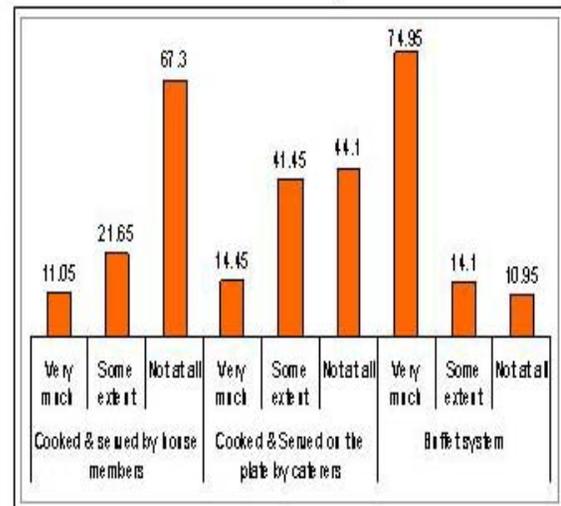
Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

**Factors Responsible for Food Wastage**



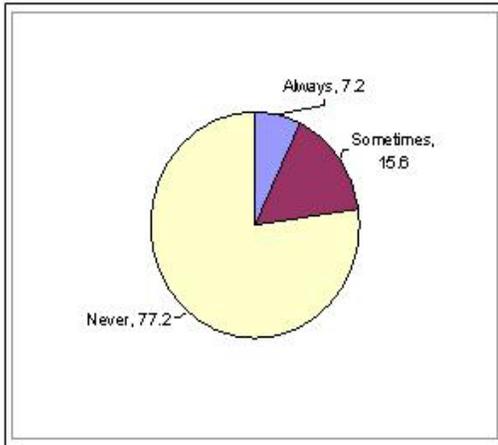
Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

**Wastage of Food by Different Methods of Serving**



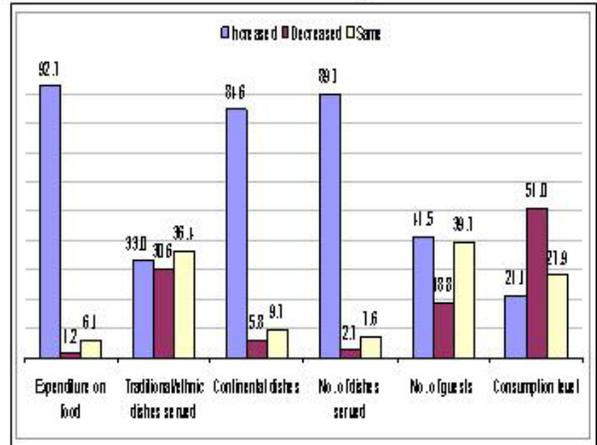
Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

**Donation of Unserved Food to Charity Organization/NGOs**



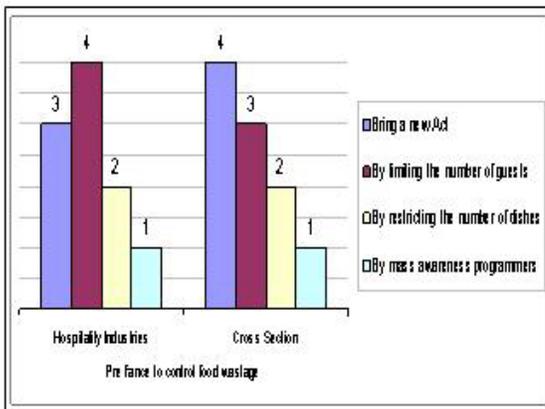
Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

**Change in Pattern of Celebration (Last 10 to 15 Years)**



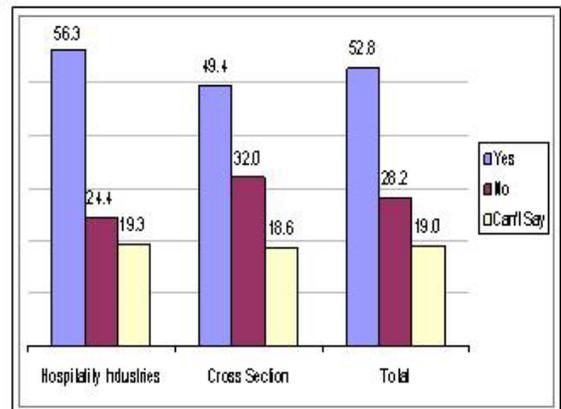
Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

**Effective Measures to Minimizing Food Wastage**



Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

**Effectiveness of Policies/Order to Restrict the Number of Guest/Dishes**



Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

9. Why do people indulge in extravagance in a social function? The major factor relates to social status. People tend to spend more keeping in view their power and prestige in the society. They would like to show their standing in the society. Members of the hospitality industry identify the second next important factor to be the competition to do better while the respondents from the cross section of the society say that because of societal and relative pressure people tend to spend more.

10. People by and large are in favour of controlling food wastage in social gatherings. 95 percent say this. 52.9 percent agree that government

policies/ orders will be effective in controlling food wastage. However 83.1 percent of the respondents are not aware about any Guest Control Order.

- 11.** Given a set of preferences to minimize food wastage, the respondents did not favour any new legislation to control food wastage but ranked mass awareness programmes as the first option. The second preferred option was to restrict the number of dishes in a social function. Limiting the number of guests and bringing about a new legislation were the least preferred options.
- 12.** There appears to be a mixed reaction as to what extent the legal mechanism will interfere in people's social life. 55.6 percent say that it will interfere in the individual's right to privacy. 54.5 percent are of the view that any legal measure to control food wastage will amount to interference in the private matters of an individual and 48.5 percent feel that it will amount to interference in cultural affairs of the people.
- 13.** 81.1 percent of the respondents say that it is the individual alone who can minimize food wastage. The respondents from the hospitality industry say that the individual who organizes the social event has to limit his expenditure and not indulge in extravagance while the respondents from the cross section of the society say that the individual should take as much as he can eat and not waste food. 53.8 are of the view that the hospitality industry can minimize food wastage to some extent, 43.1 percent say that the government has a role to play in minimizing food wastage while 30.1 percent are of the view that the NGO's can also play a role in this.
- 14.** 56.3 percent of the respondents from the hospitality industry say that in this modern era when the economy is booming, any restriction on the number of guest or the dishes will affect their business. As a result the costs will go up further to increase the profit margin and would also affect the livelihood of thousands of people dependent on the hospitality service industry.

15. After having food in the restaurant/hotel 70.7 percent of the respondents from the cross section of the society say that they ask the staff to pack the unserved leftover food to be consumed later and 85.3 percent say the request has been complied with.
16. 85.1 percent of the respondents from the cross section of the society say that government should control food wastage in departments and public sector undertaking as it amounts to wasting public money
17. According to 62.2 percent of the Field Supervisors of Delhi Waste Management Company, food is always thrown into MCD Bins. 44.4 percent say both unserved and food leftover in the plates is thrown into the bins. As per the quantum of food found in bins placed near the venue of social gatherings 44.4 percent say it is between 20-30 percent while 11.1 percent say it is between 30-40 percent. 50 percent say that more food wastage is found in bins near Banquet Hall / Barat Ghar and 38.9 percent say in the bins near hotels/ restaurants and clubs. According to them there is high wastage of rice, vegetable and dal. During general seasons the food wastage in bins is normally less than 20 percent but during the marriage seasons it goes up to as high as 40 percent of the total waste.

## **8. Findings: Response of Hospitality Industry**

- 1) 91.7 percent of the respondents say that food is wasted in social gatherings and more food is wasted in urban areas (61.1 percent).
- 2) 17.6 percent say that food wastage is between 20-25 percent, 49.9 percent say that it is between 15-20 percent, 14.7 percent say it is between 10-15 percent. 17.2 percent say the food wastage is between 5-10 percent. Data reveals that 62.5 percent say it is between 15-25 percent.
- 3) 98 percent of the respondents say food wastage is very high in marriages and very less in conferences and seminars (59.8 percent).

- 4) 74.9 percent of the respondents say that food wastage is high when the number of guest is more. But food wastage is higher when the number of dishes is more (74.6 percent).
- 5) 80 percent respondents say food wastage is to a large extent when the number of dishes is more. 72.6 say food wastage is more because people take more than they can eat. According to 74.5 percent of the respondents people just don't bother about food wastage. They are insensitive to food wastage.
- 6) 93.9 percent of the respondents say that during a social gathering more of vegetables are wasted. 73.8 percent say rice/ pulao is wasted, 68.3 say roti/ chappati is wasted to a large extent.
- 7) 48.5 percent say both unserved food and food leftover in plates is wasted. However 39.9 percent say more food is wasted as leftover in plates. 91.5 percent of the respondents say food leftover in plates is thrown into the dustbins.
- 8) 93.4 percent of the respondents say that the nature and pattern of celebrating social function has changed in the last 10-15 years. 97.8 percent say expenditure on food has increased, 92.2 percent are of the opinion that food taste and preferences have also changed as a result the number of continental dishes in social functions has increased. 97.8 percent say that the number of dishes has increased. There is a slight increase in the number of guests. However 61.5 percent say that food consumption level has come down.
- 9) 80.2 percent of the respondents say that food is wasted more in the present day social gathering.
- 10) Traditionally during a social gathering, food was served by the family members. But now buffet system is very popular. 78.5 percent of the respondents say that food was not wasted when the family members cooked and served food. 62.0 percent say food is not wasted when cooked

and served by the caterers. 91.7 percent say much food is wasted in the buffet system.

- 11)** High expenditure on social gatherings is a matter of social status. The respondents have ranked social status as the most important factor on a scale of 1-5. The rising economic prosperity has been ranked as the second most important factor as people have more disposable income now. Competition to do better is the next important factor followed by social/ relative pressure and the last factor being social networking. Position and prestige in the society determines the volume and scale of a social function.
- 12)** 96.8 percent of the respondents say there is a need to control food wastage in social gathering and 78.1 percent are not aware about any guest control orders.
- 13)** 56.3 percent of the respondents say government policies / orders will be effective in restricting the number of guest / dishes.
- 14)** On a preference scale of 1-4, the respondents are not inclined for a new legislation/ Act to control food wastage in social gatherings. The first most preferred option to control food wastage is through education and mass awareness programmes. The second preferred option is to restrict the number of dishes and the fourth option is to limit the number of guests. Any legal measures to control food wastage will encroach on an individual's right to privacy (56.8 percent), will lead to interference in private matters (56.6 percent) and also interfere in cultural matters (50.7 percent).
- 15)** 84.9 percent blamed the individuals for food wastage and say the focus has to be on the individual. The individual who organizes the social events has to be held accountable.
- 16)** The respondents (56.3 percent) say that in this modern era when the economy is booming any restriction on the number of guests or the dishes will affect their business. As a result the costs will go up further to increase

the profit margin and would also affect the livelihood of thousands of people dependent on the hospitality service industry.

## **9. Findings: Perception of People (Cross Section) of the Society**

1. 95 percent of the respondents agree that food is wasted in social gathering. 91.7 percent less than 20 years of age and 96.6 percent above 66 years of age say that food is wasted. Similarly all income group respondents say that food is wasted in social gatherings. 88.6 percent say that food wastage is an urban phenomenon.
2. 18.3 percent of the respondents say that food wastage is between 20-25 percent, 41.7 percent say it is between 15-20 percent, 19.8 percent say it is between 10-15 percent. While 12.5 percent agree that it is wasted between 5-10 percent and 7.7 percent opined that food wastage is less than 5 percent. The survey reveals that 60 percent of the respondents say food wastage is between 15-20 percent.
3. 56.6 percent say that where the number of dishes is more, food wastage is also more, and 20.6 percent are of the view that wastage is because of the large number of guests while 22.8 say it is because of both.
4. 80.2 percent of the respondents say food wastage is very high in marriages and minimal in seminars and conferences. It is high in social gatherings like anniversaries and birthday parties.
5. 65.1 percent of the respondents are of the view that more the number of dishes more the food wastage, 61.3 percent say people take more than they can eat and 60.1 percent say that people just don't bother about food wastage. 39.3 percent also agreed that it can be because of miscalculation of invitees.
6. Food items like salad, vegetables, rice/pulau and chapattis/ roti are wasted more in social gathering. 54.4 percent agree that unserved food as well as food leftover in plates is wasted. However 39 percent say that more food is wasted as leftover in plates.

7. After having food in restaurant/hotel 70.7 percent of the respondents say they ask the staff to pack the unserved leftover food to be consumed later and 85.3 percent say the request has been complied with. Some of them say the request was turned down.
8. 83.2 percent of the respondents say that the pattern of social celebrations has changed during the last 10-15 years and 86.1 percent are of the view that food wastage is more in the way social events are celebrated at present. As a result 87.6 percent say expenditure on food has gone up. Only 43.2 percent say there is an increase in the traditional / ethnic dishes while 76.9 percent find that the number of continental dishes has increased. 81.6 percent say that the number of dishes itself has increased, 58.8 are of the view that the number of invitees has increased and 40.5 percent say food consumption has decreased.
9. Food wastage in social gatherings is also due to the change in the method of serving food. 56.1 percent say that in the traditional method, where family members cooked and served, food was not wasted. Where food is served by the caterers, 49 percent say wastage is to some extent while 58.2 percent say there is high wastage in the buffet system.
10. Extravagance in social function is a matter of status symbol. People spend according to their position and prestige in the society. Social and relatives pressure is the next important factor which forces people to indulge in ostentatious behavior, while rising economic prosperity is the third factor due to which people indulge in extravagance.
11. 93.1 percent feel the need to control food wastage. 85.1 percent of the respondents are unaware about any guest control order. Only 49.4 percent say that policies / orders will be effective in controlling food wastage in social gatherings.
12. The respondents are not in favour of bringing about a new legislation or an Act to check food wastage in social gathering. In fact it is the last preference indicated by them. The most preferred option is by education

and mass awareness programmes. The second preferred option is to restrict the numbers of dishes in a social gathering.

**13.** 77.4 percent of the respondents say that only the individual can minimize food wastage. 53.1 percent are of the view that to some extent the event managers/ caterers can do so. 43.4 percent feel the government has a role to play, while 48.4 percent say NGO's can help in minimizing food wastage.

**14.** 54.8 percent of the respondents say that any legal measures will affect individual right, 52.4 say it amounts to interference in private matters while 46.2 percent say it amounts to government's interference in cultural matters. But 50.1 percent say it does not. 64.3 percent of the respondents say that food can be used to feed the hungry people. Food wastage also amounts to loss of valuable resources and individual's money.

**15.** 85.1 percent say that government should control food wastage in their departments / public sector undertaking as it is a loss to the public exchequer.

## **10. Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, discussions and interaction with various people, the recommendations are as follows;

- 1.** The study shows that large amount of food is wasted in social gatherings. Due to the rising economic prosperity in the country people indulge in extravagance and ostentatious behavior. Food wastage is a social crime and therefore it needs to be curtailed.
- 2.** India is a multi religious, democratic country with a mosaic of cultures. Unity in diversity is its strength. Every religion, region and community has its own norms and values. Social gatherings are important as they promote harmony in the society, help in national integration and also bind families and communities together. Therefore any restriction has to

focus only on controlling food wastage as people will view it as interference in their private affairs.

3. Among the major stakeholders the individual and the government have a role to play in minimizing food wastage in social gatherings. For the individual wasting food is a matter of habit and he/she is insensitive towards it. Individual's attitude needs to be changed and social consciousness raised.
4. People are not in favour of any legislative enactment/ Act / order to control food wastage and regulate social gatherings as it will lead to harassment and corruption, therefore at the best it can be avoided for the present. The effectiveness of any legislative measures to control food wastage and ostentatious indulgence in social gathering is doubtful in such a large federal country. Therefore the cost benefit analysis does not favour such a step.
5. Learning from the experience of the Guest Control Order 1960, Assam Guest Control Order 1966, Rajasthan Guest Control Order 1972, Mizoram Guest Control Order, the Jammu & Kashmir Guest Control Order 2004, and even the Pakistan One Dish order (which allows six dishes) any statutory or legislative mechanism to control food wastage or regulate social gatherings will not be effective and difficult to enforce. It will lead to unnecessary litigation, and harassment. Even the Pakistan one dish order has not been very effective till date and it also ended up in litigation. The Supreme Court of India has held that Law is a regulator of human conduct but no law can effectively work unless there is an element of acceptance by the people in the society. Most of the above mentioned orders have become redundant because they lack public acceptability.
6. The one dish order in Pakistan and the order of the Supreme Court of Pakistan draws its inspiration from the holy Quran which prohibits extravagance and wastage of food. In an Islamic Republic like Pakistan

an attempt has been made to regulate ostentatious indulgence in social function but in practice the objectives have not been realised.

7. The major focus has to be on education and awareness. People need to be educated about the importance of food and how it has been treated as a sacred commodity by all the religions. Awareness has to be created about the effects of wasting food and how it affects the society where many are malnourished and hungry.
8. Both the print and the electronic media need to play a proactive role by highlighting simple social functions particularly marriages being organized by role models and the upper strata of the society. They should not highlight extravagant weddings but focus on the waste that such weddings lead to. Political leaders, bureaucrats, industrialists, celebrities and other role models in the society should resort to simple way of celebrating social functions so that they can inspire others to do so. The social media can be an effective tool to communicate with the people particularly the youth.
9. 'Jago Grahak Jago' is the most popular media campaign launched by the Department of Consumer Affairs to educate people on various issues. This should be used to enlighten people about food wastage in social gatherings. The message should be that food wastage is a social evil.
10. World Food Day is celebrated on October 16 each year to commemorate the founding of the UN's food and Agriculture organization (FAO). Each year has a different theme, World Food Day helps raise people's awareness of problems in food supply and distribution. India should also observe World Food Day on a large scale and focus on food wastage and its effect on the society. Various events involving the youth can be organized to raise awareness about food wastage. The government and the civil society should work in tandem to educate the people.
11. Taking a cue from good practices from other countries is important. The "*Love Food Hate Waste*" campaign launched by the Waste & Resources

Action Programme in 2007, with the aim of reducing the amount of food waste in the United Kingdom is a good idea. A similar campaign can be launched in India. Various stakeholders in the society should converge to make such a campaign popular and effective.

- 12.** There are thousands of consumer clubs functioning in the country funded by the Department of consumer Affairs, GoI. These clubs are the best medium to involve the youth in this education and awareness campaign/programmes. This may be done through rallies, debates, posters and painting competition and school level campaigns. The ECO clubs can also be involved in this campaign to help save food by minimizing food wastage. Apart from these the RWA's, NSS, NCC and Nehru Yuva Kendra's can also be involved in the campaign to reduce food wastage during social gatherings
- 13.** Children must be targeted to impart knowledge. The teaching of life skills have become a mandatory part of school curriculum. The importance of food and the ill effects of wasting food should be made a part of the school curriculum so that the children can imbibe the value of food at the young age and develop the habit of respecting food.
- 14.** The hospitality industry (Food Service Sector) also needs to contribute in minimizing food wastage as they are one of the major stakeholders in organizing a social gathering.
  1. The hotels and restaurants should display as a policy matter that they do not encourage food wastage.
  2. They should pack the unused/ unserved but ordered leftover food
  3. When a social function is being organised they should display the message that "Please do not waste food" "Eat but not waste" or similar messages to remind the guests. This will have some sobering effect.
- 15.** Even invitation cards may carry the message that food should not be wasted and it is a social crime. People should be educated and

encouraged to put the RSVP culture in practice and always develop the habit to confirm their presence in a social function.

- 16.** The Government Departments and the Public Sector Organizations should observe austerity when they organize social events. Many of these organizations are also indulging in extravagance leading to food wastage.
- 17.** NGOs may be identified and funds provided to collect excess food and distribute it to the needy in a clean and hygienic manner.
- 18.** Imparting education and creating awareness is a slow process. Its effects will be visible after some years. Therefore the campaign should be vigorous and repetitive to remind the people about the ills of food wastage. However if these measures do not bring the desired effect then the government may consider the option of restricting the number of dishes through legal measures after a nationwide discussion and debate and arriving at a consensus. In a multi cultural democracy with a booming economy, where the hospitality industry is also providing employment to lakhs of people any restriction on social gatherings is a sensitive issue.

## Introduction

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### 1.1 Background

It is estimated that 46% children of India below three years are underweight, 79% of children aged 6-35 months have anaemia, 23 per cent have a low birth weight and 68 out of 1000 die before the age of one year, and 33% of women and 28% of men have a Body Mass Index (BMI) below normal just because they do not have enough food to eat. Approximately, about 214 million people are chronically food insecure. At present, India is home to the largest number of hungry people in the world. India has consistently ranked poorly on the Global Hunger Index. The Global Hunger Index 2011 reveals India's continued lackluster performance in eradicating hunger; India ranks 67th out of the 122 developing countries and countries in transition for which the index has been calculated. It ranks slightly above Bangladesh and below Pakistan and Sri Lanka. In such circumstances wasting a huge amount of food is a serious crime to the humanity.

It is not that India is a food deficient country. Over the years, India has made rapid progress in food production and achieved near self-sufficiency in food grain production. In fact the attainment of self sufficiency in food grains at the national level is one of the major achievements of the country in the post-independence era. Moreover, India has also formed enough buffer stocks to cope-up with year-to-year variations in food grain production. Going by FCI statistics, the food grain production in India increased to 228 million tones in 2009 from 82 million tones in 1961 and the food grain stocks held in government godowns amounted to 61.27 million tones (Mt) in 2011. But, at the same time, a staggeringly higher percent of food grains is being wasted at different stages of food supply chains. India loses 23 million tons of cereals, 12 million tons of fruits and 21 million tons of vegetables each year. A fresh estimate of the Ministry of Food Processing says a whopping ` 58,000 crore (` 580 billion) worth of agriculture food items get wasted in the country every year. It is notable that this wasted quantity of food grains is enough to feed our hungry population, including those who are starving and malnourished.

It must be understood that food losses not only have an impact on food security for poor people, but also have a greater repercussion on economic development and on the environment of the country or region. In May 2011, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) released a short study on 'Global Food Losses and Food Waste'. To carry out the study on the extent and effects, as well as causes and prevention of food losses and food waste, FAO defines these two words separately. "**Food losses**" refer to the decrease in edible food mass throughout the *part of the* supply chain that specifically leads to edible food for human consumption. Food losses take place at production, post harvest and processing stages in the food supply chain. On the other hand the food losses occurring at the end of the food chain (retail and final consumption) are rather called "**food waste**", which relates to retailers' and consumers' behavior. The focus of this report is on the food losses occurring at the consumption level especially at the social gathering, keeping in view the changing consumption pattern in India in recent decades.

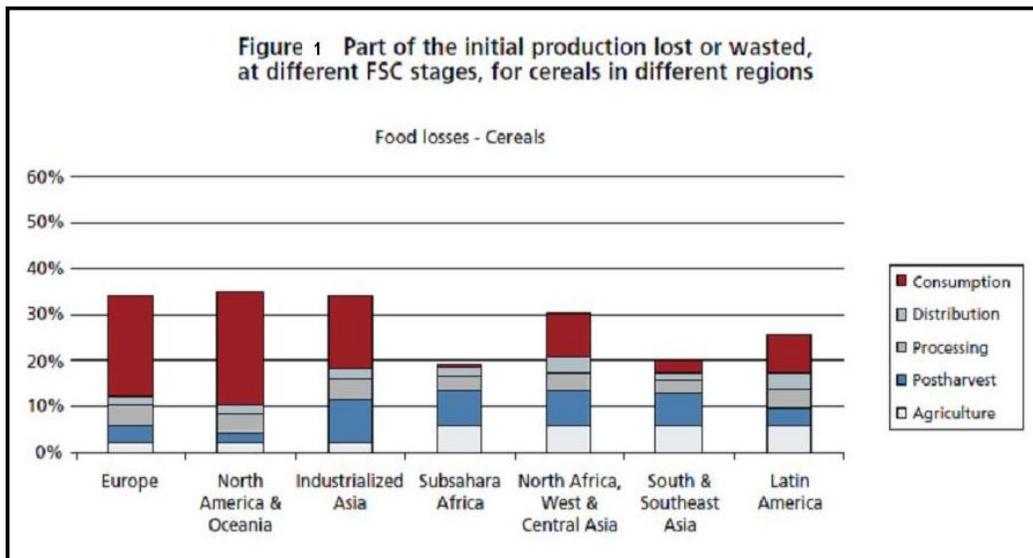
## 1.2 Types of Food Wastages/Losses

Generally, the wastage of food occurs at all stages of the life cycle of food, starting from harvesting, through processing and production via trade and finally consumption. Attempts have been made to quantify global food waste at different stages of food cycle over several decades, motivated partly by the need to highlight the scale of 'waste' in relation to global malnutrition

1. **Agricultural production:** losses due to mechanical damage and/or spillage during harvest operation (e.g. threshing or fruit picking), crops sorted out post harvest, etc.
2. **Post harvest handling and storage:** including losses due to spillage and degradation during handling, storage and transportation between farm and distribution.
3. **Processing:** including losses due to spillage and degradation during industrial or domestic processing, e.g. juice production, canning and bread baking. Losses may occur when crops are sorted out if not suitable to process or during washing, peeling, slicing and boiling or during process interruptions and accidental spillage.
4. **Distribution:** including losses and waste in the market system, at e.g. wholesale markets, supermarkets, retailers and wet markets.
5. **Consumption:** including losses and waste during consumption at the household level.

On the basis of these categorisation, FAO had done two studies one for developing countries and the other for developed countries and drawn certain conclusions about the food wastes or losses. According to FAO, the food loss in industrialized countries is not only high in terms of per capita waste but the factors or source of food waste is different from developing countries. In developing countries most of the food losses occur at post-harvest and processing levels while in industrialised countries more than half the losses happen at retail and consumer levels. The study has shown that the per capita food loss in Europe and North-America is 280-300 kg per year. In Sub-Saharan Africa and South and Southeast Asia it is 120-170 kg per year. Per capita food wasted by consumers in Europe and North-America is 95-115 kg per year, while this figure in sub-Saharan Africa and South and Southeast Asia is 6-11 kg per year.

**Figure - 1.1**



Source: FAO, Global Food Losses and Food Waste – Extent, Cause and Prevention, UN, Rome, 2011

This study concluded that, overall, on a per-capita basis, much more food is wasted in the industrialized world than in developing countries (figure 1). The causes of food losses and waste in low-income countries are mainly connected to financial, managerial and technical limitations in harvesting techniques, storage and cooling facilities in difficult climatic conditions, infrastructure, packaging and marketing systems. Conversely, the causes of

food losses and waste in medium/high-income countries mainly relate to consumer behaviour which causes the current high levels of food waste.

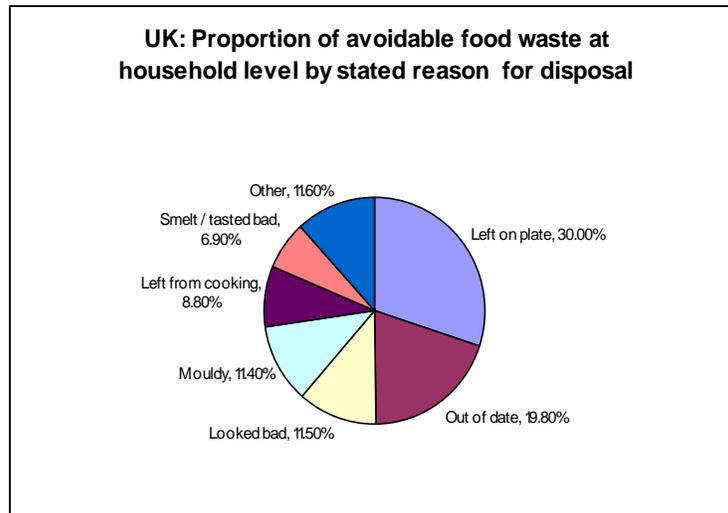
### 1.3 Food Wastages at Consumption Level

To define food wastage at consumption level is a difficult task; it differs from person to person, region to region and based on the culture, diet practice, socio-economic condition of the society. One can define food waste according to their preference, policies and other requirements. However, several agencies have tried to define the food wastages at consumption level particularly at household level. 'United States Environmental Protection Agency', defines food wastage at consumption level as 'the uneaten food and food preparation wastes from residences and commercial establishments such as grocery stores, restaurants, and produce stands, institutional cafeterias and kitchens, and industrial sources like employee lunchrooms'. According to European Commission, food waste is composed of raw or cooked food materials and includes food loss before, during or after meal preparation in the household, as well as food discarded in the process of manufacturing, distribution, retail and food service activities. It comprises materials such as vegetable peelings, meat trimmings, and spoiled or excess ingredients or prepared food as well as bones, carcasses and organs. But in simple terms food wastage can be defined as 'any food materials which is unused and rejected as worthless or unwanted is wastage' or the food that is discarded from a kitchen.

The UK Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) have done an extensive analysis on the food wastages at household level. The study has classified food wastages at household level in six broad categories (figure 2); (i) left on the plate after a meal that contributed 30 percent of food loss (ii) uneaten food which passed its time contributed 19.80 percent (iii) food that looked, smelt or tasted bad contributes 18.40 percent (iv) food that went mouldy contributed 11.40 percent and (v) left over from cooking contributed 8.80 percent of food loss (vi) others 11.60 percent. The report has estimated that overall food losses in the UK amount to £10,180 million per year. Jones has estimated that overall food losses in the USA amount to US \$ 90–100 billion a year, of which households threw away US \$ 48.3 billion worth of food

each year (Jones 2006). So the share of food loss at the household level to the total food loss was estimated to be almost 50 per cent. Yoon & Lim (2005) of South Korea have made estimations of household food loss through the tracking of overall municipal waste which is being used to landfill and suggested that food accounted for 26–27% of household waste.

**Figure - 1. 2**



Source: WRAP (2008)

As mentioned in the earlier sections the loss of food at household level is very high in developed country. But the question is that why the level of food waste at household level is high in developed countries. Considering the rise in dispensable income, Ricardo et al. (Ricardo S., Joanna K. and Jorge M. (2006) find a strong indication that the proportion of wastage increases with the increase in food consumption. Andrew Parry (2007) has made two important observations (i) today consumers have become more affluent as their disposable income has increased. Now they are spending less amount of their income on food items while food has become cheaper in real terms. So, after over a decade of food deflation, the economic motivation to be careful with food, even for the less affluent households of UK, has been eroded (ii) together with that very few consumers of UK have experienced food shortages in recent times, so the social and ethical pressures to avoid waste and extravagance are less relevant to our contemporary society.

The study of European Commission [DG ENV - Directorate C] demonstrates the diversity of causes of food waste within the four following

investigated sectors; (i) Manufacturing Sector (ii) Household Sector (iii) Wholesale/Retail and (iv) Food Service Sectors. According to this report the food waste at household level is combinedly based on certain specific attitudes and attributes of the households. Some of the causes for household waste involve.

- **Consumer's Attitudes:** With the high financial capacity the importance of food is undervalued by consumers. There is lack of necessity to use it efficiently
- **Preferences:** many (often nutritious) parts of food are discarded due to personal taste: apple skins, potato skins, bread crusts for example
- **Planning issues:** 'buying too much' and 'lack of shopping planning' frequently cited as causes of household food waste
- **Labeling issues:** misinterpretation or confusion over date labels is widely recognised as contributing to household food waste generation, leading to the discard of still edible food
- **Storage:** suboptimal storage conditions lead to food waste throughout the supply chain, including in the Household sector
- **Packaging issues:** packaging methods and materials can impact the longevity of food products
- **Portion sizes:** includes issues such as "making too much food" hence leading to uneaten leftovers as well as purchasing the correct portions of food; individually sized portions can minimise food waste but often create additional packaging Waste
- **Socio-economic factors:** single person households and young people generate more food waste

Experiences suggests that, other things being equal, as our income increases we spend more and more on those goods and services that we do not use. Clive Hamilton (2005) through his study 'Wasteful Consumption in Australia' discerns that households with higher incomes waste more than those on lower incomes and households with more young people waste more than older people. Through the above discussion the factors that determine the food wastages at household or consumption level can be determined as follows:

1. The quantum of food wastage depends on the socio-economic characteristics of the society and their cultural practices
2. Households with higher income waste more than those with lower income.
3. Wastage of Food is higher in urban areas than in rural areas.
4. Larger the items in the menu more the wastage of food
5. Young people waste more than older people.
6. Parents of young children throw out more fresh food than any other household type.

#### **1.4 Food Wastages at Consumption Level in India**

According to a World Bank study (1999), post-harvest losses of food grains in India are 11-15 percent, which accounts for 22 -30 million tones. These losses would be enough to feed about 70-100 million people, i.e. about 1/3rd of India's poor. However, no estimate is made by any study to determine the quantity of food losses and wastes at the final consumption level or household level in India.

Based on the above discussion, the sources of food wastages at consumption level in India can be classified as follows:

1. Households
2. Social Gatherings/Public Ceremony/Festivals
3. Hotels/Restaurants/Cafeteria/Hostels/Canteen/Clubs

##### **1.4.1 Food Wastages at Household Level**

About seventy percent households of India live in rural areas and primarily depend on agricultural and allied activities. It is also a fact that most of them are small and marginal farmers. Of the total number of farming families, more than seventy eight percent are small and marginal farmers with less than two hectare land that essentially represent the poor and food insecure section of Indian Society. Since all these rural households are engaged in food production directly or indirectly, they cannot imagine wasting foodstuffs, it would almost be a crime to them. The other main characteristic of Indian agriculture is the seasonal nature of agricultural production, which is

directly connected to climate variability of the Indian subcontinent. For that reason also wasting of foodstuffs can create food insecurity for the villagers therefore they always try to minimize the food wastages. Many of the rural households keep cattle for their various requirements hence they purposely use their leftover foods to feed their cattle. All these practices of rural households minimize the food wastages at the household level.

Contrarily, urbanization process leads to concentration of non agricultural population in urban areas where the sizes of family are not only smaller but many of them are migrants who live alone in their house. The per capita expenditure on food items in urban areas as a whole is estimated at ₹ 881 which is almost 46 percent higher than rural counterpart, i.e. 600 ₹ per capita. The share of food in consumer expenditure was 44.4 percent in urban India and 57 percent in rural India. Simultaneously, almost all of the urban dwellers are net food buyers and they also have higher purchasing power than rural area. They undervalue the cost, effort and requirements foodstuffs. They do not know how to use food items efficiently. Therefore many of them buy too much food and contribute to the household food waste. Many rich Indians do not eat the previous day's food and they either give leftovers to their servant or throw it into the dustbin. Some times a family with small children throws out much of the uneaten leftover fresh food as many of them refuse to eat the prepared meal. WRAP's research suggests that the influence of children on food waste is significant. Shopping trips with our children tend to lead to over-purchasing due to pester power and those of us with young children prefer to over rather than under-purchase, so that we don't run out of provisions.

#### **1.4.2 Food Wastages at Social Gatherings Particularly Marriages**

Though the issue of food wastage in India is much more rooted in the actual handling, storage, transport of food grains and vegetables before they even reach the consumer's plate or find themselves in shopper's baskets, the matter of food waste and the amount of food thrown away at the consumption level, specially at the social gatherings can't be ignored. India is often called the land of feasts, fasts and festivals. Different religious groups observe

seasonal and harvest festivals, religious holidays and life transitions such as weddings, births, deaths, by eating certain foods, by avoiding them (fasting), or in some cases, by doing both. Food is prepared on large scale on these occasions. But in festivals people consume mostly sweets, offer them to guests and send them to friends and family members as a gesture of affection and goodwill, therefore probability of food waste is very less. However, in a country like India, where more than thousands of marriages take place in a single day the amount of food wastages is significantly high. Today, at any banquet of a marriage function, one can easily find plates after feast full of food items leftover.

Weddings have always been special occasions for Indians; they celebrate it with great enthusiasm. People wait for years for this occasion. They spend lots of money to celebrate this one time event. Relatives, fellow villagers/ neighbours and friends are invited for the feast. But after 1990s, the economic boom has pumped huge quantity of wealth into the country. Weddings have turned into extravagant show of flaunting social status, wealth and prestige. Even in rural India the wedding celebrations seem extremely lavish to an outsider, especially in contrast to the extreme poverty of rural Indian life, with large numbers of people invited for feasts and ceremonies that can go on for several days. Now a days many weddings seem less influenced by norms in the village than by patterns in cities, and celebrations of poor families imitate the more extravagant patterns common in richer families. However, in rural areas the amount of food waste is still negligible at the marriage ceremonies and social gatherings, because in villages, most of the leftovers are either consumed by the members of the household themselves or distributed to the fellow villagers, extended families and relatives for consumption within 24 hours.

However, in the past, especially in rural areas, limited numbers of traditional food items were being prepared for functions. But now the problem of food wastages is growing in urban areas as the number of wealthy persons and families surging with rapid economic growth are staging extravagant displays of food on the occasion such as celebration of marriage, birth in a family and even at the event of death to show off their newfound wealth and

affluence. At many lavish marriages more than 10000 people are invited at the receptions where 300 to 350 dishes are served. It is impossible for anyone to taste this wide array of dishes. In this scenario large quantity of food waste occurs at two stages. Firstly people take too many dishes without knowing or tasting them therefore many of dishes are left uneaten in their plate. Secondly, large quantity of cooked food is left unconsumed by the person, which is either thrown into the municipal dustbins or at some occasions donated to the poor families to feed their cattle. A wedding planner at Mumbai says she has catered to weddings where over 200 dishes were served. Therefore now it is being argued that there must be restrictions to limit these wasteful expenditures on food items in the high-class lavish marriages. This tendency is spreading among the rising middle class as well.

## **1.5 Changing Consumption Pattern in India**

The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has released the key indicators of household consumer expenditure in India, generated from the data collected in its 66<sup>th</sup> round survey during July 2009 – June 2010. NSS surveys on consumer expenditure are conducted quinquennially starting from 27<sup>th</sup> round (October 1972 – September 1973) and the last quinquennial survey was conducted in NSS 61<sup>st</sup> round (July 2004- June 2005) for which, the results have already been released. The NSS 66<sup>th</sup> round was the eighth quinquennial round on the subject.

According to the 66<sup>th</sup> round of NSSO survey, consumption numbers for the past six years show that real incomes have grown much faster. Poverty is trending down and rural wages are growing smartly. The 2009-10 survey shows real spending by each person in rural India rose 6.3% in the five-year period from 2004-05 to 2009-10. The average person's spending in urban areas went up 12.9% during 2004-2009 when compared to a 6.7% jump during 1999-2004. The numbers also show that the percentage of poor Indians, using the Suresh Tendulkar methodology, also fell to about 32% of the population in 2009-10 from 37% in 2004-05. Incomes and consumption

expenditure have picked up significantly after 2004 and people are definitely earning more and also spending more,

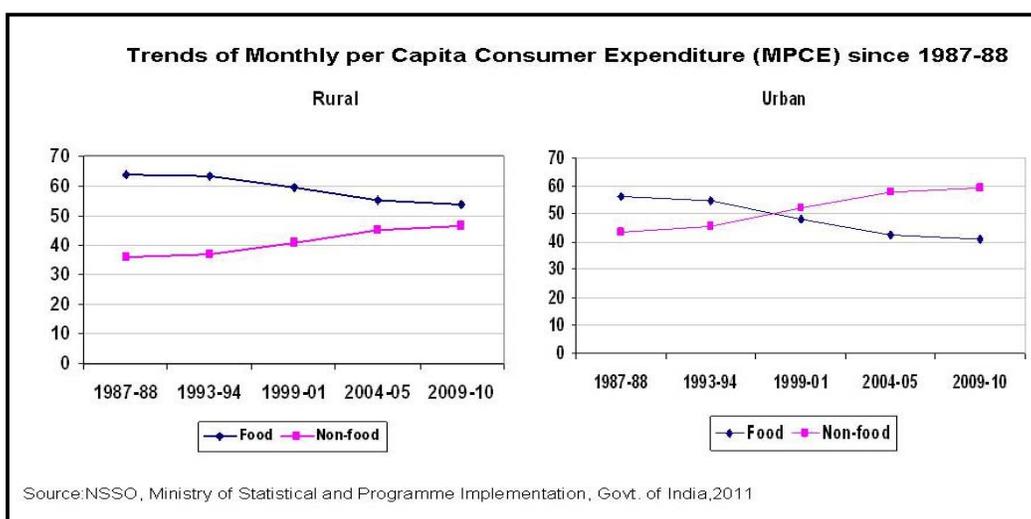
Growth in India had picked up from 2005-06 averaging almost 9.5% for three years, before dipping to 6.8% in 2008-09 due to the global financial crisis. However, the stimulus measures taken by the government to prevent the consumption cycle from collapsing further helped push up incomes. A major reason for the rise in incomes and consumption is the stimulus measures taken by the government which pushed up wages and stimulated spending, according to an economic expert. The years after 2004 saw the government waive unpaid farm loans, announce pay hikes for government employees through the sixth pay commission and put in place its flagship rural employment guarantee scheme (NREGS). Economists now say these measures boosted incomes and wages all over the country. According to the labour bureau in Shimla, farm wages have risen between 24.1% and 106.5% across states through January 2008 to December 2010.

The momentum of increase in income and expenditure has helped the growth of consumer durables, and encouraged retail, finance and other allied services to venture into the vast hinterland. The period from 2004 onwards has seen a rise in consumer durables industry and other allied services justifying the trend and aiding it. This is a combination of rising incomes and rising consumerism. But as incomes have gone up, so has inequality. Disparities between the poorest and the richest in both urban and rural areas and that between the urban and rural population is on the rise. The current survey reveals the spending of the top 10% of rural Indians is 5.76 times more than that of the bottom 10%. This gap was slightly lower, at 5.63 times, during the previous survey period (2004-05).

According to the 66th round of the household consumption expenditure survey the per capita expenditure level of the urban consumer is now 91% higher than his rural counterpart, compared with 80% in the earlier 61st round of the survey conducted in 2004-05. However, the survey shows an increase in consumption power across the country. The rural per capita consumption has grown 6% in 2009-10 against 1.2% in 2004-05. Similarly, urban per capita

consumption has risen 6.8% compared with 2.9% in the earlier survey. The survey shows the share of the food basket in total consumption expenditure is coming down in both rural and urban India. The share of food in consumer expenditure was 57% in rural India and 44.4% in urban India. The share of food in total consumption has declined since 1987-88 by about 10 percentage points to 53.6% in the rural sector and by about 16 percentage points to 40.7% in the urban sector. The share of food in total household expenditure was 57% and 44% in rural and urban India respectively. In rural India, this share in respect of bottom 10% population was 65% and for top 10% population, 46%. In urban India, the share of food was 62% for its bottom 10% population and 31% for top 10 % population.

**Figure - 1.3**



In rural India, people are spending less and less on cereals, edible oil and fruits. They are spending more on pulses, milk, non-vegetarian items and beverages. In urban India, consumption of nearly all food items is either going down or is constant compared with the earlier survey. In both rural and urban India, consumption of non-food items, which include consumer durables, education and recreation, among others, has gone up as a result of the decline in expenditure on food items. The breakup of the expenditure, or how households spent their money, suggests a break away from mere subsistence for the vast majority because the average spending on food was down to 53.6% in 2009-10 from 59.4% in 1999-2000. In rural households, cereals

accounted for only 15.6% of expenditure in 2009-10, down from 22.2% in 1999-2000. During the same period, share of their spending on consumer durables almost doubled to 4.8% from 2.6%.

**Table 1.1: Monthly Per Capita Consumer Expenditure on Food and Non-food Items**

Area	Year	Share of Consumer Expenditure (in %)	
		Food	Non-food
Rural	1987-88	64.0	36.0
	1993-94	63.2	36.8
	1999-01	59.4	40.6
	2004-05	55.0	45.0
	2009-10	53.6	46.4
Urban	1987-88	56.4	43.6
	1993-94	54.7	45.3
	1999-01	48.1	51.9
	2004-05	42.5	57.5
	2009-10	40.7	59.3

*Source: NSSO, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation Govt. of India, 2011*

Indian families are investing heavily in their children's education and spending more on healthcare at the expense of basic needs like food, reveals the NSSO survey report on spending patterns of households. Between 1999 and 2009, expenditure on food increased by about 70% among rural families and 78% among urban ones. But the spending on education jumped up by as much as 378% in rural areas and 345% in urban areas. Even after correcting for inflation, the expenditure on education increased by a phenomenal 162% in rural areas and 148% in urban areas during the decade. Compare this to the overall household expenditure on all items, which increased by a mere 8% in rural areas and 20% in urban areas after adjusting for inflation. And, it is not just the same people who are spending more on their children's education. In 2004-05, when the previous such survey was carried out, 40% of rural and 57% of urban families said that they were spending on education. The latest survey records a big jump in these numbers - 63% of rural and 73% of urban families were getting their children educated.

Expenditure on health too has shown a considerable increase though not as much as education. At current prices, spending on medical care in hospitals increased by 152% in rural areas and by 136% in urban areas. The

corresponding figures after adjusting for inflation are 38% and 31%. Spending on non-institutional medical care - medicines, tests, fees etc - jumped up by 60% in rural areas and 102% in urban areas. After adjusting for inflation, this works out to a decline of about 12% in rural areas - possibly an effect of the National Rural Health Mission - and a modest increase of 12% in urban areas.

The survey also does not endorse the notion that one reason for high food inflation was that consumers were buying high-value foods. There is no clear trend of higher expenditure on pulses, milk products, vegetables and fruit, and eggs and meat. In the case of urban households, there is steady decline in allocation to these foods. The bulk of allocation away from foods has gone to consumer durables and services. The rise in spending on durables indicates the overall increasing affluence of the population

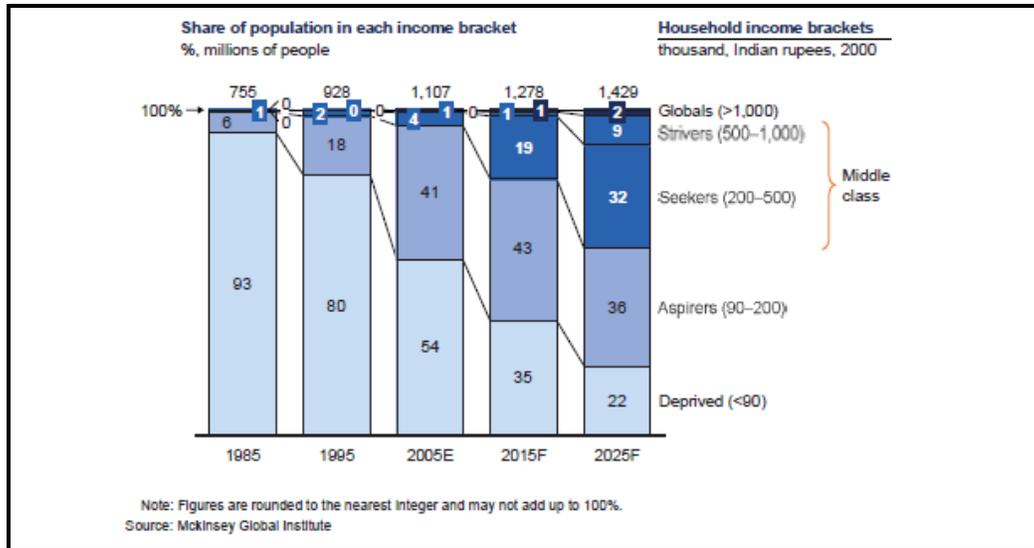
## **1.6 Future Concern of Food Wastages at Consumption Level**

It can easily be discerned that with the rise of average income and increase in the number of rich people there would be an increase in food wastages at consumption level in India. The experiences of developed countries suggest that with the rise in average per capita income, the amount of food wastages at consumption level increased considerably. Various studies also suggest that there is lower food loss in low-income households than in high-income households (Osner 1982). Moreover, it has been noted that high income households with adequate storage facilities e.g. refrigeration and enclosed cabinets, produced greater edible food wastage (Mercado-Villavieja, 1976).

According to the study done by McKinsey Global Institute, if India continues on its current high growth path, over the next two decades, the number of middle class population, defined as earning between ` 200,000 to 1,000,000 per year will increase by over eleven times from its current size of 50 million to 580 million people comprising 41 percent of the people. The affluent class, defined as earning above ` 1,000,000 a year will increase from 0.2 percent of the population at present to 2 percent of the total population by 2025. Importantly this segment which is currently consuming 7 percent of all

consumer goods will consume 20 percent of the same by 2025. The same McKinsey report noted that there is a negative correlation between aggregate poverty and average consumption in India, whereby the decrease in poverty is associated with an increase in consumption. Therefore, it can be envisaged that the rise in income will instigate the increase in food wastage in India.

**Figure – 1.4: Projected Percentage of Different Income Group Population, India**



Source: McKinsey Global Institute (2007): *The Bird of Gold: The Rise of India's Consumer Market*

Rise in income is also associated with the change in composition of food demand. This is illustrated both by Meade & Birgit (1997), which indicates that rising income levels generally result in a more diverse diet and Julian Parfitt (2010) which concludes that the growth of household incomes is very much associated with a decline in consumption of starchy food staples and diversification of diet into fresh food and vegetables (FFVs), dairy, meat and fish. This transition conforms to Bennett's Law (Bennett 1941), where the food share of starchy staples declines as income increases. In fact, the rise in income improved the capability of households to gain access to a greater variety of food results in changes in food consumption patterns. However, the shift towards vulnerable, shorter shelf-life items is associated with greater food waste and a greater draw on land and other resources.

Food demand projections have been made using the piece-wise linear expansion system (LES) model developed at Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS), Hyderabad. It projects an increase in population to 1.343

billion in 2020 and the level of urbanization at 37 percent. Under these assumptions, the demand is projected to grow at 2.2 per cent for cereals during 2000-10 and 2.0 per cent during 2010-20, 3-4 per cent for edible oils and pulses, and 4-5 per cent for milk and milk products, meat, fish, eggs, fruits, vegetables, sugar and gur. At the current cereal intake of 143 kgs/per capital/annum, cereal requirement for household consumption will be around 192 million tons in 2020. The requirement will be more if the increase in household demand due to income growth is also considered. At 5 per cent per annum growth in total expenditure and population of 1.343 billion, household cereal demand works out to 221 million tons in 2020 and for food grains 241 million tons. With a grossing factor of 1.14, the total (household plus non-household) demand for cereals may be around 253 million tons.

The above cereal demand projections are made with the assumption of stability of tastes and preferences in food consumption. If the secular trend of food grain production as witnessed during the last two decades is sustained, the production of additional 57 million tons of cereals and 76 million tons of total food grains in the coming two decades may not be out of reach for India. The demand projections may turn out to be on a higher side if the secular trend of change in consumer preferences away from cereal consumption persists. Demand for superior food items such as dairy and animal husbandry products, sugar, fruits and vegetables are expected to grow much faster during the coming decades. The estimated demand in 2020 for milk and milk products will be around 166 million tons, edible oils 11 million tons, meat, fish and eggs 11 million tons, sugar and gur 25 million tons and fruits and vegetables 113 million tons. However, there may be a significant growth of demand for food grains as milk consumption is likely to increase at a high rate. The balance of 35 million tons over and above the direct household cereal consumption can absorb any reasonable increase in feed grain demand.

**Table 1.2: Projection of Households Food Demand – India (Mill Tons)**

S. No.	Food Items	2010	2020
1	Rice	97.99	118.93
2	Wheat	72.07	92.37
3	Other Cereals	14.11	15.57
4	All Cereals	181.12	221.11
5	Pulses	14.58	19.53
6	Food Grains	195.69	240.64
7	Mil & Milk Product	106.43	165.84
8	Edible Oils	7.67	10.94
9	Meat and Fish	7.25	10.80
10	Sugar and Gur	17.23	25.07
11	Fruits and Vegetables	75.21	113.17

*Source: Planning Commission, Food Security and Nutrition: Vision 2020*

Similarly, the food demand will also be driven by high level of urbanization. Under the realistic scenario, between 2010 and 2025, the percentage of urban population is expected to increase from 30 to 47 percent. With the increase in urban population together with the relatively high disposable income, the choices, attitudes, values and behaviours of urban consumers towards food change comprehensively. Actually, majority of urban dwellers are net food buyers and spend a large part of their disposable income on food but at the same time they are disconnected to the population and the process related to the food production, which is likely to further increase food waste generation.

NSSO provides estimates of per capita monthly expenditure on food, non-food and total expenditure separately for rural and urban sectors at the state level as well as for all-India across deciles classes. The first decile class comprises the bottom 10 percent of population in terms of MPCE and the top (10<sup>th</sup>) class comprises the top 10 percent of population. NSSO further classified these data for rural and urban segment separately. According to data the per capita expenditure level of urban population was almost 88 percent higher than that of rural population. Apart from that there is a huge difference among the different income groups of India as far as monthly per capita expenditure is concerned which presents gigantic challenge to our

policy makers. The top 10 percent of the urban population is spending about 4.98 times more on food items than that of bottom 10 percent.

**Table 1.3: Per Capita, Non Food & Total Expenditure for each Decile Class MPCE<sub>MMRP</sub>**

Decile class of MPCE (MMRP) %	Per capita expenditure (Rs.) on (Rural)			Per capita expenditure (Rs.) on (Urban)		
	Food	Non-Food	Total	Food	Non-Food	Total
0-10	294.03	158.95	452.98	370.11	229.16	599.27
10-20	375.90	208.50	584.40	490.83	340.13	830.96
20-30	428.37	246.98	675.35	583.25	428.59	1011.84
30-40	480.19	280.61	760.79	659.27	536.81	1196.08
40-50	527.07	321.00	848.07	741.06	656.93	1397.99
50-60	573.60	370.76	944.35	835.11	798.31	1633.42
60-70	636.03	426.89	1062.93	939.01	991.94	1930.96
70-80	704.38	516.21	1220.59	1059.33	1270.54	2329.87
80-90	827.34	642.98	1470.33	1285.18	1765.52	3050.69
90-100	1156.68	1360.01	2516.69	1845.08	4018.17	5863.25
<b>All Class</b>	600.36	453.29	1053.64	880.83	1103.63	1984.46

Source: NSSO 66<sup>th</sup> Round Survey, 2009-10

Since last ten years urban consumers are showered with the malls and supermarkets. With their attractive schemes these malls are changing the buying behaviour of urban consumers. These malls, in fact, are promoting food shopping trips with the majority of consumers undertaking a weekly shop. They offer variety of schemes and prizes to attract the consumers. They carry a broad collection of goods and generally offer certain discounts. They sell most of the consumer items in bulk packaging and in that way promote mass consumption. Certain convenience products, e.g., beverages, snacks and other food stuffs are provided in more outlets where consumers may be willing to pay higher prices for convenience. Consumers are so happy to enjoy the air-conditioned comfort, availability of a range of merchandise under one roof, and a one-stop family entertainment arena that they forget about their 'unplanned expenditure' incurred by an outing to such a tempting place. The 'buy three, pay for two' promotions are also a good catalyst of mass consumption. In such scenario consumers are generally encouraged to "buy more food than they need" and at many occasion they have to throw the food items because their date of use has already expired.

## **1.7 Attempts to Control Food Wastage**

It is obvious that food wastage is now a big economic and social problem and we have to do our best to stop it in our own way. Attempts to avoid food waste must be very effective and extensive. Apart from the policy measures, we have to involve each and every individual in the long run. However, there are many people who argue that personal attempts to stop food waste are bound to fail, as most of the wastage takes place on a larger scale. In this endeavor the role of social and religious organizations which have always a prominent role and influence on Indian Society becomes very important. We have various examples that our religious institutions and leaders had always argued about the importance of food.

### **1.7.1 Importance and Sanctity of Food in Different Religions**

A multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society, India has a variety of religions and cultures. The dominant religious group is the Hindu religion (according to the 2001 Census of India approximately 80:5% of the population is Hindu), but there are also large numbers of Muslims (13:5% of the population), Christians (2:3% of the population), Sikhs (1:9% of the population) and other religious groups. Some of these groups are regionally concentrated (for instance Christians in the North East and in the states of Goa and Kerala, Sikhs in the Northern states of Punjab, New Delhi and Haryana). All of these are groups with very distinctive social identities, cultures, customs and norms. Another important and historically disadvantaged group which is outside the Hindu religion and the caste system is the Tribals (now referred as Adivasis or Scheduled Tribes). Within the Hindus, there are important distinctions across caste. The food habits, eating habits, customs as well as rituals vary from religion to religion, community to community and from region to region.

Religion has been a binding force as well as a method of social control. Give a religious connotation to any issue and by and large people abide by it. Similar is in the case of food wastage. India is a multi religious country. People by and large are very religious. Even social functions are held on certain auspicious days or month. All the religions have given importance to

food and are against wastage of food. Faith and food are inextricably linked in human experience and belief. This includes the act of eating as well as the natural cycles of planting and harvest. Food is so essential that the activities involved in obtaining, preparing, and enjoying it are closely related to basic human concerns: happiness and sadness, want and plenty, life and death — even God. It is not surprising that food has deep symbolic as well as physical meanings and these food rituals and food taboos appear in many religions.

In India places-of-worship are used to perform religious obligations and are also used socially. Here Food also plays a major role in social and religious activities. Since the beginning of time, dietary practices have been incorporated into the religious practices of people around the world. Some religious sects abstain, or are forbidden, from consuming certain foods and drinks; others restrict foods and drinks during their holy days; while still others associate dietary and food preparation practices with rituals of the faith. Many religions incorporate some element of fasting into their religious practices. Laws regarding fasting or restricting food and drink have been described as a call to holiness by many religions. Fasting has been identified as the mechanism that allows one to improve one's body or to understand and appreciate the sufferings of the poor.

#### **1.7.1a Hinduism**

In Hinduism food is considered as God (Brahman) and said to be a part of Brahman as it nourishes the entire physical, mental and emotional aspects of a human being. It is considered as a gift from God and should be treated respectfully. In Vedas food is acknowledged with the rudiments of the earth. The Prasna Upanishad identifies food with the Lord of Creation. According to Manu, “Food that is always worshipped gives strength and manly vigor but eaten irreverently, it destroys them both.” Serving food to the poor and the needy, or a beggar according to Hindus is good karma. Food is associated with religious activity. Food is still offered to God during some of the religious ceremonies. On specific days in a year food is offered to departed souls. Food is also distributed to people at the end of many religious ceremonies. Many Hindu temples distribute food freely every day to the visiting devotees.

There is no better puja and ritual in Hindu religion than feeding a hungry living being. Annadanam is Mahadanam or the greatest donation in Hindu religion and is an essential part of Sanatana Dharma tradition. The food donation is not limited to feeding a human being but it encompasses all living beings. There are numerous stories in Hindu scriptures that extol the glory of Annadanam – prominent being Goddess Parvati appearing as Goddess Annapurnaeshwari and feeding Shiva. Another instance is that of Karna taking rebirth as he had performed all types of donation except food donation. Annadanam should be offered to all living beings – there should not be any consideration of position, authority, religion or caste or nationality. In Hinduism, Annadanam is performed for redemption of sins, to attain piety, to get speedy recovery from illness and also to attain moksha. There is a Hindu belief that sins committed in previous birth follow a person in successive births – Annadanam is performed to put an end to this. The glory of family, popularity of institution, holiness of a temple increases with each Annadanam. Above all we become good human beings when we are willing to share our food with one who is hungry.

#### **1.7.1b Islam**

In the Muslim faith, the holy month of Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic year and is devoted to prayer, fasting, and charity. Muslims believe that it was during this month that God first began to reveal the holy book of Islam, the Quran, to the prophet Muhammad. Most Muslims are required to refrain from food and drink during daylight hours for the entire month. The fast is broken in the evening by a meal called the *iftar*, which traditionally includes dates and water or sweet drinks, and is resumed again at sunrise. Fasting during Ramadan is one of the five Pillars of Faith, which are the most important religious duties in Islam. The practice is meant to remind Muslims of the poor, to cleanse the body, and to foster serenity and spiritual devotion. Ramadan ends with Eid al-Fitr, the "Festival of Breaking the Fast."

Muslims believe that God has created this planet in harmony and equilibrium, where there is enough of every resource to provide for every

living being. Even the food God provided for people is a “trust” that needs to be consumed in moderation. While some cannot afford basic green foods, we cannot afford to waste ours. This is why a Qur’anic reminder is set for Muslims: “It is God Who causes gardens to grow, with trellises and without, and palm trees, and crops of different kinds of food, and olives and pomegranates, similar (in kind) and different (in variety): eat of their fruit in their season, but render the dues that are proper on the day that the harvest is gathered...” The line following this is our main focus: “Eat – But waste not by excess: for God does not love the wasters.” (Qur’an, 6:141).

### **1.7.1c Christianity**

The Bible provides a broad range of perspectives on the relation of faith and food. These range from everyday eating and drinking to food as divine grace, and they are often interrelated in literal and symbolic ways. Food also plays a role in the story of human sin, which is the rejection and abuse of grace. Many biblical references to food—and to planting and harvesting—concern the common need to eat to sustain the physical body. At least part of the dietary laws and food taboos in the Old Testament reflect knowledge of substances harmful to eat in days before refrigeration and preservatives. More importantly, food and drink sustain the life force breathed into humanity by God in creation and so are acts of reverence and piety. Respect for the life force is no doubt one reason why the ancient Hebrews worked out such minute regulations on the feeding of strangers and the chronically hungry.

The petition, "Give us each day our daily bread," in the Lord's Prayer (Lk. 11: 3) puts food as sustenance in the context of worship and relates it to God's action. In both Old and New Testaments, God is the clear source of food. Food is a part of divine grace and providence. The Lord's Prayer also stresses the "daily" aspects of the bread for which people pray—enough to get by on but not enough to waste or withhold from others.

Community is created and grows in the sharing of food and drink. Refusal to eat with others is a sign of enmity. Though the table draws people together, food and the table can also be used to separate and destroy

community. Because it is so essential, because it is a form of God's grace, food figures in broken relationships and in the rejection of grace. Thus food and sin are often partners in the Bible and in life. Food plays a major role in the banishment of Adam and Eve from Eden, where God provided directly for the couple's sustenance. Only one prohibition was set: Adam and Eve could eat of every tree except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:16). Such a tree is clearly symbolic, unrelated directly to physical nourishment. Yet the story presents disobedience to God in the language of food.

Food in the Bible (and, perhaps, in all societies) represents power. Those who control the supply and production of bread can do good or evil. But food power is easily abused. In his parables, Jesus shows great impatience with those who abuse the power of food, including the rich man who denies crumbs to Lazarus (Lk. 16:19 ff. ) and the man who keeps building barns in order to hoard grain (Lk. 12:16-21). In the allegory of Judgment Day, sorting the sheep from the goats (Mt. 25:31 ff.), those who fail to feed the hungry are among the unfavored goats: Another kind of abuse of food—one that breaks the fellowship of the church—appears in First Corinthians 11, which goes on to illustrate how brokenness is repaired (11:17-34).

#### **1.7.1.d Sikhism**

In Sikhism an essential part of any Gurdwara is the Langar, or free kitchen. Here the food is cooked by Sevadars and is served without discrimination to all. After the Sadh Sangat has participated in any ceremony, they are served the Guru's Langar. It was inspired by Guru Nanak's act of serving food to wandering holy men when given money by his father to strike a good bargain. The practice of serving food to all was started with Guru Nanak's Sikhs at Kartarpur.

The Guru's Langar is always vegetarian, and traditionally is made up of simple, nourishing food. Strict rules of hygiene and cleanliness are important when preparing the Langar (i.e., washed hands, never tasting it while cooking). Servers should not touch the serving utensils to the plates of those they serve. When serving foods by hand, such as chapatis or fruit, the

servers' hands should not touch the hand or plate of those they are serving. Those serving should wait until all others have been completely served before they sit down to eat themselves. It is advisable not to leave any leftovers.

A service at the Gurdwara normally consists of a combination of sermons and singing of shabads (hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib). The blessed pudding of Parsad, is distributed to all the Sangat who eat with their hands. It is important that no part of the parsad (consisting of flour, semolina, butter, sugar and water) falls on the floor as it has been blessed. It is then off to the dining hall for Langar (blessed lunch). Again it is important that you get only what you intend to eat, as leaving food that is blessed is frowned upon.

Recently, the Delhi Gurdwara Management Committee, the city's top Sikh body, told the capital's nearly one million Sikhs to boycott weddings that are not teetotaler, vegetarian and over by noon to cut down the cost involved in the usual lavish sikh weddings. Similar measures are being considered in other Indian cities. Wedding planners and wedding exhibition organisers point out that such a directive will not in any way stop the grandness of weddings. They say young Indians know that marriage is usually a one time opportunity and hence, want to have a great wedding if not a lavish one. The notice put up by the Gurdwara committee will not have much impact on wedding expenditure," says Kiran Sharma, Director, ITE Group which organised the just concluded Bride and Groom 2007, exhibition in the capital.

### **1.7.1e Jainism**

The Jains follow strict vegetarianism and prohibit the use of meat and liquor. The Jain foods do not contain root vegetables like potatoes as according to the religion it is being violent to the plants. The people believe in giving food to the poor and needy. Jains are strictly against wasting food and do not eat after sunset and before sunrise. After a meal, the Jains wash the plates that they have just eaten their food in and drink that water. They do this to ensure that they don't waste even a particle of food- true practitioners of an ancient Sanskrit saying – *annam na nindyat. tadvratam* – Do not insult food [by wasting]. That is the inviolable discipline of life for the one who knows.

### 1.7.1.f Buddhism

Buddhism originated in India in the fifth century B.C.E. and from there spread to many lands. Buddhism is divided into several branches or ordination traditions. In some Buddhist traditions, respect for earth deities continues as a reflection of earlier cults of the soil. Food offerings may be left at stone monuments often containing relics commemorating the life and teachings of the Buddha. But these food practices are not Buddhist. Food rituals transmit collective and individual messages about religious principles. Religion influences dietary intake by prescribing or proscribing certain foods, providing ritual foods or meals, and reinforcing key cultural and social values. Buddhism has less rigid dietary laws defining what people can eat and with whom they can dine. However, fasting and feasting are integral parts of most religious traditions, and Buddhism is no exception. The special foods used in the annual cycle of Buddhist holidays and festivals differ from country to country. Food is both a marker of religious affiliation and a marker of ethnic identity.

Food rites mark changes in personal status as well, serving as temporal boundary markers through the life cycle. Special foods may be prepared for birthdays, weddings, funerals, tonsures, and ordinations.

Monks are expected to show moderation and control in all things, including eating. They are warned that wrong mental states easily come to the surface when collecting or eating food. When Theravada monks go on begging rounds, giving people an opportunity to put food into their bowls, they are expected to show no interest in the qualities of the food and even mix the food donations together. Zen cooking (*shojin ryori*) is a style of vegetarian cooking developed by Zen monks that acts as an aid to meditation and spiritual life. Food is prepared as a spiritual exercise with attention to balance, harmony, and delicacy. Some Zen and Chinese Mahayana temples practice the three-bowl eating style, making eating a ritual training. The three bowls contain rice, vegetables, and soup. In fact, eating can be a kind of meditation—remembering to let go of evil, to cultivate good deeds, and to save sentient beings—as each food is put into one's mouth. In such events, food is consumed according to need with no waste and no over consumption.

Food is often used in Buddhist texts to explain complex ideas in an easily understood manner. Buddhism rejects the asceticism of fasting and denial found in many religious traditions. Buddha rejected the extreme of starvation as a route to salvation. Instead, he used the experience of eating and digesting food as a means to understand the instrumentality of food. The element of heat transmutes food into body during the process of digestion. Thus, eating is an important metaphor for understanding bodily existence and the transformation of matter and substance. Eating literally makes us human and embodies us. Buddhist rituals imbue food with sanctity; the sanctity remains in the food after it has been received by the monks. Communal eating is one means of experiencing Buddhist precepts and concepts in a direct and sensory way.

### **1.7.2 National Policies, Laws and Regulations**

Many people believe that bringing new laws and regulations to restrict the number of guests as well as dishes would be an effective tool to stop or minimize the food wastages at social gatherings particularly wedding celebrations. It is commonly believed that only the affluent segment of our society is spending their wealth and flaunting their vanity to promote their business and political interests. Unfortunately, even the families who earn barely enough to survive, spend vast amounts of money on celebrations, especially in marriages due to the social pressure. On many occasions a simple household spends approximately seven times its annual income on a daughter's marriage.

In view of this the government in the early 1960s imposed a “Guest Control Order” to limit the number of guests at weddings. In the same way many state governments tried to bring special legislation, for example, (i) Rajasthan Guest Control Order (1972) (ii) Assam Guest Control Order (1973) and (iii) Mizoram Guest Control Order (1987). The purpose of all these acts was to reduce the wastage of food by restricting the number of guests and dishes served at social gatherings. The Assam Guest Control Order allows only 25 persons (including the host or hosts) at ordinary parties or

entertainments or social or other functions or not more than 100 persons (including the host or hosts) at weddings and funerals. According to the Rajasthan Guest Control Order and Mrityu Bhoj Act, 1960, not more than 100 persons could be allowed for the feast. . But these orders have not made any impact on the food wastages at social gatherings. People of Assam have not heard about this Act. Even the senior police personnel are not aware of this Act.

In other case while protesting against the Jammu Kashmir Guest Control Order, the Chefs' Welfare Association of J&K State emphasise that any restriction on the number of guest at a feast will destroy the catering industry and will create more unemployment. They suggested that instead of controlling the number of guests, controlling the number of dishes at the feast can actually minimize the amount of food wastage and that would be beneficial to both people and government. Apart from these laws, at international level our neighbour country, Pakistan has enacted two laws to restrict the food wastages at social gatherings. (i) Marriage Functions (Prohibition of Ostentatious Displays and Wasteful Expenses) Ordinance, 2000, (ii) The Punjab Marriage Functions (Propitiation of Ostentatious Displays and Wasteful Expenses) Act, 2003. With economic prosperity on the rise, any attempt to restrict the number of guests and dishes is a very sensitive issue in India. Here marriages are not just a one day event; people save up for the weddings of their children for years and invite all their relatives and friends to the occasion, they do spend according to their financial capacity.

As Indian economy continues to grow at the present growth rate i.e. 8-9 % annually, the per capita income of its citizens will definitely increase. In that situation government will have to face two major challenges. Firstly, they have to raise their food production to feed their rapidly increasing urban population and along with that the government has to provide enough food to millions of hungry people to reduce its mass poverty. Secondly, the amount of food wasted by the affluent society, mostly from urban India, is likely to increase faster than the food production. After the mid-1990s, food grain production failed to keep pace with population growth. Therefore, the policies that foster

sustainable food consumption must be in the priority list of Government. Since the foodstuffs are being managed and utilized by different stakeholders, therefore a multi level planning and strategies are required to minimize the food wastages at consumption level.

## **1.8 Objectives of the Study**

In this backdrop the objectives of the present study are:

5. To assess the amount of food wasted in social gatherings like marriages, parties, etc,
6. To find out the attitudes and behaviour of the individuals that might be related to food wastage,
7. To assess the socio-demographic and economic impact of food wastage during social functions,
8. To suggest policy guidelines to minimize food wastage in social gatherings.

## **1.9 Methodology of the Study**

The food waste can be differentiated into four groups: original food, partly used food, leftovers (plate waste) and preparation residues. The quantum of original food waste is being analysed by different countries, organizations and researchers. They could also be potentially prevented by different measures. Rest of the three occurs at consumption level which can further be divided into two groups: (i) food wastes at household level and (ii) food wastes at social gatherings. As mentioned earlier, India has a long tradition of organizing large scale feast, especially during marriage ceremonies in which wastage takes place on a larger scale. As far as quantifying the food wastage at social gatherings is concerned. It has to be borne in mind that till now no study has been done so far in India to assess it and this study is the first attempt in this course. Therefore, before formulating the problem of study we have consulted various persons and groups such as people from wedding industries, event management and waste management staff. Focus group meetings and discussions with individuals as well as experts in this field have also been held.

For the collection of relevant data three interview schedules were prepared. The questionnaires were subjected to reliability test by pre-testing the constructed tools by administering it to 80 respondents. The questionnaires were modified based on the responses received.

### 1.10 Sampling Plan

A stratified Random Sampling technique has been used to find out the level and extent of food wastages in social gathering in NCR and Delhi. Though the quantity of food consumption or wastage of food is very much related to individual capacity but there are many who are responsible or linked with food wastages. Therefore, for this study, three stakeholders were approached for data collection. For convenience we have clubbed the food service sector as the hospitality industry.

4. Hospitality Industry (caterers, chefs, wedding planners and hotel/club/ banquet halls)
5. People from different sections of the society
6. Waste Management Staff (Supervisors of Delhi Waste Management Ltd.)

The study has been conducted in five cities of NCR region, namely, Delhi, Ghaziabad, NOIDA, Gurgaon and Faridabad. NOIDA has been included in Ghaziabad segment. Total 838 respondents were interviewed regarding food wastage in social gatherings. The stakeholder wise distribution of sample size is given below in the table.

**Table-1.4: Sample Size**

S. No.	Respondents	Delhi	Gurgaon	Ghaziabad	Faridabad	Total
1	Hospitality Industry	200	65	80	65	410
2	Cross section of Society	205	65	75	65	410
3	Waste management staff	18				18
<b>Total sample size</b>						<b>838</b>

Since no secondary data or estimates are available regarding food wastages at social gatherings; therefore the present study is wholly based on primary data. The data analysis and tabulation has been done by using SPSS. Some of the secondary data and information has been collected from the internet and the blogs. International experiences have also been studied to understand the concept and trends regarding food wastage in various countries.

**Table 1.5: Time Frame**

Phase	Work Plan	Days
I	Preliminary work (Manpower Planning, Identification of Respondents & Developing Interview Schedule)	15
II	Collection of Primary and Secondary Data	30
III	Data Compilation & Analysis	15
V	Report Writing and Preparation	15
<b>Total Days</b>		<b>75</b>

### 1.11 Limitations of the Study

As previously stated, this is the first exploratory research which tries to assess the wastage of Food and Ostentatious Behaviour during Social Gatherings (Marriages/Parties/Meetings, etc) in India. As we know, India specially NCR Delhi, is a mosaic of cultures. People of different socio-economic, religious and regional background are residing in NCR Delhi. Moreover, the region has benefited immensely due to economic reforms and the living standard of the people has gone up. The number and size of social gatherings has increased but it is difficult to quantify the amount of food wasted at Social Gatherings. Therefore the study has certain limitations. Some of them are as follows:

- Difficult to quantify food wastage at social gatherings
- Stakeholders hesitant to reveal facts
- Inadequate secondary data
- No previous study on food wastage
- Weddings are not registered, hence difficult to assess total number of weddings

## **Response of Hospitality Industry (Food Service Sector) on Food Wastage and Ostentatious Behaviour in Social Gatherings**

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### **2.1 Introduction**

The hospitality industry consists of broad category of fields within the service industry that includes hotels, restaurants, event planning, catering theme parks, transportation, cruise line, and additional fields within the tourism industry. It is a several billion dollar industry that now mostly depends on the availability of leisure time and disposable income. A hospitality unit such as a restaurant, hotel, or even an amusement park consists of multiple groups such as facility maintenance, direct operations (servers, housekeepers, porters, kitchen workers, bartenders, etc.), management, marketing, and human resources. The hospitality industry covers a wide range of organizations offering food services, entertainment and accommodation. The industry is divided into sectors according to the skill-sets required for the work involved. Hospitality segment, just like many other segments in India is booming at an unprecedented pace and provides for a huge opportunity growth.

According to a report by Mafoi Management Consultants India's hospitality sector is expected to see an estimated investment of US\$11.41 billion in the next few years and to provide over 400,000 jobs.. In India, the industry supports 48 million jobs, directly or indirectly or 8.27 per cent of total employment and accounts for 5.83 percent of the GDP, according to Department of Tourism estimates. Apart from social gatherings and festive occasions, formal events, seminars, conferences and other business related events consider professional catering services to add to the success of these events.

As the Indian middle class is getting more affluent, the number of social functions is growing both in terms of volume and guest list. Now there are functions for birth celebration, first birthday celebration, parties, engagements,

marriages, promotions, sixtieth birthdays, marriage jubilees and even 13th day after death. A large number of people get invited to each of these social gatherings and lot of money is spent on these events.

## **2.2 Catering Services**

A catering business is a service oriented business. Caterers provide food, sometimes supplies and service for social events like weddings, anniversary parties, seminars, conferences and many other social events. The catering and allied service industry has a never ending need in Indian metro as people of India are strong believers of conducting any occasion traditionally and ritually, hence this business is always promising. The number one skill that would be helpful in running a catering business would be the love for food and the passion to cook. It is rightly said that when you are offering a service based business you are selling your dependability instead of a product.

According to estimates the catering services industry in India has been consistently growing at the annual growth rate of 15 to 20 percent. In 2009, the industry attained worth of ` 15,000 crore. The positive aspect about the Indian catering industry is that inspite of recession it continued to grow. So, what are the reasons for the consistent growth rate enjoyed by the Indian catering industry? Catering has now become an important factor for the success of any event like social gathering or marriage. Earlier, family members used to take care of catering services during any social event. The trend has changed in the last decade. People tend to avail catering services for their social functions, especially in marriages, so that everyone can enjoy the event. People are now availing catering services for even 50 to 100 people events also. This is mainly because of rising economic prosperity and also break down of joint family system. Heterogeneous character of the urban society is also a reason.

Restaurant based catering services too have grown in the past few years. People, who are earning well in various fields and who have started enjoying higher standards of life, prefer to choose dining venues with professional catering services. The festival season of October and November

in India is one of the best times for the catering companies. Though, the industry doesn't rest for the remaining part of the year as well. Going further, the presentation and decoration used by the professional caterers further make them popular for various types of events. All of the aforesaid reasons justify the consistency in the Indian catering industry growth rate.

### **2.3 Wedding Industry and Ostentatious Behavior in India**

Gone are the days when social events like weddings used to be organised by the elders of the family with the exception of a few aspects like décor and catering. With marriages getting grander by the day, organising them is no mean feat. Planning functions can get tedious. The wedding planning industry has seen a major boom in recent times. According to experts, the latest estimate of the size of this industry in India stands at a whopping ` 125, 000 crore. "It's a flourishing industry and is growing by leaps and bounds. The job enables one to work in diverse avenues of planning and execution. As wedding consultants or coordinators, one gets to be a part of every minute detail of putting together the most special day in a couple's life and that in itself is an achievement. The amount of exposure and experience is enormous," quips a Wedding Management Services expert.

The extravagance of weddings has also spawned a new and more enterprising crop of wedding planners. The term "wedding planner" was unheard of a decade ago and now it is considered passé not to hire one. Wedding planners charge anywhere from U.S. \$2,000 to \$10,000. They arrange for the venue, décor, catering, wedding attire and other pre-and post wedding arrangements. A wedding planner says that weddings are affairs for the elite to showcase their wealth. "Better standards of living, travel and greater aspirations have also fuelled this trend to have luxurious weddings" says sociologist Salma Siddiqui. The middle class is trying to imitate the elite and hence fat weddings. Families do not mind paying extra money to make sure everything is perfect. This industry has shown a growth rate of more than 60 per cent in recent times, which in turn increases job opportunities. Another, Event Manager, says, "Creativity is the key prerequisite." Patience,

perseverance, practical experience, knowledge and negotiation skills follow close. This unique industry is for those who are good organisers and event managers with no specific educational qualifications. The wedding planning industry in India has seen a steep rise in a very short time. According to industry experts, it will only flourish in the coming times with the changing tastes and requirements of the new generation.

Today one associates the wedding industry with lots of glamour and adrenaline flowing everywhere, thus making it a lucrative and appealing industry. Wedding tourism is growing almost 100% on a year-on-year basis. Generally, the ratio of foreigners to Indians in an NRI wedding is 7:3. On an average, an NRI wedding organised in India costs ` 50 lakh. On an average, 50-150 rooms are booked in a star category hotel, according to a wedding planner.

It might be a 'seasonal' industry, thriving only during the auspicious months of the year but the Indian wedding industry is getting bigger and fatter. With the industry growing at an average rate of 25 per cent per annum, the lavishness doled out by Indians on weddings is just getting larger each season. The problem is that everyone is trying to out do each other. With the property and stock boom, India has seen a new generation of millionaires coming up and the lavishness that they indulge in weddings is just mind-blowing. Gone are the days when great weddings were the ones to be held at some five star hotel. Points out a wedding organiser and industry expert that "with increased money at their disposal, people now want more than a five star wedding. The Mittals and Sahara's along with the Chatwal weddings have changed the way, one would view a grand wedding. Even individual events like ladies sangeet with Bollywood singers performing and bachelor parties along with theme parties for the marriages are being organized by event managers. Today the pandals are more like film sets. Theme parties are what really excites everyone and one cannot even imagine how much can one spend on each individual ceremonies. Moreover, with even some Bollywood set designers stepping in to design marriage pandals, the grand Indian wedding is just getting bigger. Industry experts now point out that a good

wedding now takes place for around a crore and a half, even though the average wedding expenditure for a normal middle class family comes to about 15-20 lakhs without the jewellery and other gift items.

The booming economy of India is allowing the elite to hold weddings where money is no hindrance. A wedding planner in New Delhi says that they have become accustomed to receiving such unusual requests, be it exotic dancers from Spain, expensive flowers from Thailand or ice-sculptures. Preparations start months in advance and celebrations last weeks after the big day. An expert from an event-management company, told Time magazine that in India it is more about the glitz and glamour because people want something bigger and better than the last event they attended. She says budgets are astronomical and Indian weddings surpass even the recent British royal wedding when it comes to money. Such pomp and splendor has attracted international luxury brands to look eastwards. The Indian wedding industry, now worth a whopping \$40 billion, was valued at \$11 billion in 2005 with a growth rate of 25% per annum. It has quickly caught up with the U.S. wedding industry, also valued at \$40 billion, to date. Businesses have also latched on to this trend and have started marketing their products during the wedding season. Sony, LG, Samsung and other appliance brands offer discounts during the wedding season. GE Money India offers loans exclusively for weddings. In April 2011, a special online service called the cyber boutique was launched that delivers all the essentials that a wedding couple and their wedding party would need, directly at their doorstep. This is the first e-commerce platform that aims at bringing the best of South Asian wedding apparel and jewellery to the global Indian community.

Moreover Bollywood's obsession with decadent celebrity marriages has had a trickle-down effect and the rising middle class, estimated at 300 million in 2005, is eagerly jumping on the bandwagon of dream weddings. The industry insiders say that several Bollywood stars are invited to the wedding. Many of these stars are paid to mingle with the guests at the weddings of the elite. These extraordinarily extravagant weddings have attracted criticism as well. Renowned columnist and publisher, Malvika Singh has termed these

weddings as “graceless.” She adds that while once weddings were celebrated, today they are well-executed performances. Inspired by the glitz and glamour, even the poor want to have expensive weddings.

The glittering banquets about Millennium Development Goals (MDG) hide the stark reality that the fruits of a booming economy are only benefiting the elite and the middle class. There has been no social development. The measures of hunger reduction have made little impact and do not match the existing rates of malnutrition. However, extravagant weddings are unlikely to go away. The rising middle class is not used to this kind of wealth hence the need to show it off is greater. Some 300 million wealthy middle class people compared to 75% of rural India is a pretty small number and the rising GDP, is only benefiting this minority.

## 2.4 Taste and Preferences

Most of the wedding planners have admitted that the cost depends on the taste and preference of the party. Parties in a five star hotel, a farm house with imported foods and flowers are no more exclusive in a city like Delhi, and even the smaller cities are catching up. Now theme weddings are costing at least 20% more than normal wedding parties, according to wedding planners. They said that the sky was the limit and that people could spend as much and in as many ways as they wanted. In a metro city like Delhi an upper middle class family normally spends approximately ` 30 lakh on a wedding.

There is a growing expenditure pattern for the Indian middle class. Those who belong to the top socio-economic class have a tradition to spend lavishly. But now the middle class are also spending freely on social events as their disposable income is growing. World Gold Council says that an average of 10 million (or 1 crore) marriages take place in India every year. If one takes a conservative average of wedding expenditure to be ` 3 lakh, a simple multiplication suggests that India spends around ` 3 lakh crore or ` 3 trillion for weddings every year. Even if this estimate is on the higher side, it does reflect a high expenditure on weddings.

People have money and they want to ensure that others know this. India is happening and Indians are willing to pay for the expertise to send a style statement through a social event like a wedding. A wedding for an Indian is probably the biggest and most serious event in his or her lifetime. The industry is now slowly getting organised with the roles played by wedding planners, exhibition firms providing everything from make up to jewellery under one roof and with other big players now stepping into the arena.

## **2.5 Changing Menu in Social Gatherings**

In the past the members of the families usually took care of different arrangements during a social gathering or an event. This trend is fast being replaced by the people's interest in hiring catering services. This often results in better arrangements and opportunity for everyone in the family to enjoy the function. Earlier, an event taking place in a family belonging to a particular region of India used to have cuisines preferred in that region. But, the scene has changed today, all thanks to the popularity of catering service providers. Now, a wedding taking place in Punjab has South Indian dishes in its menu. Cuisines from Gujarat, Bengal and other Indian states are included in the menu cards all over the country. This encourages people to hire the professional catering services.

Apart from their lavish décor, Indian weddings are known for their sumptuous food. Any wedding is considered incomplete without delicious food. In India, the arrangement of the wedding day food is done by the parents of the bride. Though the menu is decided according to their wish, at times the approval of the groom's family is also taken. The groom's family is given prime importance in any wedding alliance and therefore, the food is prepared in the best possible manner, in order to please them.

Traditionally, the food for the wedding was cooked by family members or skilled cooks. Nowadays, people's preferences are changing and quite a number of them opt for catering services. The Indian wedding feast usually commences with appetizers, which are served before the main meal. The appetizers are usually both vegetarian and non vegetarian to cater to all

guests. It can comprise of traditional starter meals of the specific region the couple belongs to. In some weddings, drinks are also served. At times, there are even separate counters or stalls for beverages. The drinks which are usually served comprise of soft drinks, mocktails, wine, whiskey, etc. There are also a number of stalls of fast food, Chinese, fruits and other snacks. This is followed by the main course meal. The main course meal in normal middle class families now contains ten to twelve vegetable dishes, different types of daals, pulao and breads. However among the upper strata of the society the items on the menu list go upto around 100-150. This is complemented with various salads and other condiments. It also comprises of both vegetarian and non vegetarian dishes. The meal is the heaviest and grandest of all and showcases the best delicacies of any cuisine.

One thing which is often neglected at most Indian social gatherings is food wastage. Tons of food is often wasted knowingly and unknowingly. Most people lay stress on menu planning and food tasting while food wastage is one of the loose ends. While planning a social event people order large quantities of food even if they have to throw it away. This is the subject matter of our enquiry.

## **Field Data Analysis**

### **2.6 Perception of Members of Hospitality Industry**

The survey was done in the NCR Delhi during October – November, 2011 covering Delhi, Gurgaon, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Noida. However for the sake of analysis Noida has been clubbed with Ghaziabad. A structured questionnaire was used to elicit the views of the members of the Hospitality Industry. For the sake of convenience the Food Services Sector has been taken as hospitality industry. They happen to be a major stakeholder both in organizing a social event as well as wasting food during such social functions. The total sample size was of 410 respondents which included caterers, hotels, restaurants, chefs, wedding planners, event managers, baratghars, banquet halls, and farm houses. Out of the total respondents 200 were from Delhi, 65 from Gurgaon, 80 from Ghaziabad and 65 from Faridabad.

To understand the extent of food wastage in social gatherings and also the nature and extent of ostentatious behaviour various stakeholders from the hospitality industry were interviewed. Discussions were also held on various other aspects. Their response on various issues have been presented in the following pages.

## 2.7 Food Wastage in Social Gatherings

Table 2.1 represents the opinion of various stakeholders on food wastage in social gatherings. Of the total respondents 91.7 percent agreed that food is wasted in social gatherings. A region wise analysis also reveals a similar pattern. In Delhi 89 percent, in Gurgaon 92.3 percent, 95 percent in Ghaziabad and 95.4 percent in Faridabad confirmed that food is wasted in social gatherings.

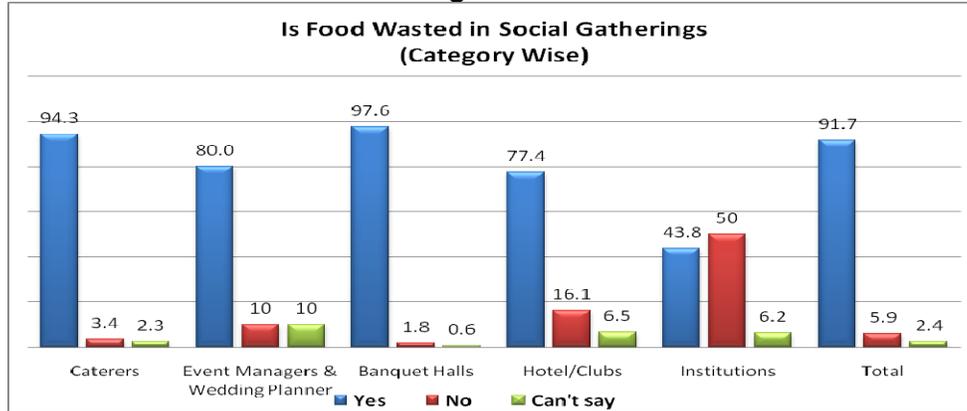
**Table 2.1: Is Food Wasted in Social Gatherings (City Wise)**

Cities	Yes	No	Can't say
Delhi	89.0	9.0	2.0
Gurgaon	92.3	4.6	3.1
Ghaziabad	95.0	1.3	3.8
Faridabad	95.4	3.1	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>91.7</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>2.4</b>

*Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA*

A category analysis of the stakeholders also reveals that food is wasted but there is least wastage of food at the level of institutions where seminars and conferences are organized. Only 43.8 percent of the respondents agreed that food is wasted at such events. 97.6 percent of Banquet hall respondents and 74.3 percent of the caterers agreed that food is wasted during marriages and social gatherings. 80 percent of the event managers and wedding planners opined the same while 77.4 percent of the respondents from hotel and clubs agreed that food is wasted.

**Figure-2.1**



Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

## 2.8 Food Waste in Rural/ Urban Areas

Rising prosperity has made urban weddings vary fat. Majority of the respondents (67.1 percent) agreed that there is more food wastage in social gatherings in urban areas than rural areas. Only 24.6 percent said that there is food wastage in rural areas. During the discussion it emerged that due to fewer items on the menu in rural areas food wastage is also less. More over since it is a community function, food is consumed even the next day by relatives and friends so there is lesser wastage of food. Similarly 78 percent of the respondents of Delhi, 60 percent of Gurgaon, 56.3 percent from Ghaziabad and 53.8 percent from Faridabad agreed that more food is wasted in urban areas.

**Table 2.2: Food Waste in Rural and Urban Areas (City Wise)**

Cities	Rural	Urban	Don't Know
Delhi	16.5	78.0	5.5
Gurgaon	32.3	60.0	7.7
Gaziabad	33.8	56.3	10.0
Faridabad	30.8	53.8	15.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>67.1</b>	<b>8.3</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

A category wise opinion of the stakeholders also reveals that 67.1 percent of the respondents opined that more food is wasted in urban areas, 85.7 percent of the event and wedding planners agreed that more food is wasted in urban areas but did not share any idea about rural areas as their

business is confined to urban areas only. Even a cross section analysis of the survey data reveals that all the categories rate wastage of more food in urban areas.

## 2.9 Quantum of Food Wastage

It is very difficult to assess the exact volume of food wasted but some rough estimates can be arrived at. There is a mixed response to the quantum of the food wasted in such gathering. 5.6 percent of the respondents have opined that less than 5 percent food is wasted, 17.2 percent said that the wastage is between 5 to 10 percent, 14.7 percent agreed that the wastage is between 10 to 15 percent while 44.9 percent felt that the wastage was high and rated it between 15 to 20 percent. However 17.6 percent of the respondents were of the view that the wastage was between 20-25 percent. Overall 62.5 percent said that wastage is between 15 to 25 percent which is on the higher side.

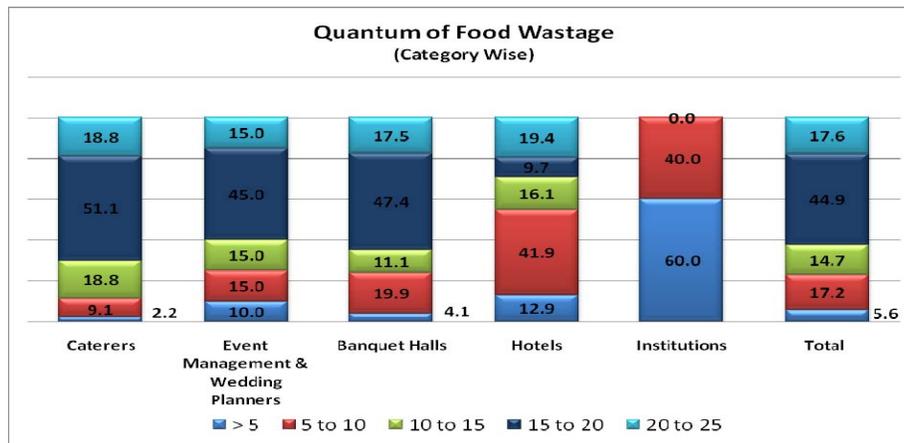
**Table 2.3: Quantum of Food Wasted (City Wise)**

Cities	Percent of wastage				
	> 5	5 -10	10-15	15-20	20-25
Delhi	4.3	21.5	12.4	45.7	16.1
Gurgaon	2.7	17.8	16.4	47.9	15.1
Ghaziabad	7.1	14.3	15.5	41.7	21.4
Faridabad	10.8	7.7	18.5	43.1	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>44.9</b>	<b>17.6</b>

*Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA*

A look at the category wise responses of the stakeholders reveals that 18.8 percent of the caterers said that food wastage is between 20-25 percent while 19.4 percent respondents from hotels viewed that it is between 20-25 percent. 45 percent event managers opined that it is between 15 to 20 percent, 47.7 percent from banquet halls said it was between 15 to 20 percent. 60 percent respondents from institutions said wastage is less 5 percent. An overall 62.5 percent of the respondents said wastage is between 15-25 percent. 69.9 percent of the caterers said that the wastage is between 15-25 percent, 60 percent of event managers and 64.9 percent of banquet hall respondents say wastage is between 15-25 percent.

**Figure-2.2**



Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

## 2.10 Occasion Wise Wastage of Food

Reiterating a known fact, in most social gatherings particularly marriages, the wastage of food is both ubiquitous and blatant. But then, such wastages are not merely restricted to marriages as similar wastages take place in restaurants, corporate events and even at seminars and conferences. Anybody who is more into social gatherings would be quite conversant with the amount of food wasted in parties. On which occasion is maximum food wasted was the next question of enquiry. According to 98 percent of the respondents, it was during marriages, while the least (59.8) was during conferences and seminars. This is mainly because generally seminars/conferences are by invitation and confirmation and a rough estimation is available. The gatherings are normally modest so is the menu. (Table 2.4)

**Table 2.4: Occasion Wise Wastage of Food**

Occasion	Very High	High	Average	Less	Very Less
Marriages	98.0	1.5	0.2	0.2	0.0
Anniversary /birthday/ parties	1.2	22.5	36.7	6.8	32.8
Business Parties	0.0	8.5	19.3	60.7	11.5
Political Events	1.9	61.8	19.1	11.8	5.3
Conference/Seminars	0.8	5.9	15.2	18.4	59.8

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

## 2.11 When Food Wastage is More?

Is there any correlation between food wastage and the number of guests and the number of food items. It appears so. Therefore it was interesting to know the reason for food wastage and its relation to the large numbers of guests or large number of dishes.

**Table 2.5: When Food Wastage is More**

Reason for wastage	Very High	High	Average
Number of Dishes is more	74.6	17.8	7.6
Number of Guests is more	13.7	74.9	11.5
Both	10.5	1.7	87.8

*Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA*

A majority of the respondents (74.9 percent) agreed that there is high wastage of food when the number of guests is more, while 74.6 opined that wastage is very high when the numbers of dishes are more. 87.8 percent of the respondents opined that an average quantity of food is wasted when both reasons exist i.e. where the number of guests as well as the number of dishes is more.

**Table 2.6 : Food Wastage in Rural and Urban Areas (Category wise)**

Categories	Rural	Urban	Don't Know
Caterer	33.2	62.2	4.7
Event Managers & Wedding Planner	0.0	85.7	14.3
Banquet Hall	19.4	73.1	7.5
Hotel	20.0	56.0	24.0
Institutions	9.1	54.5	36.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>67.1</b>	<b>8.3</b>

*Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA*

## 2.12 Factors Responsible for Food Wastage

Generally it has been observed that wastage of food is not due to the parties but due to the habits of people. It is not as if a person leaves food on his plate only during a party – if he leaves food on the plate, then it can be safely assumed that he generally leaves food on his plate at home as well. To some extent it is the person who has to be blamed for the wastage and not

the occasion. It is also true that the host prepared more food than what could have been consumed.

It is also interesting to know as to why food is wasted during such social gatherings. Only 46.4 percent of the respondents agreed that to some extent food wastage is due to miscalculation of guests and 49.2 percent agreed that to some extent it was due to lack of idea of guests' food preferences.

**Table 2.7: Factors Responsible for Food Wastage**

Factors	Cities	Response		
		Large extent	Some extent	Not at all
Miscalculation of invitees	Delhi	3.0	36.7	60.3
	Gurgaon	8.2	54.1	37.7
	Ghaziabad	7.5	53.8	38.8
	Faridabad	9.2	60.0	30.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>46.4</b>	<b>47.9</b>
No idea of Guest's food preference	Delhi	8.1	49.5	42.5
	Gurgaon	3.4	77.6	19.0
	Ghaziabad	6.6	40.8	52.6
	Faridabad	4.7	32.8	62.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>49.2</b>	<b>44.3</b>
More dishes on the menu list	Delhi	82.0	17.0	1.0
	Gurgaon	73.0	23.8	3.2
	Ghaziabad	81.3	18.8	0.0
	Faridabad	79.7	17.2	3.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>80.0</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>
People take more than they can eat	Delhi	65.6	31.7	2.6
	Gurgaon	72.1	23.0	4.9
	Ghaziabad	82.3	15.2	2.5
	Faridabad	81.5	18.5	0.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>72.6</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>2.5</b>
People just don't bother about food wastage(Insensitive)	Delhi	65.4	29.2	5.4
	Gurgaon	75.0	14.6	10.4
	Ghaziabad	84.2	15.8	0.0
	Faridabad	89.1	10.9	0.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>74.5</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>4.0</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

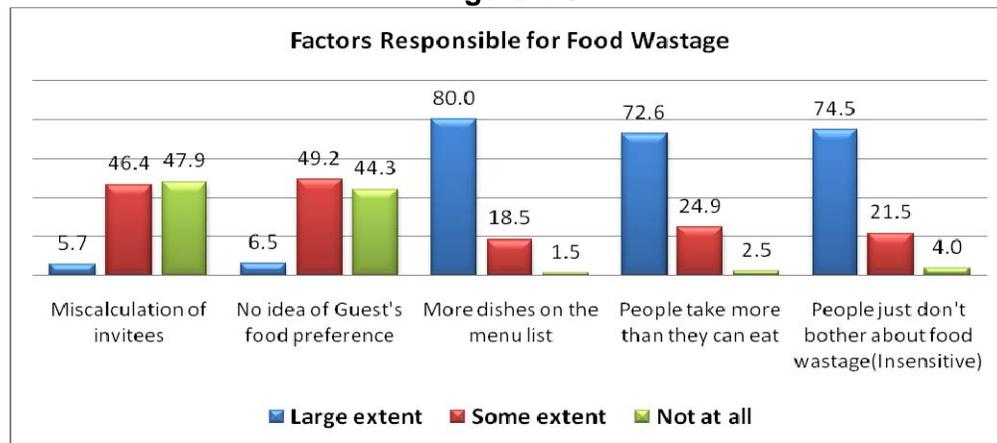
Majority of the respondents agreed that to a large extent, more food is wasted because of more dishes on the menu list (80 percent). During discussions they revealed that right from starters, soups, tea, coffee, cold drinks, fruit, chats, dosas, chinese and other fast food and finally to the main course is a long journey in most of the weddings. By the time the guest reaches the main course his appetite falls but still he has to eat because he

has come to a wedding. It becomes a family outing. The eating habit of the people is also to be blamed for food wastage. It has been observed and the respondents also agreed that generally people tend to take more than they can eat during a social function because they want to taste all the items on the menu (72 percent). While 74.5 percent of the respondents blamed the insensitivity of the people towards food wastage as the major reason for food wastage. It has been observed that people just fill their plates and leave a lot of food in their plates. This could have been avoided. As a result of the survey three main reasons for food wastage can be identified as;

- (1) Due to more dishes on the menu list
- (2) People take more than they can eat
- (3) People just don't bother about food wastage

This pattern of wastage is common in the entire NCR Delhi region where the survey was conducted.

**Figure-2.3**



Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

### 2.13 Items Wise Food Wasted

The more the number of items (dishes) on the menu the higher the social status. Even items like salad and pickles are in large number and in different varieties. Therefore the next question of enquiry was as to which item was wasted more. The data reveals that wastage is more in items like, vegetable, chapattis and rice. 55 percent of the respondents said that wastage of vegetable is between 10 to 20 percent while 40 percent of the respondents

said that rice/ pulau wastage is between 10 to 20 percent and chapattis/ bread is also wasted between 10 to 20 percent. By taste and habit Indians are fond of eating hot food. If the chapati /roti is not hot they will not eat it hence wastage is more in such items.

**Table 2.8: Item Wise Food Wasted**

Items	Response on quantum of wastage					
	>30%	<20 to 30	10 to 20	<10%	Not at all	No response
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Snacks/starters	0.2	3.7	9.3	37.1	13.4	36.3
Salads	1.0	1.7	13.7	35.4	7.6	40.7
Vegetables	2.4	13.2	55.4	22.9	1.0	5.1
Non Veg	0.7	2.4	5.4	14.9	33.2	43.4
Rice/Pulau/Biriyani	0.7	4.6	40.0	28.5	1.2	24.9
Chapattis/Breads	1.0	2.9	36.8	27.6	2.2	29.5
Sweet/Desserts	0.5	0.7	28.0	21.7	8.8	40.2

*Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA*

## 2.14 What Happens to the Wasted Food

In our country there are no scientific ways of disposing of food waste. Leftover food in social gatherings is either recycled, sold off, donated to the poor or thrown into the dustbins. The members of the hospitality industry, mainly the caterers, were very evasive as many of them did not reveal the truth. But after persuasion some of them said that if food waste is in large quantity particularly, the ones leftover in plates, they sell it as animal feed for pig etc at the rate of ₹ 22/kg.

A few of them agreed that unused food is recycled mainly by the family members. As far as donating the food is concerned they were of the view that it is very difficult since no agency wants to take up this work as collecting, storing, transporting and distributing food is a major task. If not done properly, it may lead to food poisoning.

Mr. Harsh Mander, member of the National Advisory Council in a recent article in Hindustan Times dated 13 December 2011 has analysed the reasons as to why homeless people do not depend on food charity, and prefer to spend their scarce resources on purchasing food or even to remain hungry. According to him the reason is that the food is served sporadically, and is not

the whole some food that they seek or need. Charity forces persons to be dependent on the timing, menu and availability of food at religious places, determined by the wishes of the donors, rather than the needs of homeless people. Moreover the most important reason why homeless people and migrants reject food charities is that these assault their dignity and respect.

**Table 2.9: What Happens to the Wasted Food?**

Items	Donated	Recycled	Thrown into Dustbin	No response
Snacks/starters	22.0	6.1	35.1	36.8
Salads	19.5	5.9	35.4	39.3
Vegetables	42.9	7.1	23.4	26.6
Non Veg	30.5	11.7	18.5	39.3
Rice/Pulau/Biriyani	40.0	6.6	20.2	33.2
Chapattis/Breads	36.3	6.3	21.5	35.9
Sweet/Desserts	32.8	8.5	18.0	40.7

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

### 2.15 Donation of Unserved Food to Charity Organisation/ NGO's

Nearly 33 percent of the respondents said that leftover food is donated but our enquiry revealed that they sell it. Among those only 7.2 percent of the respondents said that they always donated the food while 15.6 percent said that they do it sometimes. 77.3 percent said that they never donate it. Many of them during discussions also revealed that since wastage is not a regular affair, mainly a seasonal one, no organization is ready to collect such food. May be it is easier to collect from hotels and restaurants. Moreover collecting, storing and distributing is not an easy task. It requires financial and manpower resources. The other problem is that the trend is that, people do not accept food charity easily.

**Table 2.10: Donation of Unserved Food to Charity Organization/NGOs (City wise)**

Cities	Response on food donation		
	Always	Sometimes	Never
Delhi	9.6	13.2	77.2
Gurgaon	7.4	18.3	74.3
Gaziabad	5.5	16.3	78.2
Faridabad	6.3	14.4	79.3
Total	7.2	15.6	77.3

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

## 2.16 Stage Where More Food Waste Takes Place

As the wastage of food appears to be quite high from the survey data it was important to identify the chain of food wastage during social gatherings. According to 48.5 percent wastage is both in left over in plates and unserved food. However only 19.6 percent of the respondents said that unserved food is also wasted. Nearly 32 percent of the respondents agreed that it is mainly left in plates to be thrown in the dustbins. NCR Delhi tops the list among the cities where 35.5 percent of the respondents said that food is leftover in plates. (Table 2.11)

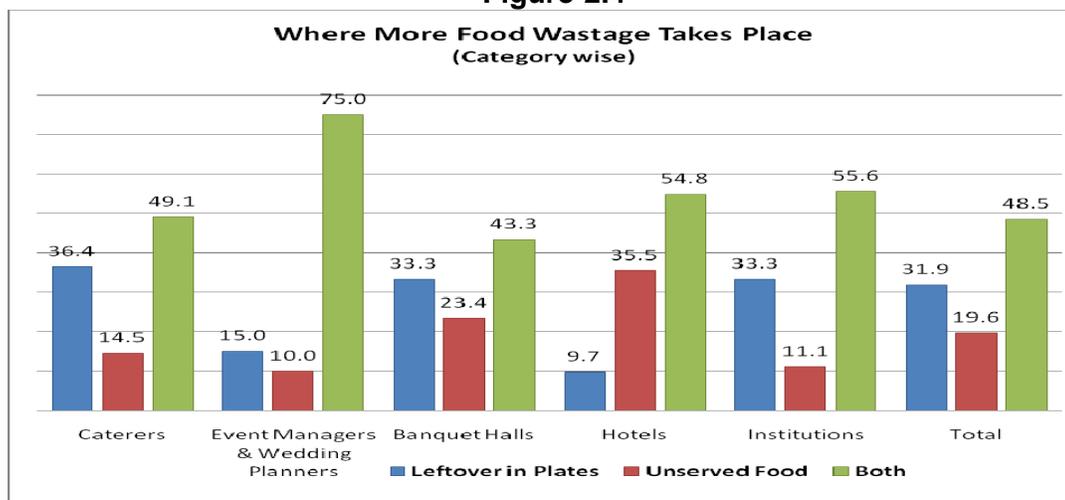
**Table 2.11: Stage Where More Food Waste Takes Place (City wise)**

Cities	Leftover in plates	Unserved Food	Both
Delhi	35.5	16.2	48.2
Gurgaon	28.6	23.8	47.6
Ghaziabad	30.4	17.7	51.9
Faridabad	26.2	27.7	46.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>31.9</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>48.5</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

As far as the opinion of the members of the hospitality industry category wise is concerned 48.5 percent of the respondents said that both unserved food and food left over in plates is wasted. While 31.9 percent of them said that it is leftover in plates. (Figure 2.4)

**Figure-2.4**



Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

## 2.17 Disposal of Wasted Food

Table 16 indicates the way food is disposed of in social gatherings. Majority of the respondents (91.5 percent) said that the food leftover in plates is thrown into the dustbins. On the other hand 29 percent of them were of the view that the unserved food also goes into the dustbin, 46.3 percent said it is donated while 21.2 percent said that the unserved food is recycled. However on a specific query as to whom it is donated and in what method no satisfactory answer was given. Infact it is sold to animal farms.

So, without getting into the various nitty-gritty details of food waste management and disposal, food itself should not be wasted at all. And though it is easier said than done, the easiest way to reduce the amount of food wasted is to reduce the amount of food created.

**Table 2.12: Ways to Dispose off Wasted Food**

Method	Type of Food Wastage	
	Left Over Food in Plates	Unserved Food
Donate	1.2	46.3
Recycle	0.5	21.2
Dustbin	91.5	29.0
No response	6.8	3.4

*Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA*

## 2.18 Changes in Pattern of Celebrations

There has been a visible change in the way social functions are being organized all over the NCR Delhi. No doubt rise in disposable income due to opening of economy and the growth of service sector has changed the way people celebrate such functions. Marriages and other social functions have become very ostentatious, where huge sum of money is spent lavishly not only on food items but also on decorations and gifts. The prosperity that has come due to sale of property in Gurgaon, Faridabad and Ghaziabad has given rise to vulgar display of wealth. The survey data reveals that 93.4 percent (Table 2.17) of the respondents of the hospitality industry agreed that during the last 10 to 15 years the pattern of celebrations has undergone a drastic change. The response is similar in all the cities of NCR.

**Table 2.13: Change in Pattern of Celebration (Last 10 to 15 Years)**  
(City wise)

Cities	Yes	No	Can't Say
Delhi	92.5	5.0	2.5
Gurgaon	90.8	4.6	4.6
Ghaziabad	96.3	2.5	1.3
Faridabad	95.4	3.1	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>2.4</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

## 2.19 What has Changed?

As per the data 97.8 percent of the respondents (Table 2.14) said that as a result of the change in the nature of celebration, expenditure on food has increased many folds both in terms of items on the menu as well as the number of guests. It also reveals that the taste and preferences of the guests is also changing as 50 percent of them said that the traditional and ethnic dishes being served in social gatherings has remained the same while 92.2 percent of the respondents agreed that there is an increase in continental dishes. On the other hand 97.8 opined that the number of dishes served has increased. A few of the respondents said that people say there is no problem of money you can suggest as many dishes as you desire. But ensure that there is something new and uncommon.

**Table 2.14: What has Changed ?**

Pattern	Response on changing pattern		
	Increased	Decreased	Same
Expenditure on food	97.8	0.7	1.5
Traditional/ethnic dishes served	22.7	26.6	50.7
Continental dishes	92.2	4.1	3.7
No. of dishes served	97.8	1.2	1.0
No. of guests invited	24.1	21.2	54.6
Food Consumption level	10.2	61.5	28.3

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

What is interesting is that inspite of a rise in the expenditure on food, the number of dishes served and the variety of food from traditional to continental, the consumption level has gone down. It was revealed that on an average 300 grams / individual is prepared, which includes all items. But today people are becoming health conscious and many are also suffering

from various aliments. As a result they consume less food. People prefer to eat snacks than the main course. So the actual consumption of the main course has gone down. But that does not indicate that they take lesser food in their plates.

## 2.20 Food Wastage: Present vs. Past Celebration

Once upon a time, the social functions were organized mainly by the family members but not any more. The event managers and wedding planners have arrived, and everybody wants a big extravaganza. India's burgeoning middle class – now 300 million strong – are turning weddings into showcases of their growing disposable incomes and newfound appetite for the goodies of the global marketplace. The maximum budget for a wedding ceremony in the past is today the minimum. The upper-middle and rich classes are known to spend upward but of late others are also following them.

But due to the change in the nature and pattern of celebrations is food wasted in such social gatherings is a matter of enquiry.

**Table 2.15: Wastage of Food: Present v/s Past Celebrations (City wise)**

Cities	More food wasted		
	Past function/marriage	Present function/marriage	Don't Know
Delhi	22.0	74.0	4.0
Gurgaon	15.4	80.0	4.6
Gaziabad	11.3	87.5	1.3
Faridabad	18.5	78.5	3.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>80.2</b>	<b>2.9</b>

*Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA*

In comparison to the past 80.2 percent of the respondents were of the view that more food is wasted in the way social functions are celebrated at present. The pattern of response is similar in the NCR Region. 74 percent of the Delhi respondents are of the view that more food is wasted at present while 80 percent of the respondents in Gurgaon, 87.5 percent in Ghaziabad and 78.3 percent in Faridabad were also of the same view. This also indicates that people are spending more money on social functions now.

## 2.21 Wastage of Food by Different Methods of Serving

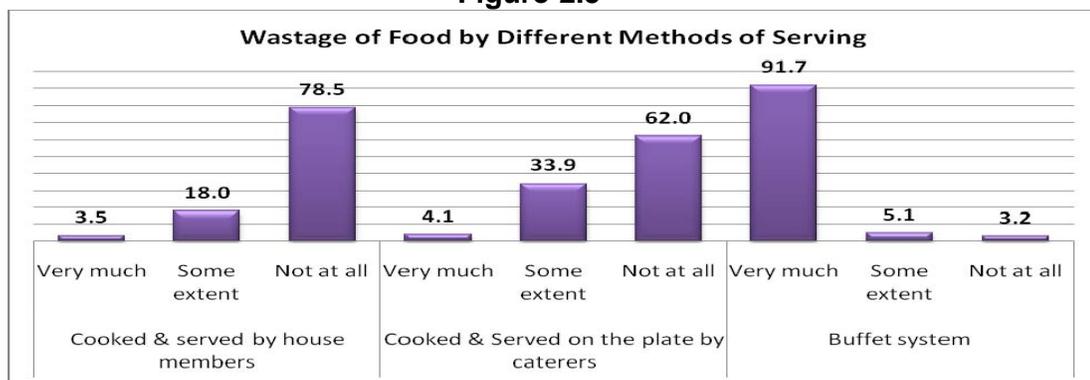
In the past when food service sector had not developed well, social functions were organized mostly with the help of members of the family unlike now where people prefer to outsource the arrangement of a social function. In the traditional manner the food was served by the family members who took care that not much food was wasted and the servings or the helpings would be in small quantities. According to 78.5 percent of the respondents no food wastage was there in this pattern of traditional servings which was mainly done by the family member (Table 2.16)

**Table 2.16: Wastage of Food by Different Methods of Serving**

Method	Response	Cities				
		Delhi	Gurgaon	Ghaziabad	Faridabad	G.Total
Cooked & served by house members	Very much	4.0	4.6	2.5	1.5	<b>3.5</b>
	Some extent	19.5	16.9	15.0	18.5	<b>18.0</b>
	Not at all	76.5	78.5	82.5	80.0	<b>78.5</b>
Cooked & Served on the plate by caterers	Very much	4.0	4.6	5.0	3.1	<b>4.1</b>
	Some extent	37.5	32.3	28.8	30.8	<b>33.9</b>
	Not at all	58.5	63.1	66.3	66.2	<b>62.0</b>
Buffet system	Very much	92.0	90.8	92.5	90.8	<b>91.7</b>
	Some extent	5.0	4.6	5.0	6.2	<b>5.1</b>
	Not at all	3.0	4.6	2.5	3.1	<b>3.2</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

**Figure-2.5**



Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

However as the pattern of serving changed there is a visible increase in the wastage of food as revealed by the survey data. Accordingly where food is cooked and served by the caterers, there is some wastage of food. 33.9 percent of the respondents agreed with this view. However a large percent of

them (62 percent) said that food was not wasted by such method of serving. However, with the arrival of buffet system which is a western concept and the most common system in social gatherings food wastage has gone up. Here food is displayed and each takes a serving as per his taste and needs, which should in fact minimize food wastage as observed in European countries. However the survey data reveals that 91.7 percent of the respondents said that there is high wastage of food in buffet system. This system has replaced the traditional methods of serving food. Even in rural areas this culture is taking root now as 'halwais' are being hired to cook food as there is a general break down in community life and joint family system. Family members do not help in such social gatherings any more.

But at places it has been observed that the caterers try and keep service staff behind the buffet so as to serve the guests and minimize waste. They are experienced and serve decent portions, instead of guests helping themselves with liberal portions which are then wasted. In the buffet system they can always help themselves to a second serving if they like anything in particular but many don't do this and fill their plates once and for all.

The same rationale holds true for buffet at restaurants, or for that matter, corporate parties – which are no less in terms of grandeur and lavishness when compared to any wedding.

## **2.22 Factors Behind Extravagance in Social Functions**

There are a number of factors for this. Firstly – there's the attitude of ostentatiousness – people want to spend money for the sake of it, for the sake of showing they have money. Secondly – there's the aspect of having a huge function, with massive guest lists. In a wedding literally half the guests will be people who neither boys nor girls side can claim to be close family or friends. No doubt sometimes people need to maintain relations within their community and society, so they invite. The net result of having a large event is that people themselves don't enjoy their own party. The rich are wasting huge amount of money on weddings and the media highlights it so much, that people tend to compete for an ostentatious event.

Everyone of course has the right to spend as much as they'd like, or can afford but there are surely rational boundaries to what becomes just plain excessive spending. Then it is also a question of family honor. A person who organizes a simple wedding ceremony will find it difficult to show his face in society. The back-biting and loss of face will be too humiliating to bear. In any traditional society, honour is important. It can become more important than even food. Community comes before self. It's what the community thinks which matters and as weddings were always sacred and special occasions in our society, celebrating them until the purse strings are stretched is what's expected. Today, weddings have become some sort of 'show' of one's 'honour.' Every society has it's own idea of what honor is all about and it's tragic that in Indian culture, wedding celebrations have become one such symbol. People are taking loans to organize social functions like wedding and it increases their status in society. In any case today most people think it's a shameful thing to have a simple wedding. Today even if a person has nothing he will apply for a loan and celebrate wedding in style because of societal pressure.

But we need to validate this. So the next question why people spend so much on social functions? Why this extravagance? Why do they have so many items on the menu list? In some marriages there are more than 100-150 dishes and hardly any guest can even taste all the dishes. Why do people want to waste food and their money? The survey reveals that it has mainly to do with status symbol. The more you spend the higher status you have in the society. It is also to maintain your status in the society. Ones position, prestige and standing in the society to a large extent determine the volume and scale of the social function.

The next factor that influences the spending relates to competition to do better. It's more of a compulsive behavior to do better than the neighbour and other relatives. People like to display and flaunt their wealth. Rising economic prosperity is a key factor that enables people to spend more during social functions.

**Table 2.17: Factors Behind Extravagance in Social Functions (City wise)**

Factors	Delhi		Gurgaon		Ghaziabad		Faridabad		NCAR	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Status Symbol	4.9	1	4.9	1	4.5	1	4.6	1	4.7	1
Economic Prosperity	4.8	2	4.7	2	2.7	4	3.6	4	3.5	3
Social/Relative Pressure	3.5	4	3.8	4	2.9	3	3.2	3	3.4	4
Competition to do better	3.7	3	4.5	3	3.3	2	3.6	2	4.2	2
Social networking	2.3	5	2.7	5	1.2	5	1.2	5	2.0	5

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

Pressure from the relatives increases the expenditure especially on decoration and on food “Badia Swagat Hona Chahiye” means good food and extravagance – which essentially leads to wastage. Social networking is another factor that plays a role in enhancing the spending pattern on a social event.

### 2.23 Need to Control Food Wastage and Ostentatious Behaviour

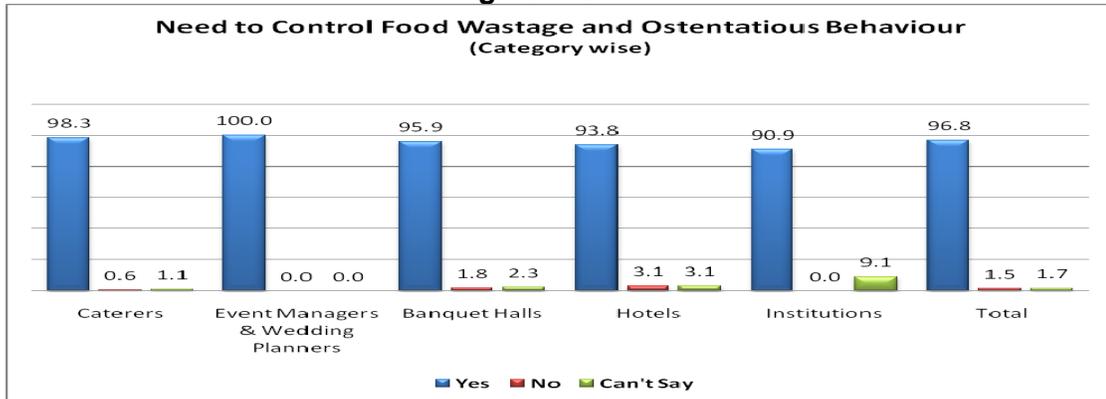
The respondents of the hospitality industry are no doubt concerned about food wastage during social gatherings but they say that they cannot control it on their own as they prepare as per the order of the customers. They are in business and have to prepare as per orders. But 96.8 of the respondents agreed that there is a need to control food wastage. Some of them during discussions revealed that at times they feel frustrated when large quantity of food is thrown away. Category wise analysis also reveals that caterers, event managers, banquet halls, hotels and institutions all agree that wastage of food needs to be checked. (Table 2.18)

**Table 2.18: Need to Control Food Wastage and Ostentatious Behaviour (City wise)**

Cities	Yes	No	Can't Say
Delhi	96.5	2.5	1.0
Gurgaon	95.4	1.5	3.1
Gaziabad	96.3	1.2	2.5
Faridabad	95.4	1.5	3.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>96.8</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.7</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

**Figure-2.6**



Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

## 2.24 Knowledge about Guest Control Orders

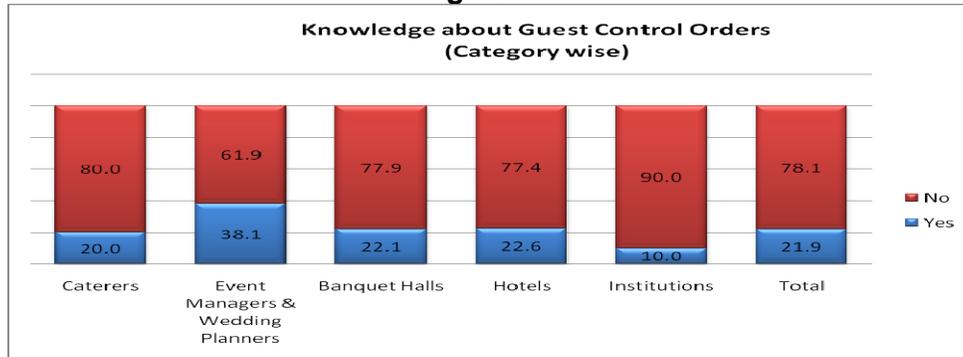
In the past efforts were made to control extravagance in social functions. In the 1960's there was a Guest Control order that restricted the number of guests to be invited in a social gathering. Assam and J&K also passed Guest Control orders. However these orders did not have much effect and slowly died their natural death. Majority of the respondents said that they are not aware of such an order (78.1 percent). Only 21.9 percent of the respondents had heard about Guest Control order. These respondents were mainly in the higher age bracket who have been in the catering business for a number of years. However they could not specify the various provisions of the Guest Control order but agreed that something like that was in force earlier. Some of them also said that initially it was enforced but with passage of time people forgot about it.

**Table 2.19: Knowledge about Guest Control Orders (City wise)**

Cities	Yes	No
Delhi	26.5	73.5
Gurgaon	25.0	75.0
Ghaziabad	20.0	80.0
Faridabad	7.7	92.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>21.9</b>	<b>78.1</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

**Figure-2.7**



Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

## 2.25 Effectiveness of Policies / Orders to Restrict Guest / Dishes

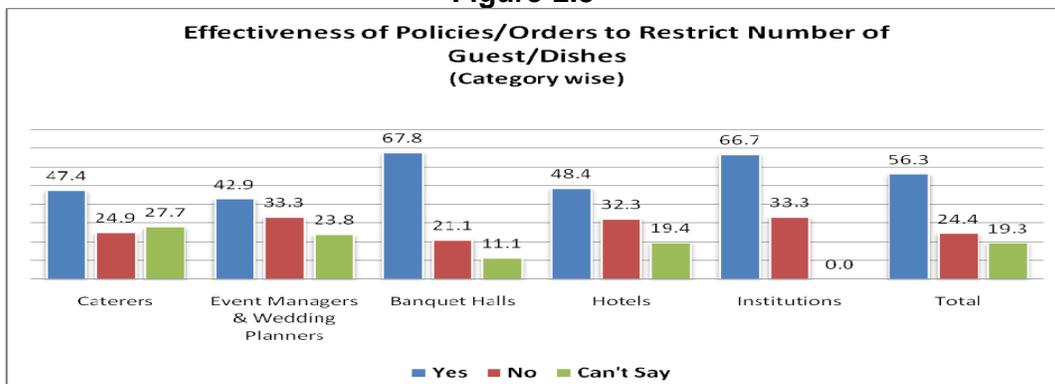
In view of wastage of food in social gathering to what extent will the policies / orders to control the guests / dishes be effective. The opinion on this seems to be divided. According to 56.3 percent of the respondents it will be effective while 24.4 percent of them said that it won't be effective. 19.3 percent of them were not sure about it. Respondents from Faridabad and Ghaziabad did not favour such an order.

**Table 2.20: Effectiveness of Policies/Orders to Restrict Number of Guest/Dishes (City wise)**

Cities	Yes	No	Can't Say
Delhi	66.0	19.3	14.7
Gurgaon	65.6	23.4	10.9
Gaziabad	40.5	25.3	34.2
Faridabad	36.9	40.0	23.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>56.3</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>19.3</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

**Figure-2.8**



Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

If we take into account the respondents category wise, we find that 47.4 percent of the caterers and 42.9 percent of the event managers said that it would be effective. 67.8 percent of the respondents from Banquet halls were also of the same view. But they also said that such attempts will only complicate the matter and the hospitality industry will suffer. Educating the people is the best way as any administrative action will lead to corruption. Media pressure may not allow such actions to be taken (Figure 2.8).

## 2.26 Effective Measures to Minimize Food Wastage

Food is being wasted. The menu list and the guest list is increasing. Social functions are becoming an expensive affair. The poor are being sucked into the debt trap. In such a scenario, what is the need of the hour? The respondents also agreed that food is being wasted during social gatherings and also to the fact that polices / orders would be effective in controlling the number of guests and dishes. They were asked about the various measures that can be adopted to stop food wastage and vulgar display of wealth. Majority of them ranked education and mass awareness campaign as the first priority to control food wastage. Next preference was to limit the number of dishes. Bringing in a new Act to control food wastage was the third preference, while limiting the number of guests was the fourth option.

**Table 2.21 :Preference for Effective Measures to Minimize Food Wastage (Preference Wise)**

(1- Most Preferred; 4 – Least Preferred)

Measures	Delhi		Gurgaon		Ghaziabad		Faridabad		NCER	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
By bringing a new Act	3.9	2	3.5	3	2.3	3	3.5	3	3.3	3
By limiting the number of guests	3.0	4	1.3	4	1.3	4	1.3	4	1.7	4
By restricting the number of dishes	3.8	3	3.8	2	2.9	2	3.8	1	3.6	2
By education and mass awareness campaign	4.0	1	3.9	1	3.9	1	3.6	2	3.9	1

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

However during discussions most of them did not favour any legislation to control food wastage as it will give rise to corruption and also lead to unnecessary harassment. They were of the view that people should be

sensitized through mass awareness programmes and they should be called upon to voluntarily reduce the number of dishes and guests as well. Multimedia campaign should be organized to educate the people.

## 2.27 Legal Measures Encroach on Social Life

While discussing various options to check wastage in social gatherings the option of resorting to legal action was also discussed. The respondents of the hospitality industry did not seem to favor such an idea.

**Table 2.22: Legal Measure Encroach on Social Life**

Particulars	Response		
	Yes	No	Can't say
Affect an individual's right to privacy	56.8	40.0	3.2
Lead to interference in private matters	56.6	42.0	1.5
Interference in cultural matter	50.7	46.1	3.2

*Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA*

56.8 percent of the respondents felt that it would invade an individual's right to privacy. According to 56.6 percent of them it would amount, to interfering in private matters and 50.7 percent were of the view that it would amount to interference in cultural matters. They were of the opinion that India is a multi cultural society with different traditions and customs. Therefore no such action should be taken to invade an individuals' privacy and encroach upon private affairs.

## 2.28 Who Can be Effective in Minimizing Food Wastage

Exploring the alternate options to control food wastage is important. If the respondents do not favour legislative and administrative actions then who can help reduce food wastage? There are four major stakeholders in any social event. The individual who organizes the event, the planners / caterers, the government and the NGO's and VCO's. According to the majority of the respondents from the hospitality industry (84.9 percent) the responsibility of reducing food wastage lies with the individual who organizes the social gathering. The event managers and the wedding planners feel that they have

some role to play in this as they need to be realistic while planning the event. 52.3 percent felt that the government can be effective in this matter, while 40.3 percent of the respondents were of the view that with the help of the NGO's and VCO's food wastage in social gathering can be minimized. They suggested that the NGO's could campaign against food wastage and also make efforts to collect the food and distribute it to the needy (Table 2.23).

**Table 2.23: Who Can Be Effective in Minimising Food Wastage**

Stakeholders	Response		
	Very much	Some extent	Not at all
Individuals who organize the event	84.9	13.2	2.0
Wedding Planners/Event Managers/Caterers	25.8	54.5	19.7
Government	52.3	39.8	8.0
NGOs/VCOs	40.3	23.2	36.5

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

## 2.29 Guest Control Order to Affect Business

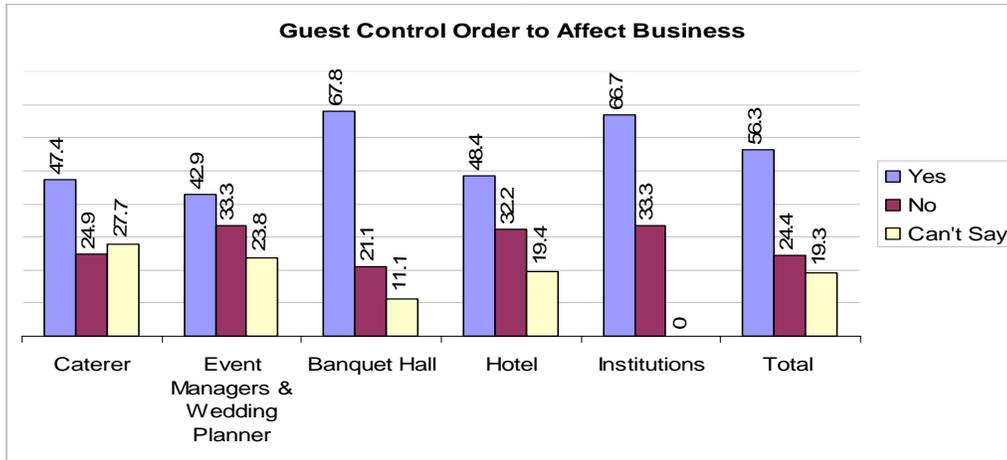
When Jammu and Kashmir Government introduced an order limiting the number of dishes in marriages the caterers filed a petition in the High Court challenging the order on the ground that it would affect their business prospects. The order has been stayed till date. The respondents of the hospitality industry were also asked the same question, whether any order to control the guests or limit the dishes in social gathering would affect their business?

**Table 2.24: Guest Control Order to Affect Business (City wise)**

Area	Response		
	Yes	No	Can't Say
Delhi	66.0	19.3	14.7
Gurgaon	65.6	23.4	10.9
Gaziabad	40.5	25.3	34.2
Faridabad	36.9	40.0	23.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>56.3</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>19.3</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

**Figure-2.9**



Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

According to 56.3 percent of the respondents in the NCR such an order will affect their business while 24.4 percent differed. 19.3 percent of them were not sure about its impact on their business. However during discussions they revealed that in case of any such order to restrict the guests or dishes the cost would increase and the expenditure on food served during social gatherings would increase substantially because the quantum of time and manpower employed would more or less remain the same. They also said that now it's a big industry employing lacs of people and it would affect their livelihood.

## Peoples' (Cross Section of Society) Response on Food Wastage and Ostentatious Behaviour in Social Gatherings

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### 3.1 Introduction

"ANNAM PARABRAHMASWAROOPAM," says our Indian philosophy. This means that food is equal to God as told by our great ancient Sages. But we are not giving the same amount of respect to this age-old God. As a result millions of people are dying in hunger when millions of tons of food is being thrown away wasted and discarded. Wasting food is not good for anyone atleast certainly not to the society, to the economy, to the environment or to our own ethical justification. So if things are going wrong, they need to be put on the right track. Food was considered God by our ancestors and it used to be given to others piously. But now thanks to the economic boom, food is being flaunted as a sign of our wealth, never mind it being wasted in this frenzied display of prosperity. Just estimate how much of productivity is lost forever when food is discarded on our plates. Also imagine how much of time, energy and money has been put on that right from the farm place to the consumer. We have lost respect for food and no longer treat it as precious, holy or divine as God is.

### 3.2 Determinants of Food Choice

Given the priority for population dietary change there is a need for a greater understanding of the determinants that affect food choice. . The key drive for eating is of course hunger but what we choose to eat is not determined solely by physiological or nutritional needs. Some of the other factors that influence food choice include:

- Biological determinants such as hunger, appetite, and taste
- Economic determinants such as cost, income, availability
- Physical determinants such as access, education, skills and time
- Social determinants such as culture, family, peers and meal patterns
- Psychological determinants such as mood, stress and guilt
- Attitudes, beliefs and knowledge about food

The complexity of food choice is obvious from the list above, which is in itself not exhaustive. Food choice factors also vary according to life stage and the power of one factor will vary from one individual or group of people to the next. The central nervous system is involved in controlling the balance between hunger, appetite stimulation and food intake. An important satiety signal may be the volume of food or portion size consumed. Many people are unaware of what constitutes appropriate portion sizes and thus inadvertently take excess food.

There are many influences on food choice which provide a whole set of means to intervene into and improve people's food choices. There are also a number of barriers to dietary and lifestyle change, which vary depending on life stages and the individual or group of people in question. Cultural influences lead to the difference in the habitual consumption of certain foods and in traditions of preparation, and in certain cases can lead to restrictions such as exclusion of meat and milk from the diet. What people eat is formed and constrained by circumstances that are essentially social and cultural. Population studies show there are clear differences in social classes with regard to food intakes. Although the majority of food is eaten at home, now an increasing proportion is eaten outside the home, e.g. in social gatherings and in restaurants. The venue in which food is eaten can affect food choice, particularly in terms of what foods are on offer. The availability of good food increases the consumption of such foods.

Social influences on food intake refer to the impact that one or more persons have on the eating behaviour of others, either direct (buying food) or indirect (learn from peer's behaviour), either conscious (transfer of beliefs) or subconscious. Even when eating alone, choice is influenced by social factors because attitudes and habits develop through the interaction with others. However, quantifying the social influences on food intake is difficult because the influences that people have on the eating behaviour of others are not limited to one type and people are not necessarily aware of the social influences that are exerted on their eating behaviour (Feunekes et al. 1998).

The family is widely recognised as playing significant role in food decisions. Research shows the shaping of food choices takes place at home. Because family and friends can be a source of encouragement in making and sustaining dietary change, adopting dietary strategies which are acceptable to them may benefit the individual whilst also having an effect on the eating habits of others.

Food habits and dietary preferences are of considerable interest to a wide variety of scholars. Those who study Indian culture have often wondered if the image of India as a predominantly vegetarian country is correct. Market analysts want to know about the new eating habits of the Indian middle class. Economists think of food as the measure of well-being. Despite such widespread interest, there have been very few attempts to study the food habits of the Indian population. *The Hindu* -CNN-IBN State of the Nation Survey is one of the few such attempts. The poll, conducted between August 1 and 6, 2006 is based on interviews with 14,680 respondents, spread across 883 villages and urban areas in 19 States.

The survey confirms the widespread impression that the popular image of a vegetarian India is off the mark. The late Professor Kumar Suresh Singh analysed the data of the People of India project to show that a majority of our communities are non-vegetarians. The present survey fixes figures not only for communities but also for individuals and families. The findings show that only 31 per cent of Indians are vegetarians. The figure is 21 per cent for families (with all vegetarian members). Another nine per cent of the population is 'vegetarian,' or vegetarians who eat eggs. Vegetarianism has a predictable pattern: women are more likely to be vegetarian than men and so are those above the age of 55. But there is no broad correspondence between age and vegetarianism. Among the young, the figure is only slightly below the national average. The findings show that vegetarianism is a function of inherited cultural practice rather than individual belief. Religion and community matter: as many as 55 per cent of Brahmins are vegetarians. The corresponding figure for Adivasis is 12 per cent. Hindus who worship every day are more likely to be vegetarian, but the majority of all Hindus are non-vegetarian.

Interestingly, eight per cent of Christians are also vegetarians. This being the nature of the Indian society it was important to understand as to why people waste food and spend so much on social events.

## **Field Data Analysis**

### **3.3 Analysis of Peoples' Response on Food Wastage**

People organize as well as participate in social gatherings on a regular basis. Be it wedding, parties, ceremonies, seminars or conferences. They are also an important stakeholder in the food wastage chain cycle. Therefore it was important to understand their view point as well as their assessment of food wastage. A structured questionnaire was used to elicit their views on various issues about food wastage and ostentatious behaviour during social gatherings. The sample size consisted of 410 respondents from NCR Delhi comprising of 200 respondents from Delhi, 65 from Gurgaon, 75 from Ghaziabad and Noida and 65 respondents from Faridabad. The respondents from the cross-section of the society belong to different age groups, gender, educational qualification, profession and also different economic and social strata of the society. The selection was on random basis as there is hardly anyone who has not attended a social gathering.

### **3.4 Food Wasted in Social Gatherings**

The opinion of the respondents was sought on whether food is wasted in social gatherings or not. As in the case of respondents of the hospitality industry large number of the respondents 95 percent agreed that food is wasted in such gatherings. A sectoral analysis of the respondents from the NCR also indicates the same trend. Delhi, Gurgaon, Ghaziabad and Faridabad show almost the same pattern. The respondents themselves confessed that at times they do leave food in the plate. (Table 3.1)

**Table 3.1: Is Food Wasted in Social Gatherings (City wise)**

Cities	Opinion on food wastage		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Delhi	95.5	2.7	1.8
Gurgaon	96.4	1.8	1.8
Ghaziabad	92.3	4.6	3.1
Faridabad	94.9	5.1	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>95.0</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>1.7</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

### 3.5 Food Wastage and Age Group

A cross sectional analysis of the respondents reveals an interesting pattern. 95.0 percent of the respondents belonging to the age group between <20 years to > 66 years agree that food is wasted in social gatherings. The older the age group, the higher the response. 91.7 percent of the respondents in the age group of less than 20 years say that food is wasted while 96.6 percent of the respondents in the age group more than 66 years say that food is wasted in social gatherings.

**Table 3.2: Is Food Wasted in Social Gatherings (Age Wise)**

Age Group	Yes	No	Don't Know
< 20	91.7	8.3	0.0
21-35	94.6	2.7	2.7
36-50	93.1	4.6	2.3
51-65	94.4	4.2	1.4
> 66	96.6	0.0	3.5
<b>All</b>	<b>95.0</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>1.7</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

### 3.6 Income Group and Food Wastage

An income wise analysis of the respondents also indicates that majority of them agree that there is food wastage in social gatherings. Respondents with income less than ₹ 3 lakh agreed that food is wasted (98 percent). 96.3 percent in the income bracket of ₹ 3-5 lakh, 95.7 percent in the income range of ₹ 5-7 lakh, 90.3 falling in the income slab of ₹ 7-9 lakh and 92 percent above ₹ 9 lakh income opined that food is wasted in social gatherings. Therefore irrespective of age all of them agreed that food is wasted in social gatherings.

**Table 3.3: Income Groups and Food Wasted (Income Wise)**

Annual Income (in `)	Opinion on food wastage		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
< 3.0 Lakh	98.1	1.9	0.0
3.0-5.0	96.3	2.8	0.9
5.0-7.0	95.7	2.9	1.5
7.0-9.0	90.3	6.9	2.8
>9.0 Lakh	92.0	2.0	6.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>95.0</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>1.7</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

### 3.7 Food Wastage in Rural and Urban Areas

The survey data reveals that food wastage is mainly confined to urban areas (88.6 percent) and only 8.2 percent of the respondents are of the view that food is wasted in rural areas during social gatherings. During discussions it was also gathered that in the rural areas the menu and the number of dishes is still limited to a few even though large number of guests are invited. As a result of having only a few items wastage of food does not take place. Moreover the guests eat it the next day as well.

The glamour of social gatherings is yet to taint rural India. People are still fighting poverty and hunger. But the trend is changing as far as the rural elites are concerned. The tent walas and caterers are reaching rural India. The pomp and show associated with social functions is picking up. Tastes and preferences of rural populace are also changing slowly (Table 3.4).

**Table 3.4: Food Wastage in Rural and Urban Area (City Wise)**

Areas	Rural	Urban	Don't Know
Delhi	5.8	90.6	3.6
Gurgaon	5.4	92.9	1.8
Ghaziabad	10.8	87.7	1.5
Faridabad	17.0	78.0	5.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>88.6</b>	<b>3.2</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

### 3.8 Quantum of Food Wasted

'Taste' is consistently reported as a major influence on food behaviour. In reality 'taste' is the sum of all sensory stimulation that is produced by the ingestion of a food. This includes not only taste per se but also smell,

appearance and texture of food. These sensory aspects are thought to influence, in particular, spontaneous food choice. From an early age, taste and familiarity influence behaviour towards food. A liking for sweetness and a dislike for bitterness are considered innate human traits, present from birth. Taste preferences and food aversions develop through experiences and are influenced by our attitudes, beliefs and expectations.

Within the NCR Delhi a number of social functions are held almost daily. According to reports the number of weddings in Delhi on the auspicious day of 10 December 2006 was around 36000. As there is no primary data it is difficult to calculate the volume of the wastage of food. The next question of enquiry was as to the approximate quantum of food wasted in such gatherings. The results of the survey are interesting. In Delhi 40.2 percent of the respondents said that between 15-20 percent of the food is wasted in such gatherings, while 40 percent in Ghaziabad Region opined that between 15-20 percent of the food is wasted in such gatherings. The overall results reveal that only 7.7 percent of the respondents said that the wastage is less than 5 percent, 12.5 percent of the respondents opined that wastage is between 5-10 percent, 19.8 percent indicated that the wastage is between 10 to 15 percent, 41.7 percent of the respondents were of the view that between 15-20 percent of the food served in social gatherings is wasted while 18.3 indicated that the wastage is between 20-25 percent. Thus nearly 60 percent of the respondents are of the view that food wastage in social gatherings is between 15-25 percent.

**Table 3.5: Quantum of Food Wasted (City Wise)**

Areas	Percent of food wastage				
	> 5 %	5% to 10%	10% to 15%	15%-20%	20 %-25%
Delhi	7.3	11.4	22.6	40.2	18.5
Gurgaon	7.0	10.0	21.0	42.0	20.0
Ghaziabad	9.6	15.4	16.9	40.0	18.1
Faridabad	6.7	13.2	18.7	44.7	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>41.7</b>	<b>18.3</b>

*Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA*

### 3.9 Quantum of Food Wastage and Age Group

The older the people the more social functions they have attended. They have also witnessed the change that has taken place over the years

both in terms of food and the way social functions are organised. When the respondents were asked to quantify food wastage in terms of percentage 22.2 percent of the respondents above 66 years of age said that between 20-25 percent of the food is wasted while 41.8 percent said that the wastage is between 15-20 percent. However they said that mostly it is in weddings. For all the age groups 18.3 percent of the respondents agreed that between 20-25 percent food is wasted while 41.7 percent said that the wastage was between 15-20 percent. On the other hand 19.8 percent of the respondents felt that the wastage was between 10-15 percent and 12.5 said its between 5-10 percent.

**Table 3.6: Quantum of Food Wasted (Age Wise)**

Age Group	> 5 %	5 to 10	10 to 15	15-20	20 -25%
< 20	6.4	18.0	23.8	46.5	5.3
21-35	6.5	11.5	16.9	40.8	24.3
36-50	7.5	8.7	22.6	40.5	20.7
51-65	11.3	14.0	16.8	38.9	19.0
> 66	7.0	10.3	18.7	41.8	22.2
<b>All</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>41.7</b>	<b>18.3</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

### 3.10 When Food Wastage is More?

Due to growing affluence in the society social functions particularly, weddings have come to reflect social status of the person. Big fat weddings are becoming a norm now. One can now see a large number of dishes in social functions. In Delhi itself 36,000 marriages took place on the same day.

**Table 3.7: When Food Wastage is More (City Wise)**

Areas	Reasons		
	Number of Dishes is more	Number of Guest is more	Both
Delhi	56.5	20.2	23.3
Gurgaon	58.9	17.9	23.2
Ghaziabad	61.5	21.5	16.9
Faridabad	49.2	23.7	27.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>56.6</b>	<b>20.6</b>	<b>22.8</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

Duplication of guests is common practice hence there is always a mismatch between the guests invited and the number of actual guests attending the wedding. The RSVP system does not work in our country. The

culture of confirmation of attendance is not prevalent hence this problem. 56.6 percent of the respondents blamed the excess number of dishes on the menu list for food wastage while 20.6 percent said it was because of the number of guests.

### 3.11 Occasion Wise Wastage of Food

People have many different eating occasions daily, the motivations for which will differ from one occasion to the next. Most studies investigate the factors that influence habitual food choice but it may be useful to investigate what influences food choice at different eating occasions. The effects of snacking on health have been debated widely. Evidence shows that snacking can have effect on food consumption.

**Table 3.8: Wastage of Food on Different Occasion**

Occasion	Level of food wastage					
	Area	Very High	High	Average	Less	Very Less
Marriages	Delhi	80.4	6.0	3.8	4.4	5.4
	Gurgaon	78.4	7.8	3.9	3.9	5.9
	Ghaziabad	78.3	11.7	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Faridabad	84.9	6.1	0.0	3.0	6.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>80.2</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>5.2</b>
Anniversary /Birthday Parties	Delhi	4.9	46.7	19.0	14.7	14.7
	Gurgaon	5.9	41.2	7.8	17.7	27.5
	Ghaziabad	5.0	35.0	21.7	23.3	15.0
	Faridabad	0.0	33.3	15.2	36.4	15.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>42.4</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>16.8</b>
Business Parties	Delhi	6.0	16.9	37.0	22.8	17.4
	Gurgaon	7.8	21.6	27.5	25.5	17.7
	Ghaziabad	13.3	16.7	26.7	23.3	20.0
	Faridabad	12.1	24.2	27.3	15.2	21.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>18.3</b>	<b>32.6</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>18.3</b>
Political Events	Delhi	7.6	20.1	17.4	35.9	19.0
	Gurgaon	5.9	25.5	29.4	23.5	15.7
	Ghaziabad	11.7	11.7	20.0	25.0	31.7
	Faridabad	9.1	15.2	36.4	15.2	24.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>18.9</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>29.9</b>	<b>21.3</b>
Conference/Seminars	Delhi	6.0	10.3	14.1	22.3	47.3
	Gurgaon	4.0	12.0	20.0	30.0	34.0
	Ghaziabad	3.3	10.0	31.7	20.0	35.0
	Faridabad	8.8	17.7	35.3	17.7	20.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>20.4</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>40.2</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

An analysis of the occasion wise survey data indicates that highest wastage of food takes place in weddings. According to 80.2 percent of the

respondents wastage of food is very high in marriages. 42.4 percent felt that there is high wastage of food during anniversary and birthday parties. In conferences and seminars the wastage is very less. Nearly 40.4 percent of the respondents are of this view. The reason being that conferences and seminars do not attract large crowds and the participation is limited to invitees only and no family members are invited. As a result it is easier to estimate the number of guests likely to attend the seminar or the conference.

### 3.12 Factors Responsible for Food Wastage

In trying to identify the exact reason that leads to food wastage a variety of factors were put forth to the respondents.

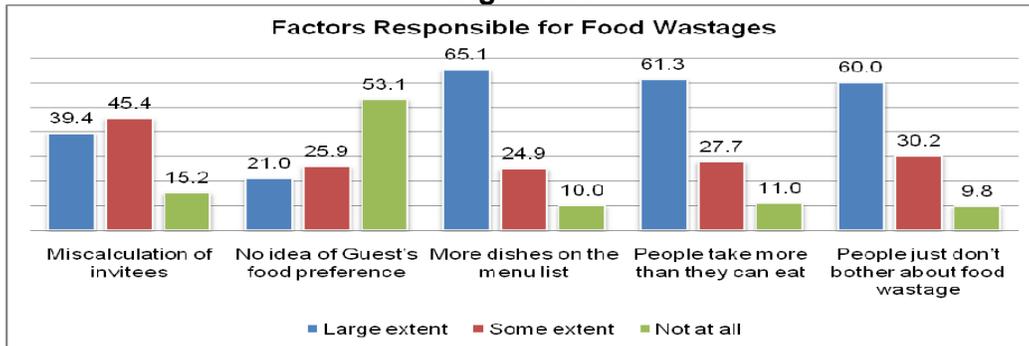
**Table 3.9: Factors Responsible for Food Wastage**

Factors	Area	Large extent	Some extent	Not at all
Miscalculation of invitees	Delhi	44.0	42.9	13.0
	Gurgaon	35.3	49.0	15.7
	Ghaziabad	30.0	51.7	18.3
	Faridabad	36.4	42.4	21.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>39.3</b>	<b>45.4</b>	<b>15.2</b>
No idea of Guest's food preference	Delhi	20.1	33.2	46.7
	Gurgaon	29.4	21.6	49.0
	Ghaziabad	18.3	11.7	70.0
	Faridabad	18.2	18.2	63.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>25.9</b>	<b>53.1</b>
More dishes on the menu list	Delhi	66.0	27.0	7.0
	Gurgaon	64.7	19.6	15.7
	Ghaziabad	61.7	23.3	15.0
	Faridabad	66.7	24.2	9.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>65.1</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>10.0</b>
People take more than they can eat	Delhi	62.0	27.7	10.3
	Gurgaon	64.7	23.5	11.8
	Ghaziabad	61.7	30.0	8.3
	Faridabad	51.5	30.3	18.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>61.3</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>11.0</b>
People just don't bother about food wastage (Insensitive)	Delhi	62.5	28.3	9.2
	Gurgaon	64.7	25.5	9.8
	Ghaziabad	55.0	36.7	8.3
	Faridabad	48.5	36.4	15.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>60.1</b>	<b>30.2</b>	<b>9.8</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

Miscalculation of invitees to some extent leads to food wastage (45.4). While 50.6 percent felt that it was due to large number of dishes on the menu list. It is also interesting to note that 51.5 percent of the respondent agreed that food is wasted as people take more than they can eat. People generally tend to fill their plates with the maximum number of food items that they can. However due to individual taste and preferences some food is not eaten at all. A large percentage of the respondents (60.1) hold people insensitive to food wastage as a reason. During discussions it was also revealed that no food is wasted during religious functions as it is considered to be 'prasad' However during marriages and social gatherings people do not bother about food wastage.

**Figure-3.1**



Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

### 3.13 Item Wise Food Wasted

Palatability is proportional to the pleasure someone experiences when eating a particular food. It is dependent on the sensory properties of the food such as taste, smell, texture and appearance. Sweet and high-fat foods have an undeniable sensory appeal. It is not surprising then that food is not solely regarded as a source of nourishment but is often consumed for the pleasure value it imparts. The influence of palatability on appetite and food intake in humans has been investigated in several studies. There is an increase in food intake as palatability increases, but the effect of palatability on appetite in the period following consumption is unclear. Increasing food variety can also increase food intake.

Therefore which item was wasted more was the next question of enquiry. Table 10 indicates the item wise wastage of food. Items like starters,

salad, vegetables, rice / pulao and chapatis are on the higher side of wastage. During discussions it was found that the shelf life or reuse value of the above mentioned items is less, therefore the more the wastage. Moreover by habit and choice Indians don't eat much raw vegetables as salad. They also like to have hot meals. No one wants to eat cold vegetables and rotis which increases the chances of wastage.

**Table 3.10: Item Wise Food Wasted**

Items	Level of wastage					
	>30%	<20 to 30	10 to 20	<10%	Not at all	No Response
Snacks/starters	7.3	13.6	29.2	39.0	2.8	8.1
Salads	20.2	16.9	25.7	25.9	4.3	7.0
Vegetables	17.9	32.0	35.5	6.7	1.2	6.7
Non Veg	4.7	11.3	15.0	18.3	40.7	10.0
Rice/Pulau/Biriyani	13.4	29.3	36.0	13.7	1.0	6.6
Chapattis/Breads	2.7	23.1	30.0	26.3	11.7	6.2
Sweet/Desserts	6.5	13.9	30.0	30.8	9.7	9.1

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

### 3.14 Stage Where More Food Wastage Takes Place

During social gatherings it has been observed that people generally want to eat as many items as they can. Every individual has his own taste and preferences. A number of items are taken in the plate. As a result food left over in plates is wasted. It is equally true that unserved food is also wasted. According to 50.4 percent of the respondents both served as well as unserved food is wasted. 39.0 percent of them said that food which is left over in plates is mainly wasted while 10.7 percent agreed that unserved food is also wasted.

**Table 3.11: Stage Where More Food Wastage Takes Place**

Area	Wastage pattern		
	Leftover in Plates	Unserved Food	Both
Delhi	35.0	9.0	56.1
Gurgaon	41.1	16.1	42.9
Ghaziabad	46.2	9.2	44.6
Faridabad	44.1	13.6	42.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>39.0</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>50.4</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

### 3.15 Packing of Unserved Food

It's fine to get the left over food packed in a restaurant or a hotel but applying the same practice to social functions, such as weddings is very awkward and does not reflect well on the individual. Young people find packing leftover banquet food an “embarrassing and greedy” practice.

It has been observed that in clubs, restaurants and hotels left over unserved food is wasted. This kind of wastage can be avoided if the restaurants / hotels / clubs are asked to pack the unserved food. The food can be eaten at home. Many of them ask the restaurants / hotels to pack the unserved food, so that it can be used later on. (70.7 percent) while 29.3 percent said they did not bother to carry unserved food with them. No specific reason was cited for this. Some of them said that the same food cannot be eaten twice. Some of them also said that they feel awkward to ask the staff to pack the left over food.

When asked to pack the left over food the staff normally did so. 85.5 percent of the respondents said that when they requested the restaurant/hotel staff to pack the food, the same was complied with while 14.7 percent said the request was denied to them by the staff. However it should be mandatory for the staff to pack the unserved food and hand it over to the customers.

**Table 3.12: Packing of Unserved Food (City wise)**

Area	Response	
	Yes	No
Delhi	71.8	28.3
Gurgaon	75.0	25.0
Ghaziabad	70.8	29.2
Faridabad	62.7	37.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>70.7</b>	<b>29.3</b>

*Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA*

In a restaurant the problem is that quite often the customers over order. However, some food waste is unavoidable when the portion served exceeds what one's stomach can handle. There's no point in trying to finish the food when one is full. Food is already wasted when you over order. It all boils down

to an individual's effort to reduce food portions. When buffet customers outnumber other customers during the peak period, food wastage increases twofold. Normally young couples tend to order everything on the menu even though there are just two eaters. In buffet, operators revealed that at least 10 to 20 per cent of prepared food goes waste. Buffets aside, food retailers such as restaurants also see wastage when customers unwittingly order more than what they can finish.

**Table 3.13: Customers Request to Pack Unserved Food**

Area	Response	
	Obedied the request	Denied to do so
Delhi	88.8	11.3
Gurgaon	83.3	16.7
Ghaziabad	89.1	10.9
Faridabad	67.6	32.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>85.3</b>	<b>14.7</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

### 3.16 Changes in the Pattern of Celebrations

There is no doubt that the way social functions are organized now is much different than what it used to be a decade back. Before the economic reforms, in a normal middle class family, except for a wedding, the social functions would be a low key affair normally limited to the family members. The food would generally be cooked at home and served by the family members. But now every function is to be celebrated in a grand manner and display of wealth is common. Family members are no more involved in cooking and feeding. Its taken over by event managers.

**Table 3.14: Change in Pattern of Celebrations (Last 10-15 year) (Age Wise)**

Age Group	Yes	No	Can't Say
< 20	66.7	16.7	25.0
21-35	83.2	5.4	10.1
36-50	84.6	5.4	10.0
51-65	87.3	5.6	8.5
> 66	79.3	10.3	10.3
<b>All</b>	<b>83.2</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>11.8</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

The respondents were asked about the changes that have taken place in the pattern of celebrations during the last 10-15 years. According to 83.2

percent of the respondents there has been a visible change in the pattern of celebrations. They also opined that now more money is spent, more items are on the menu list and more number of guests are invited. Its more of a display of ones wealth and social status. Organizing a party is an expensive affair.

If there has been a change in the nature and pattern of celebrating a social event then the question arises, is food wasted in such functions? The respondents were asked to compare the wastage of food in the social functions before and now. Only 9.9 percent of the respondents said that food was wasted in the past in social gathering while 86.1 percent of the respondent said that food is wasted in the present pattern of celebrations. They also said that earlier there was scarcity of resources but today affluence has taken over. People don't mind spending money.

**Table 3.15: Food Wastage During Present and Past Functions (Age Wise)**

Age Group	Past social function/marriage	Present social function/marriage	Don't Know
< 20	20.8	75.0	4.2
21-35	12.2	84.5	4.1
36-50	6.9	90.0	3.1
51-65	8.3	87.5	4.2
> 66	6.9	86.2	6.9
<b>All</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>86.1</b>	<b>4.0</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

With the rise in income there is a perceptible change in the pattern of celebrations in the last 10 to 15 years. 83.2 percent of the respondent agreed to this fact. Middle and older age group feel there is more wastage now (Table 3.16).

**Table-3.16 ChangeS in Pattern of Celebration (Last 10 to 15 Years) (City Wise)**

Area	Response		
	Yes	No	Can't Say
Delhi	80.7	4.9	14.4
Gurgaon	85.7	7.1	7.1
Ghaziabad	83.1	6.2	10.8
Faridabad	83.1	10.2	6.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>83.2</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>11.8</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

### 3.17 What has Changed

Now the question is what has really changed? On what item has the expenditure gone up in such social gatherings. The expenditure on food has gone up substantially. According to 87.6 percent of the respondents there is an increase in the number of traditional dishes being served (42.2 percent) while 34.5 percent indicated that such dishes had declined. 76.9 percent of the respondents opined that the number of continental dishes has increased. What is interesting is that majority of the respondents (80.6 percent) said that in social gatherings the number of dishes has increased manifold so also has the number of invitees. The data also reveals that due to the increase in the number of dishes, the consumption level has also come down. There are many guests who do not take food but take heavy snacks and other items hence food is left over. (Table 3.17)

**Table 3.17: What has Changed**

Pattern	Response on changing pattern		
	Increased	Decreased	Same
Expenditure on food	87.6	1.7	10.7
Traditional/ethnic dishes served	43.2	34.5	22.3
Continental dishes	76.9	7.4	15.6
No. of dishes served	81.6	4.2	14.1
No. of guests invited	58.8	16.4	24.8
Food Consumption level	32.0	40.5	27.5

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

A city wise analysis reveals that 86.1 percent of the respondents agreed that more food is wasted at present in social gatherings as compared to previous ones. The same response is there from all the four cities viz Delhi, Gurgaon, Ghaziabad and Faridabad.

**Table 3.18: Food Wastage: Present v/s Past Celebration (City wise)**

Area	Response		
	Past social function/ marriage	Present social function/ marriage	Don't Know
Delhi	9.4	86.6	4.0
Gurgaon	7.1	87.5	5.4
Ghaziabad	13.9	81.5	4.6
Faridabad	10.2	88.1	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>86.1</b>	<b>4.0</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

### 3.18 Wastage of Food by Different Methods of Serving

Besides providing abundance, the popular food culture encourages greed. Buffets, which gained popularity in the 1990s, are the best places to see copious amounts of food being blatantly wasted. Its all-you-can-eat concept encourages guests/customers to pile their plates with food. We take more than what we need in an urban society. Traditionally in our social gatherings the food was generally cooked and served by the family members. Slowly as joint family system started breaking, the dependence on the family members in organising social functions decreased. Moreover economic prosperity brought in number of changes in the way social functions were being organised. Caterers, hotels, restaurants came to play a prominent role. People started hiring the services of professionals. Urbanization added further to the problem. When asked as to the quantum of food wasted in social gatherings in which food was served by the family member, it was found that food was not wasted (56.1 percent) and only 25.3 percent said that food was wasted only to some extent.

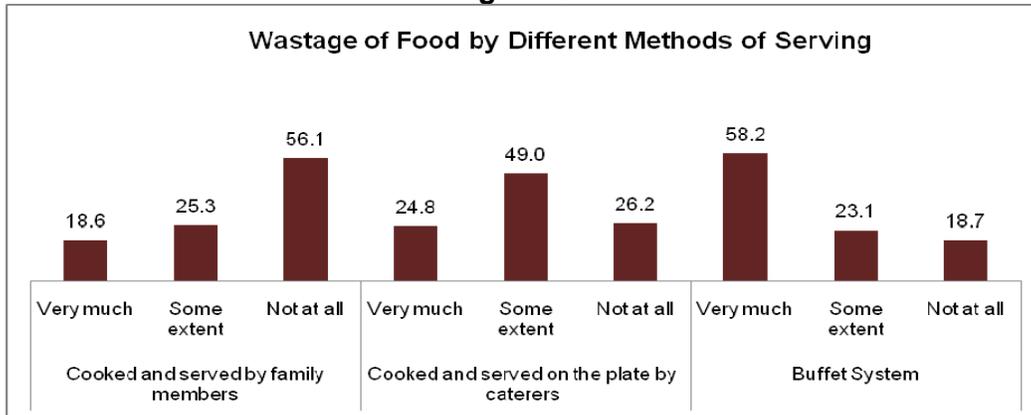
**Table 3.19 Wastage of Food by Different Methods of Serving**

Method	Response	Cities				
		Delhi	Gurgaon	Ghaziabad	Faridabad	G.Total
Cooked and served by family members	Very much	19.4	21.4	18.5	13.6	<b>18.7</b>
	Some extent	25.9	23.2	24.6	25.4	<b>25.3</b>
	Not at all	54.6	55.4	56.9	61.0	<b>56.1</b>
Cooked and served on the plate by caterers	Very much	23.3	25.0	27.3	27.1	<b>24.8</b>
	Some extent	47.5	53.6	50.0	49.2	<b>49.0</b>
	Not at all	29.1	21.4	22.7	23.7	<b>26.2</b>
Buffet System	Very much	57.8	62.5	54.7	59.3	<b>58.2</b>
	Some extent	24.2	14.3	25.0	25.4	<b>23.1</b>
	Not at all	17.9	23.2	20.3	15.3	<b>18.7</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

While in the case of food served by the caterers majority of the respondents viewed that food was wasted to some extent. However in the case of buffet system 58.2 percent of the respondents said that lot of food was wasted in this. It was also revealed that when food was served by the family members or the caterers the quantity served is less. On the other hand people tend to take more food in the buffet system. The wastage of food is higher by children in this method of serving.

**Figure-3.2**



Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

### 3.19 Factors Behind Extravagance Social Gatherings

Household income and the cost of food is an important factor influencing food choice, especially for low-income groups. The potential for food waste leads to a reluctance to try 'new' foods for fear the family will reject them. There is no doubt that the cost of food is a primary determinant of food choice. Whether cost is prohibitive depends fundamentally on a person's income and socio-economic status. Low-income groups have a greater tendency to consume unbalanced diets. However, access to more money does not automatically equate to a better quality food.

Accessibility to market place is another important physical factor influencing food choice, which is dependent on resources such as transport and geographical location. Food tends to be more expensive in cities compared to rural areas. As the economic status of an individual rises he spends more on social gatherings and celebrations. Economic boom has added to extravagance.

The respondents were asked to rank in order of importance on a scale of 1-4 the reasons for spending on social gathering. Majority of the respondents attributed the factor as status symbol. In today's economic prosperity and competition people tend to display their wealth and flaunt their social status. The respondents also felt that there was tremendous social

pressure or pressure from their relatives which made them spend a lot of money.

**Table 3.20 Factors Behind Extravagance in Social Gatherings**

Factors	Score	Rank
Status Symbol	3.4	1
Economic Prosperity	2.5	3
Social/ Relative Pressure	3.1	2
Competition to do better	2.4	4
Social networking	1.3	5

*Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA*

Economic prosperity was the next attribute. By and large people are better off after economic liberalization. People have higher disposable income in their pocket and they can afford to spend money. The rising prosperity of the middle class has added to the spending pattern. Competition to do better and networking as factors have remained low.

### 3.20 Knowledge about Guest Control Orders

Some steps were taken in the 1960's to curb expenditure in social gatherings. Restrictions were imposed on the number of guests that could be invited. The respondents when asked whether they knew about the guest control order showed ignorance about it (85.1 percent). They also said that they had never heard about Guest Control Order. However 11.9 percent of the respondent knew about the guest control order. They were generally the older respondents. They also said the Guest Control Order was good and quite effective. But they also agreed that now the society and its values have changed. This kind of step may not be effective now (Table 28).

**Table 3.21 Knowledge about Guest Control Orders (City wise)**

Area	Response		
	Yes	No	Don't No
Delhi	14.8	83.4	1.8
Gurgaon	7.1	87.5	5.4
Ghaziabad	10.8	86.2	3.1
Faridabad	6.8	88.1	5.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>85.1</b>	<b>3.0</b>

*Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA*

### 3.21 Need to Control Food Wastage and Ostentatious Behaviour

*The Hindu* -CNN-IBN survey of 2006 provides evidence on the nutritional quality of food and the extent of food deprivation. A majority report that the quality of their food intake is better than what it was 10 years ago and better than what their parents ate. The same is true of the intake of nutritional ingredients such as milk for children, and pulses and cereals. Many scholarly studies have pointed to the decline or stagnation in the consumption of pulses and cereals, but this is not reflected in the perceptions of the people. But there is an underclass comprising the bottom one-fifth that reports a decline in the quality of food consumption.

The most alarming signal from this survey comes in response to a question about the experience of hunger. As many as 35 per cent say that, at least once during the last year, they or someone in their family could not have two square meals a day. Seven per cent say this happened 'often.' This incidence is higher among the Dalits, the Adivasis, and the urban and rural poor. The survey is a reminder that hunger is not related only to natural calamities or famine. It is a living everyday reality in our country. In this scenario there is a need to control food wastage.

There is no doubt that by and large people seem to be concerned about food wastage and ostentatious behaviour during social gatherings. 93.1 percent of the respondents said that there is a need to control food wastage. (Table 3.22)

**Table 3.22 Need to Control Food Wastage and Ostentatious Behaviour**  
(City wise)

Area	Response		
	Yes	No	Can't Say
Delhi	91.9	4.0	4.0
Gurgaon	92.9	1.8	5.4
Ghaziabad	95.4	1.5	3.1
Faridabad	94.9	1.7	3.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>93.1</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

However when asked how effective will be the government intervention to control food wastage in the form of order or legislation be, only 49.4 percent

say that the government will be able to control food wastage through legislation or some control order. Most of them agreed that food wastage is a social problem. If the government brings about any legal instructs to control food wastage it will be ineffective due to corruption and other reasons. (Table 3.23)

**Table 3.23 Effectiveness of Policies/Orders to Restrict Guests/Dishes (City wise)**

Area	Response		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Delhi	49.3	31.8	18.8
Gurgaon	48.2	41.1	10.7
Ghaziabad	47.7	33.9	18.5
Faridabad	52.5	22.0	25.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>49.4</b>	<b>32.0</b>	<b>18.6</b>

*Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA*

People can always insist on simple weddings, but this is more difficult as community and parental pressure can be hard to bear. The community itself has to do something. There is one community (just 2 percent of our population) which is trying to contain this terrible malaise in our society. Last year, Sikh leaders suggested guidelines to curb lavish wedding expenses. A group of Sikh leaders called for a meeting of representatives from New Delhi's more than 400 Sikh gurdwaras, to discuss ways to rein in over-the-top weddings. The Sikh leaders said the deluxe wedding trend puts an unfair burden on brides' families, who traditionally pay for the parties.

Some years earlier even Kolkata's Marwari community had guidelines to reduce "wasteful expenditure". Somehow whenever any community leader tries to do something like this, a whole lot of people protest as they feel that the community is trying to curb their freedom to spend. Certainly, a man is entitled to spend his money on whatever he wants, but there is such a thing as social responsibility. In fact after Sikh leaders had issued those statements, the media started, criticizing them for curbing people's freedom. One of the leaders who was interviewed categorically said this was not meant for those who can afford it.

### **3.22 Effective Measures to Minimise Food Wastage**

The important question is how you tackle the problem of wastage of food in social gatherings. It has become a sensitive issue. People feel it is their right to spend their hard earned money the way they like. The media and the expansion of information technology can play a role as educator. Majority of the respondents are of the view that it can be controlled by a mass awareness campaign. People need to be educated about food habits and how a developing economy like India cannot afford to waste so much of food when millions of people are malnourished. (Table 3.24)

Studies indicate that the level of education can influence dietary behaviour during adulthood. Thus, it is important to convey accurate and consistent messages through various media, on good eating habits. Even though the respondents agree that food is wasted during social gatherings and there is a need to control this, they are not in favour of a new legislation to control food wastage during social gatherings. Any new legislation will not be effective and would only lead to harassment and corruption by the enforcement agencies. Moreover they were of the view that when the Guest Control Order was enforced in the 1960's Indian society was very different. The economy and the value system was different. Poverty was extreme. But the country is having an economic boom today. People have money and resources to spend. On a scale of 1-4 the most preferred option is to raise the awareness among the people about food wastage. Educating the people is the best solution. The next option they say is to restrict the number of dishes and then comes the option of controlling the number of guests being invited to social gatherings.

Bringing a new legislation or the lines of the guest control order of 1960 is the least preferred option. The respondents were of the view that India is not what it was in the 1960's. Rapid urbanization, increased mobility and access to better services has changed the way people live. Hence any legislation will prove counter productive. The respondents felt that instead of bringing in a new law to check food wastage in social gathering it would be better to restrict the number of dishes. This has been tried in J&K but due to

litigation it has not been an effective mechanism. Therefore the preferred option is to launch a massive awareness campaign.

**Table 3.24 Effective Measures to Minimizing Food Wastage (Preference Wise) (1 – Most Preferred; 4 – Least Preferred)**

Measures	Score	Rank
By bringing a new Act	1.6	4
By limiting the number of guests	2.2	3
By restricting the number of dishes	2.5	2
By educations & mass awareness campaign	2.6	1

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

### 3.23 Legal Measures Encroach upon Social Life

The respondents were not in favor of any legal mechanism to control food wastage in social gatherings. 54.8 percent of the respondents say that it will affect an individuals right, 52.4 percent say that such a measure will amount to government interference in private matters, while 46.2 say that it amounts to government interference in cultural matters. However 50.2 percent of the respondents did not think so. By and large the respondents did not want any legislative instrument as it would only create problems on an auspicious occasion.

**Table 3.25 Legal Measures Encroach upon Social Life**

Particulars	Response		
	Yes	No	Can't say
Affect an individual's right to privacy	54.8	43.2	2.0
Leads to interference in private matter	52.4	45.2	2.5
Leads to interference in cultural matter	46.2	50.1	3.7

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

### 3.24 Who can be Effective in Minimising Food Wastage

The respondents were asked as to who can play a major role in minimising food wastage. The respondents say that it is the individual who can play the major role as he has to have self control and self discipline (77.4 percent). 53.1 percent of them said that the wedding planners / caterers can play a role to some extent. The government as well as the NGO's can also play some role in minimising food wastage, by educating the people.

**Table 3.26 Who can be Effective in Minimising Food Wastage**

Stakeholders	Response		
	Large extent	Some extent	Not at all
Individuals	77.4	17.4	5.2
Wedding Planners/Event Management/Caterers	31.3	53.1	15.6
Government	34.0	43.4	22.6
NGOs/VCOs	19.9	48.4	31.8

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

Simply informing people about the nature and extent of the problem and providing simple strategies to reduce waste is unlikely to be successful. Most people are aware that they waste a significant amount of food and know what kinds of behaviour are likely to help them reduce their waste. The problem is not a lack of awareness but of translating this into behavior change.

### 3.25 Government Should Control Food Wastage in Public Sector Organisation

The respondents overwhelming by said that the government should control food wastage in various public sector undertakings and departments (85.1 percent). They were of the view that lavish parties are thrown in these organizations at the cost of public exchequer which not only amounts to food wastage but also wastage of public funds. The respondents said that the government should first control wastage in all public sector organizations.

**Table 3.27 Government Should Control Food Wastage in Public Sector Organizations**

Area	Yes	No	Don't Know
Delhi	80.3	7.6	12.1
Gurgaon	83.9	7.1	8.9
Ghaziabad	95.4	3.1	1.5
Faridabad	93.2	1.7	5.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>85.1</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>8.9</b>

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

### 3.26 Loss Due to Food Wastage

Food wastage leads to loss of individuals money (57.1 percent) while 73.2 percent of them felt that food wastage can be avoided and it can be used to feed the hungry. It resulted in wastage of valuable natural resources while majority of them 64.3 percent felt that it results in loss of individuals money, loss of valuable natural resources and the same could be used to feed the hungry.

**Table 3.28 Loss Due to Food Wastage**

Area	Very much	Some extent	Not at all
Loss of Individual's Money	57.1	34.7	8.2
Can be used to feed hungry people	73.2	22.1	4.7
Loss of valuable natural resources	58.6	36.7	4.7
All of them	64.3	30.0	5.7

*Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA*

By and large people are concerned about food wastage and ostentatious behaviour during social gatherings. The rising consumer culture is one of the major reasons for vulgar display of wealth. Spending in social gatherings is being attributed to one's social status. However the respondents say that the individual should be targeted to ensure that food wastage is minimised. This can be achieved by educating people about food wastage and its consequences on the society at large.

## Response of Field Supervisors of Delhi Waste Management Company on Food Wastage

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### 4.1 Introduction

The amount of waste generated by any country is directly proportional to its population and the mean living standards of the people. As per the last census of India, the Indian population was 1027 million with about 5161 urban cities and towns contributing up to 28 percent of the total population. A constant rate of increase of about 30 percent per decade in the number of town/cities urbanized is something to be considered with utmost diligence, since it is the urban areas, which mostly contribute to the waste generation. The situation grows even starker from the observation that the per capita waste generation in India has been rising by about 1-1. percent annually over the past few decades and the population itself has been rising at an annual rate of 1.2-1.percent.

Organic or food waste is one of the main constituents of the total urban waste generated. There are numerous places which are the sources of large amounts of food waste. These places include hotels, restaurants, barat ghars, residential societies, college/school/office canteens, religious mass cooking places, airline caterers, food and meat processing industries and vegetable markets which generate organic waste of considerable quantum on a daily basis. During the festive seasons like weddings large amount of food is thrown into the municipal bins.

The Union Territory of Delhi with a population of around 18 million is one of the biggest metropolises of the world. The urban population increases at 3.5 percent per annum and the per capita waste generated in the city increases at 1.3 percent per year. Poor Solid Waste Management practices affect the health and amicability of Metropolis in many ways like transmitting diseases among residents and environmental degradation, including emission

of green house gases from land fills etc. On account of tremendous increase in population and increase in per capita income, generation of domestic waste has increased considerably. It is estimated that the quantity of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) would reach 17,000 – 25,000 MT per day by 2021.

There are three agencies responsible for Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) management in Delhi namely the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) and the Delhi Cantonment Board (DCB). About 49% of the total population of Delhi lives in slum areas, unauthorized colonies and about 860 JJ Clusters with 4,20,000 Jhuggies. A sizeable population therefore lives in unplanned areas having no proper system of collection, transportation and disposal of Municipal Solid wastes. As per the Municipal Solid Waste (Management & Handling) Rules 2000 the collection, segregation, storage, transportation, processing and disposal of MSW is the responsibility of the local bodies. It is also the obligatory function of MCD to provide receptacles, depots and places for waste disposal. MCD is helped by various agents in private sector. MCD uses waste receptacles of two types i.e. neighbourhood dalaos and street dustbins of different designs and sizes. There are open sites in some locations.

The Municipal Solid Waste operation under MCD is by far the biggest in the Union Territory with more than 50,000 employees. The comprehensive operation of street cleaning; waste transportation and waste disposal is done by MCD. The secondary collection and transportation of MSW from the receptacles (dalaos) is done through private concessionaires in six zones and in four zones the secondary collection and transportation of garbage is done by the Corporation involving a large number of staff; mobile equipment and plant. The primary collection of the garbage is done by the residents themselves.

Twenty landfill sites have been developed since 1975 of which 15 have already been closed and two have been suspended. There are at present three landfill sites in operation:

**Table-4.1 Waste in Delhi**

Sl. No.	Name of SLF site	Location	Area	Start Year	Waste Received	Zones
1	Bhalaswa	North Delhi	21.06 Ha	1993	2200 TPD	Civil Line, Karol Bagh, Rohini, West and Najafgarh
2	Ghazipur	East Delhi	29.16 Ha	1984	2000 TPD	Shahdara (North), Shah. (South), City, Sadar Paharganj & NDMC area
3	Okhla	South Delhi	16.20 Ha	1994	1200 TPD	Central, South, Najafgarh and Cantonment area

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

An organic waste convertor which can convert 500 kg of biodegradable kitchen waste into compost has been installed in Delhi Government Secretariat and at Maurya Hotel and its use is being popularised in hospitals, hotels, hostels, Cooperative Group Housing Societies to reduce the load on the receptacles / dalaos.

Technological development in handling municipal solid waste has been fairly modest and no significant breakthrough has been achieved. Land filling of waste which has been the dominant waste disposal option for centuries still remains the dominant waste disposal method in Delhi. The per capita expenditure in waste management in Delhi estimated in 2003-04 is Rs.268.1 whereas it should not be more than ` 259 per capita and therefore there is a need to invest more in mechanization of services and reduction in staff.

**Table- 4.2 Municipal Solid Waste Overview**

Agency	Area Sq. Km)	Population (Million)	Waste Generation (MT/Day)	LanHfill (MT/Day)	Composting (MT/Day)
MCD	1399	13.8	7000	5500-6000	350-400
NDMC	42.8	4.5	250	170	80
Delhi Cantonment Board	43	0.13	60	60	0

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

## **4.2 Delhi Waste Management Ltd.**

This is one of the leading waste management companies, handling solid waste management in Delhi for Municipal Corporation of Delhi. It is responsible for providing service of waste collection, segregation, transportation to resource services to over 5 million people and thousands of business establishments in Delhi. DWM manages 778 waste storage depots, with 80 hydraulic vehicles including compactors, dumper placers and hook loaders and handles approximately 5,40,000 tons of solid waste. The whole task of collection, segregation and transportation is given shape by a team of field supervisors – 45 in number, office/tech. staff – 42 in number, drivers – 50 in number, helpers – 60 in number and dhalao workers – 500 in number. All the 16 wards have been divided into 4 sets of 4 wards each and have been put under the governance of a team leader. Under every team leader there is a set of field supervisors who are responsible for the management of waste collection.

### **4.2a Waste Storage Depots and Street Corner Bins**

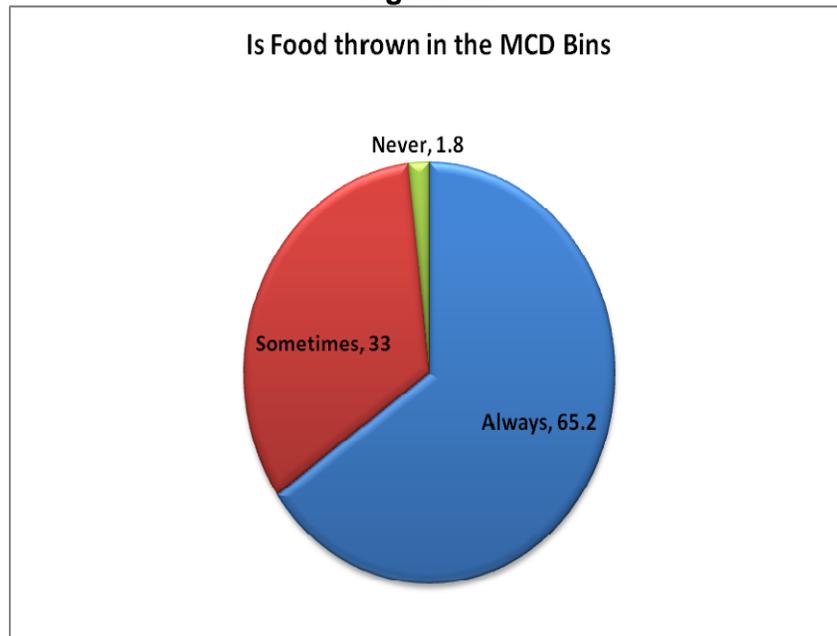
The waste storage depots have been reconstructed, repaired and maintained. Each waste storage depot is usually looked after by 3 people. The waste is not thrown on the floor of the WSD as was the practice earlier but is stored in bins. There are separate bins for wet and dry waste. The capacity of each bin is 1100ltrs. Each WSD contains 8 to 12 bins. Water, electricity and drainage connections have also been provided in the WSDs. All the waste is collected daily from the WSDs and nothing is left. Street Corner Bins have been placed for the purpose of waste collection in the residential colonies, commercial establishments and other institutions. There are separate bins for wet and dry waste. The bins have been placed after consultation with the local residents. The bins are properly looked after and are repaired from time to time according to the requirement.

## Field Data Analysis

### 4.3 Response of Field Supervisors of Delhi Waste Management Ltd (DWM)

In order to find out the level of food waste in general season and marriage season, 18 out of 45 supervisors of Delhi Waste Management Ltd were interviewed to collect information about food that goes into MCD bin, located at different places. The Delhi Waste Management Company is a private limited company which is handling the sanitation project of MCD in three zone (South zone, City zone and Central zone). These supervisors are deployed at the ward level of different zones. The response of the supervisors has been analysed below.

**Figure 4.1**

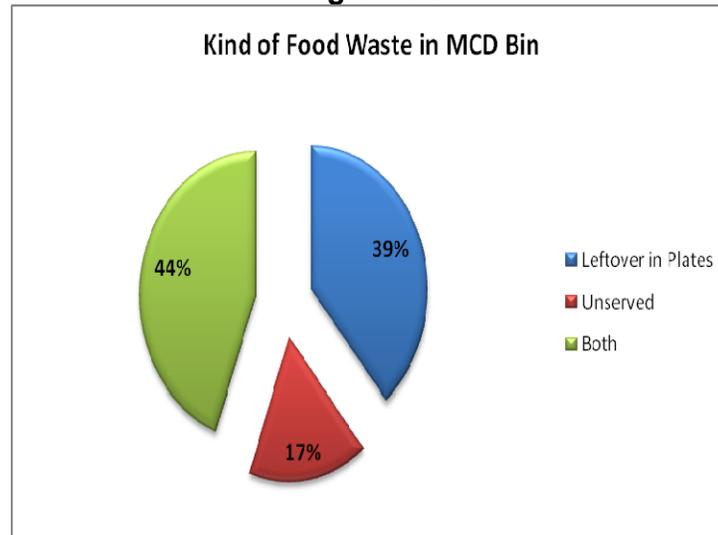


*Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA*

The supervisors were asked about food being thrown into MCD bins. 65.2 percent of the respondents say that food is always thrown into the bins while 33 percent say sometimes food is thrown into bins. A large majority of the respondents agree that food is thrown into bins.

#### 4.4 Kind of Food Wastage

Figure 4.2



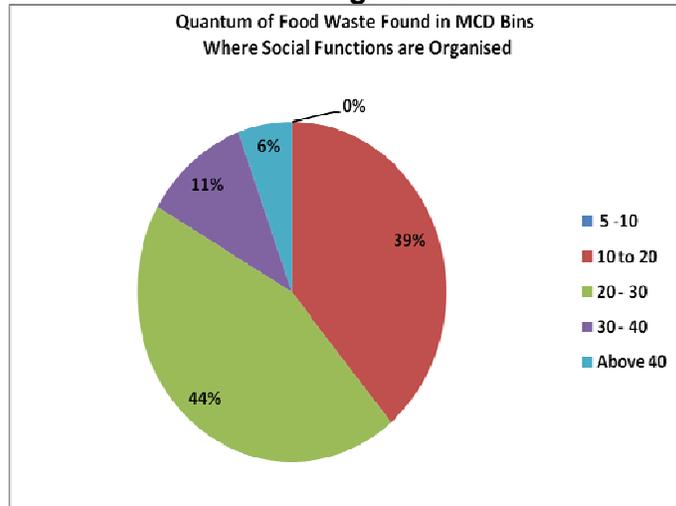
Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

The food that is thrown into the bins is mixed one therefore it is difficult to identify the sources. The respondents agreed that food is thrown in the MCD bins but were not able to specify whether the food is that which has been left over in plates or which was unserved. 44.4 percent were of the view that it is mixed one, both from the plates as well as the unserved food. While nearly 39 percent of the respondents said that the food thrown in bins is the one which is leftover in plates.

#### 4.5 Quantum of Waste

The bins located near the place of social gatherings are the best to assess the quantum of food thrown away. According to 44.4 percent of the respondents after the social gathering, particularly wedding, nearly 20-30 percent of the waste in the bins consists of food while 38.9 percent of them said that the bins consist of 10-20 percent of food. Table 4.5 indicates the quantum of food found in MCD Bins after social gatherings particularly marriages.

**Figure 4.3**

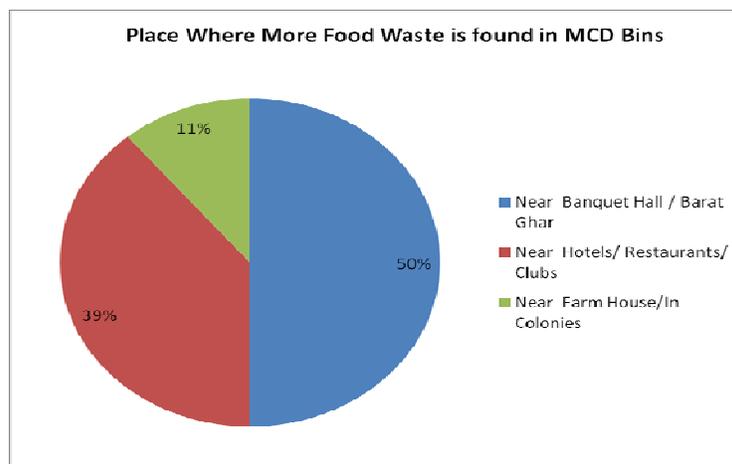


Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

#### 4.6 Place Where More Food Waste is Found in MCD Bins

In major parts of Delhi weddings are not held in the residences anymore. There are a variety of places where marriages and other social functions are held like Banquet Halls, Barat Ghars, Hotels, Clubs, Restaurants and Farm Houses. The next question of enquiry was as to where more wastage is found. More food waste is found mainly in bins located near barat ghars / banquet halls according to 50 percent of the respondents. 38.9 percent agreed that it is found in bins located near hotels and restaurants and 11.1 percent said in the bins located near the farm houses. They also said that generally farm houses bury the wasted food in compost pits within their premises. Some of the Banquet halls also do this.

**Figure 4.4**



#### 4.7 Specific Food Items Found in MCD Bins

The supervisors were asked to specify as to mainly which food item is thrown away in to the bins by the organizers of social functions. According to them salad, vegetable, dal, rice, roti are thrown away in large quantity of all the food found in the bins 20-30 percent consists of vegetables and rice opined 55.6 percent of the respondents. During summers perishable items like vegetables, rice and dal are found more in the MCD Bins.

**Table 4.3 Specific Food Items Wise Found in MCD Bins**

Items	Quantum of Food Waste in MCD Bins			
	<10%	10 to 20	20 - 30	>30%
Snacks	72.2	16.7	11.1	0.0
Salad	33.3	61.1	5.6	0.0
Vegetables /Dal	16.7	16.7	55.6	11.1
Non-veg	33.3	38.9	22.2	5.6
Rice item	0.0	27.8	55.6	16.7
Roti /Chapati	50.0	33.3	11.1	5.6

Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA

#### 4.8 Seasonal Variation of Food Wastage

In order to understand the seasonal variation of food found in the MCD bins the next question they were asked was to differentiate the quantum of food thrown in general season and wedding season. According to 42.4 percent of the respondents during normal times less than 10 percent of all the waste consists of food while 46.4 percent said that it is between 10-20 percent. During the wedding season the quantum of food in the bins goes up. 55.6 percent said it is between 20-30 percent while 22.2 percent said it ranges between 30-40 percent and 5.6 opined that it above 40 percent. However they also clarified that it also includes the food waste that is generated during cooking which includes vegetables etc. Thus from the field data it is clear that large amount of food is thrown away during wedding seasons in Delhi alone.

The response of the field supervisors indicates the during the wedding seasons large amount is thrown into the MCD bins. There is also a seasonal variation to the quantum of waste. According to them mainly perishable items like salad, vegetables, dal, rice and rotis are found in the MCD bins located near the places where weddings are held.

During discussions they also agreed that this waste should be avoided when poor people sleep hungry. They also revealed that at times they see the street children picking up food items from these bins.

**Table 4.4 Quantum of Food Wasted found in MCD Bins in Different Seasons**

Season	Quantum of Wastage in MCD Bin				
	<10%	10 to 20	20 - 30	30 - 40	Above 40 %
In general seasons	42.4	46.4	11.1	0.0	0.0
In marriage seasons	0.0	16.7	55.6	22.2	5.6

*Source: Field Survey, Centre for Consumer Studies, IIPA*

Therefore to conclude, a brief interaction with the field supervisors reveals that food is thrown into the MCD bins. It is higher during the marriage seasons and the bins near the venue of a social event have more food as waste. At times the bins have food waste as high as 30- 40 percent. The food thrown into the bins consist of both that is leftover in plates and also the unserved food.

## Findings and Recommendations

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### 5.1 Background

The present study has been undertaken by the Centre for Consumer Studies, Indian Institution of Public Administration, New Delhi on the request of the Department of Consumer Affairs, GoI. The Broad objectives of the study are; to assess the extent of food wasted in social gatherings like marriages/parties/conferences etc; to find out the attitudes and behavior of the individuals that might be related to food wastage; to assess the socio-demographic and economic impact of food wastage during social functions and to suggest policy guidelines to minimize food wastage in social gatherings.

The study covered NCR Delhi and was conducted in Delhi, Gurgaon, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Noida. For the sake of convenience Ghaziabad and Noida were taken as one unit. The sample size included 410 respondents from the hospitality industry (food services sector like hotels, restaurants, banquets halls, barat ghars, farm houses and institutions). Apart from this 410 respondents from a cross section of the society were also approached to elicit their views. The supervisory officers of Delhi Waste Management Company that is assigned the task of solid waste management in Delhi were also approached. The Sample size consisted of 18 Field Supervisors out of 45.

Three sets of structured questionnaires were administered to the respondents to elicit their views about food wastage and related issues. Apart from this focus group meeting were organized. Discussions were also held with experts in the area. As such study has not been conducted before there was a lack of primary as well as secondary data. Information was also collected from various websites and blogs on the internet which was quite useful.

## 5.2 General Observations

- 1) Due to the rising economic prosperity in the country, the Indian middle class is getting more and more affluent. As a result the number of social functions is also growing both in terms of volume and extravagance. Globalisation has changed the taste and preferences of the people hence more number of dishes in a social gathering.
- 2) Due to the booming economy the elites organise social functions especially weddings, where money is not a hindrance. Due to the extravagance of social functions the hospitality industry has grown by leaps and bounds and is providing employment to lakhs of people. Event managers, wedding planners and professionals are now being hired to organize social functions.
- 3) Social functions, particularly marriages, are now opportunities for the elites to showcase their wealth and status. Greater aspirations have also fuelled the trend to have luxurious weddings and the middle class is trying to emulate the elite.
- 4) The expenditure pattern of the Indian middle class on social functions is changing. Those who belong to the top economic class have a tradition to spend lavishly. But now the rising middle class is also spending freely on social gatherings due to the rise in disposable income. The economically lower strata of the society are forced to imitate the middle class in terms of expenditure and extravagance in social functions
- 5) The trend of organizing the social functions at homes and by the family members is changing. People's taste's and preferences are changing and now more and more of them organize social functions at hotels, restaurants, fast food chains, farm houses or clubs. They prefer to hire caterers and event managers to organize their functions, which increases the expenditure on social functions.

- 6) Weddings in India are known for their lavish décor and unrestrained celebrations. It's an occasion where people display their wealth, social status and standing in the society. Food constitutes a major part of the expenditure and the weddings are known for their sumptuous food. Any wedding is considered incomplete without delicious food. Today the number of dishes at times is 100 – 150.
- 7) But it is also true that one thing which is often neglected at most Indian social gatherings is food wastage. Lot of food is often wasted knowingly or unknowingly. Most people lay stress in menu planning and the variety of food items while food wastage is never even considered. People do not mind throwing away food but the menu has to be extensive during the social gathering as it would affect their honour and respect in the society.
- 8) While millions in the country do not get proper two square meals the affluent sections of the society are engaging in ostentatious behavior in social gatherings. To display their power, prestige and status in the society they do not bother about wasting money as well as food.

### 5.3 Major Findings

To understand the problem the entire report has to be taken into consideration but based on the overall results of the survey the major findings are given below:

- 1) 93.4 percent of the respondents say that food is wasted in social gatherings and food wastage is generally an urban phenomenon according to 77.9 percent of the respondents but catching up in the rural areas.
- 2) 89.1 percent of the respondents say that food wastage is very high during marriages. And 50 percent say that it is least during seminars and conferences. 32.5 percent say that food wastage during anniversaries and birthday celebrations is high.
- 3) Majority of the respondents (72.6 percent) say that food wastage is very high when the number of dishes is more while 57.4 percent of the

respondents say that when the number of guests is more, food wastage is high.

- 4) As far as the reasons for food wastage are concerned 72.6 percent are of the view that it is mainly due to large number of dishes on the menu. 67.9 percent say people take more than they can eat while 67.3 percent say people are insensitive towards food wastage and just don't bother about it. 45.9 percent say miscalculation of invitees results in food wastage to some extent.
- 5) The stage at which food wastage takes place is important. 49.5 percent say food wastage consists of both food leftover in plates and food that is un served. On the other hand 35.5 percent say that food is left over in plates while 15.2 are of the view that un served food is wasted.
- 6) What percentage of the total food in a social gathering is wasted? 18 percent of the respondents say that food wastage is between 20-25 percent, 43.3 percent say it is between 15-20 percent, 17.3 percent of the respondents say it is between 10-15 percent 14.8 percent say the wastage is between 5-10 percent and a small section of the respondents (6.7 percent) say that food wastage is less than 5 percent. Therefore 63.3 percent of the respondents say that between 15-25 percent of the food in social gatherings is wasted. Taking into consideration the population of the country and the volume of social functions being organized the wastage of food is on the higher side.
- 7) 88.3 percent of the respondents agree that the nature and pattern of celebrations has changed in the last 10-15 years. 92.7 say that due to this change in the celebrations the expenditure on food has gone up. 84.6 percent say that there has been an increase in the number of continental dishes but by and large there is no change in the traditional dishes that are served in the social functions. 89.7 percent agree that the number of dishes has increased while 41.5 percent say that the number of guests has also increased. However what is interesting is that 51 percent of the

respondents say that inspite of this increase the food consumption level has decreased.

- 8)** A majority of the respondents, ie 83.2 % say that in the present social functions more food is wasted and people indulge in ostentatious behavior. The way the food is served also leads to wastage. 75.0 percent of the respondents say that food wastage is high in the buffet system which is generally the western system. 44.1 percent say there is no wastage in food that is cooked and served by the family members as used to happen traditionally. Similarly 60.1 percent are of the view that food is not wasted when it is served by the caterers or the staff members.
- 9)** Why do people indulge in extravagance behaviour in a social function? The major factor relates to social status. People tend to spend more keeping in view their power and prestige in the society. They would like to show their standing in the society. Members of the hospitality industry identify the second next important factor to be the competition to do better while the respondents from the cross section of the society say that because of societal and relative pressure people tend to spend more.
- 10)** People by and large are in favour of controlling of food wastage in social gatherings. 95 percent say this. 52.9 percent agree that government polices/ orders will be effective in controlling food wastage. However 83.1 percent of the respondents are not aware about any Guest Control Order.
- 11)** Given a set of preferences to minimize food wastage, the respondents did not favour any new legislation to control food wastage but ranked mass awareness programmes as the first option. The second preferred option was to restrict the number of dishes in a social function. Limiting the number of guests and bringing about a new legislation were the least preferred options.
- 12)** There appears to be a mixed reaction as to what extent the legal mechanism will interfere in people's social life. 55.6 percent say that it will interfere in the individual's right to privacy. 54.5 percent are of the view

that any legal measure to control food wastage will amount to interference in private matters of an individual and 48.5 percent feel that it will amount to interference in cultural affairs of the people.

**13)** 81.1 percent of the respondents say that it is the individual alone who can minimize food wastage. The respondents from the hospitality industry say that the individual who organizes the social event has to limit his expenditure and not indulge in extravagance while the respondents from the cross section of the society say that the individual should take as much as he can eat and not waste food. 53.8 are of the view that the hospitality industry can minimize food wastage to some extent, 43.1 percent say that the government has a role to play in minimizing food wastage while 30.1 percent are of the view that the NGO's can also play a role in this.

**14)** 56.3 percent of the respondents from the hospitality industry say that in this modern era when the economy is booming, any restriction on the number of guest or the dishes will affect their business. As a result the costs will go up further to increase the profit margin and also affect the livelihood of thousands of people dependent on the hospitality service industry.

**15)** After a social event 70.7 percent of the respondents from the cross section of the society say that they ask the staff to pack the leftover food to be consumed later and 85.3 percent say the request has been complied with.

**16)** 85.1 percent of the respondents from the cross section of the society say that government should control food wastage in departments and public sector undertaking as it amounts to wasting public money

**17)** According to 62.2 percent of the Field Supervisors of Delhi Waste Management Company food is always thrown into MCD Bins. 44.4 percent say both unserved and food leftover in the plates is thrown into the bins. As per the quantum of food found in bins placed near the venue of social gatherings 44.4 percent say it is between 20-30 percent while 11.1 percent

say it is between 30-40 percent. 50 percent say that more food wastage is found in bins near Banquet Hall / Barat Ghar and 38.9 percent say in the bins near hotels/ restaurants and clubs. According to them there is high wastage of rice, vegetable and dal. During general seasons the food wastage in bins is normally less than 20 percent but during the marriage seasons it goes up to as high as 40 percent of the total waste.



## 5.4 Findings: Response of Hospitality Industry

- 1) 91.7 percent of the respondents say that food is wasted in social gatherings and more food is wasted in urban areas (61.1 percent).
- 2) 17.6 percent say that food wastage is between 20-25 percent, 49.9 percent say that it is between 15-20 percent, 14.7 percent say it is between 10-15 percent. 17.2 percent say the food wastage is between 5-10 percent. Data reveals that 62.5 percent say it is between 15-25 percent.
- 3) 98 percent of the respondents say food wastage is very high in marriages and very less in conferences and seminars (59.8 percent).
- 4) 74.9 percent of the respondents say that food wastage is high when the number of guest is more. But food wastage is higher when the number of dishes is more (74.6 percent).
- 5) 80 percent respondents say food wastage is to a large extent when the number of dishes is more. 72.6 say food wastage is more because people take more than they can eat. According to 74.5 percent of the respondents people just don't bother about food wastage. They are insensitive to food wastage.
- 6) 93.9 percent of the respondents say during a social gathering more of vegetables are wasted. 73.8 percent say rice/ pulau is wasted, 68.3 say roti/ chappati is wasted to a large extent.
- 7) 48.5 percent say both unserved food and food leftover in plates is wasted. However 39.9 percent say more food is wasted as leftover in plates. 91.5 percent of the respondents say food leftover in plates is thrown into the dustbins.
- 8) 93.4 percent of the respondents say that the nature and pattern of celebrating social function has under gone a change in the last 10-15 years. 97.8 percent say expenditure on food has increased, 92.2 percent say food taste and preferences have also changed as a result the number

of continental dishes in social functions has increased. 97.8 % say that the number of dishes has increased. There is a slight increase in the number of guests. However 61.5 percent say food consumption level has come down.

- 9)** 80.2 percent of the respondents say that in the present celebrations or social gathering more food is wasted.
- 10)** Traditionally food was served by the family members during a social gathering. But now buffet system is very popular. 78.5 percent of the respondents say that food was not wasted when the family members cooked and served food. 62.0 percent say food is not wasted when cooked and served by the caterers. 91.7 percent say much food is wasted in the buffet system.
- 11)** High expenditure on social gatherings is a matter of social status. The respondents have ranked social status as the most important factor on a scale of 1-5. The rising economic prosperity has been ranked as the second most important factor as people have more disposable income now. Competition to do better is the next important factor followed by social/ relative pressure and the last factor being social networking. Position and prestige in the society determines the volume and scale of a social function.
- 12)** 96.8 percent of the respondents say there is a need to control food wastage in social gathering and 78.1 percent are not aware about any guest control orders.
- 13)** 56.3 percent of the respondents say government policies / orders will be effective in restricting the number of guest / dishes.
- 14)** On a preference scale of 1-4, the respondents are not inclined for a new legislation/ Act to control food wastage in social gatherings. The First most preferred option to control food wastage is through education and mass awareness programmes. The second preferred option is to restrict the number of dishes and the fourth option is to limit the number of guests.

Any legal measures to control food wastage will encroach on an individual's right to privacy (56.8 percent), will lead to interference in private matters (56.6 percent) and also interfere in culture matters (50.7 percent).

**15)** 84.9 percent blamed the individuals for food wastage and say the focus has to be on the individual. The individual who organizes the social events has to be held accountable.

**16)** The respondents (56.3 percent) say in this modern era when the economy is booming any restriction on the number of guests or the dishes will affect their business. As a result the costs will go up further to increase the profit margin and also affect the livelihood of thousands of people dependent on the hospitality service industry.

## **5.5 Findings: Perception of People (Cross Section) of the Society**

**1)** 95 percent of the respondents agree that food is wasted in social gathering. 91.7 percent less than 20 years of age and 96.6 percent above 66 years of age say that food is wasted. Similarly all income group respondents say that food is wasted in social gatherings. 88.6 percent say that food wastage is an urban phenomenon.

**2)** 18.3 percent of the respondents say that food wastage is between 20-25 percent, 41.7 percent say it is between 15-20 percent, 19.8 percent say it is between 10-15 percent. While 12.5 percent agree that it is wasted between 5-10 percent and 7.7 percent opined that food wastage is less than 5 percent. The survey reveals that 60 percent of the respondents say food wastage is between 15-20 percent.

**3)** 56.6 percent say where the number of dishes is more, food wastage is also more, and 20.6 percent are of the view that wastage is because of the large number of guests while 22.8 say it is because of both.



- 4) 80.2 percent of the respondents say food wastage is very high in marriages and minimal in seminars and conferences. It is high in social gatherings like anniversaries and birthday parties.

- 5) 65.1 percent of the respondents are of the view that more the number of dishes more the food wastage, 61.3 percent say people take more than they can eat and 60.1 percent say that people just don't bother about food wastage. 39.3 percent also agreed that it can be because of miscalculation of invitees.
- 6) Food items like salad, vegetables, rice/pulau and chapattis/ roti are wasted more in social gathering. 54.4 percent agree that unserved food as well as food leftover in plates is wasted. However 39 percent say that more food is wasted as leftover in plates.
- 7) After a social event 70.7 percent of the respondents say they ask the staff to pack the left over food to be consumed later and 85.3 percent say the request has been complied with Some of them say the request was turned down.
- 8) 83.2 percent of the respondents say that the pattern of social celebrations has changed during the last 10-15 years and 86.1 percent are of the view that food wastage is more in the way social event are celebrated at present. As a result 87.6 percent say expenditure on food has gone up. Only 43.2 percent say there is an increase in the traditional / ethnic dishes while 76.9 percent find that the number of continental dishes has increased. 81.6 percent say that the number of dishes itself has increased, 58.8 are of the view that the number of invitees has increased and 40.5 percent say food consumption has decreased.
- 9) Food wastage in social gatherings is also due to the change in the method of serving food. 56.1 percent say that in the traditional method, where family members cooked and served, food was not wasted. Where food is served by the caterers, 49 percent say wastage is to some extent while 58.2 percent say there is high wastage in the buffet system.
- 10) Extravagance in social function is a matter of status symbol. People spend according to their position and prestige in the society. Social and relatives pressure is the next important factor which forces people to indulge in

ostentatious behavior, while rising economic prosperity is the third factor due to which people indulge in extravagance.

- 11) 93.1 percent feel the need to control food wastage. 85.1 percent of the respondents are unaware about any guest control order. Only 49.4 percent say that policies / orders will be effective in controlling food wastage in social gatherings.
- 12) The respondents are not in favour of bringing about a new legislation or an Act to check food wastage in social gathering. In fact that's the last preference indicated by them. The most preferred option is by education and mass awareness programmes. The second preferred option is to restrict the numbers of dishes in a social gathering.
- 13) 77.4 percent of the respondents say that only the individual can minimize food wastage. 53.1 percent are of the view that to some extent the event managers/ caterers can do so. 43.4 percent feel the government has a role to play, while 48.4 percent say NGO's can help in minimizing food wastage.
- 14) 54.8 percent of the respondents say that any legal measures will affect individual right, 52.4 say it amounts to interference in private matters while 46.2 percent say it amounts to government's interference in cultural matters. But 50.1 percent say it does not. 64.3 percent of the respondents say that food can be used to feed the hungry people. Food wastage also amounts to loss of valuable resources and individual's money.
- 15) 85.1 percent say that government should control food wastage in their departments / public sector undertaking as it is a loss to the public exchequer.

## 5.6 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, discussions and interaction with various people, the recommendations are as follows;

1. The study shows that large amount of food is wasted in social gatherings. Due to the rising economic prosperity in the country people indulge in extravagance and ostentatious behavior. Food wastage is a social crime and therefore it needs to be curtailed.
2. India is a multi religious, democratic country with a mosaic of cultures. Unity in diversity is its strength. Every religion, region and community has its own norms and values. Social gatherings are important as they promote harmony in the society, help in national integration and also bind families and communities together. Therefore any restriction has to focus only on controlling food wastage as people will view it as interference in their private affairs.
3. Among the major stakeholders the individual and the government have a role to play in minimizing food wastage in social gatherings. For the individual wasting food is a matter of habit and he/she is insensitive towards it. Individual's attitude needs to be changed and social consciousness raised.
4. People are not in favour of any legislative enactment/ Act / order to control food wastage and regulate social gatherings as it will lead to harassment and corruption, therefore at the best it can be avoided for the present. The effectiveness of any legislative measures to control food wastage and ostentatious indulgence in social gathering is doubtful in such a large federal country. Therefore the cost benefit analysis does not favour such a step.
5. Learning from the experience of the Guest Control Order 1960, Assam Guest Control Order 1966, Rajasthan Guest Control Order 1972, Mizoram Guest Control Order, the Jammu & Kashmir Guest Control Order 2004, and even the Pakistan One Dish order (which allows six dishes) any statutory or legislative mechanism to control food wastage or regulate social gatherings will not be effective and difficult to enforce. It will lead to unnecessary litigation, and harassment. Even the

Pakistan one dish order has not been very effective till date and it also ended up in litigation. The Supreme Court of India has held that Law is a regulator of human conduct but no law can effectively work unless there is an element of acceptance by the people in the society. Most of the above mentioned orders have become redundant because they lack public acceptability.

6. The one dish order in Pakistan and the order of the supreme court of Pakistan draw its inspiration from the holy Quran which prohibits extravagance and wastage of food. In an Islamic Republic like Pakistan an attempt has been made to regulate ostentatious indulgence in social function but in practice the objectives have not been realised.
7. The major focus has to be on education and awareness. People need to be educated about the importance of food and how it has been treated as a sacred commodity by all the religions. Awareness has to be created about the effects of wasting food and how it affects the society where many are malnourished and hungry.
8. Both the print and the electronic media need to play a proactive role by highlighting simple social functions particularly marriages being organized by role models and the upper strata of the society. They should not highlight extravagant weddings but focus on the waste that such weddings lead to. Political leaders, bureaucrats, industrialists, celebrities and other role models in the society should resort to simple way of celebrating social functions so that they can inspire others to do so. The social media can be an effective tool to communicate with the people particularly the youth.
9. 'Jago Grahak Jago' is the most popular media campaign launched by the Department of Consumer Affairs to educate people on various issues. This should be used to enlighten people about food wastage in social gatherings. The message should be that food wastage is a social evil.

- 10.** World Food Day is celebrated on October 16 each year to commemorate the founding of the UN's food and Agriculture organization (FAO). Each year has a different theme, World Food Day helps raise people's awareness of problems in food supply and distribution. India should also observe World Food Day on a large scale and focus on food wastage and its effect on the society. Various events involving the youth can be organized to raise awareness about food wastage. The government and the civil society should work in tandem to educate the people.
- 11.** Taking a cue from good practices from other countries is important. The "*Love Food Hate Waste*" campaign launched by the Waste & Resources Action Programme in 2007, with the aim of reducing the amount of food waste in the United Kingdom is a good idea. A similar campaign can be launched in India. Various stakeholders in the society should converge to make this campaign popular and effective.
- 12.** There are thousands of consumer clubs functioning in the country funded by the Department of consumer Affairs, GoI. These clubs are the best medium to involve the youth in this education and awareness campaign/programmes. This may be done through rallies, debates, posters and painting competition and school level campaigns. The ECO clubs can also be involved in this campaign to help save food by minimizing food wastage. Apart from these the RWA's, NSS, NCC and Nehru Yuva Kendra's can also be involved in the campaign to reduce food wastage during social gatherings
- 13.** Children must be targeted to impart knowledge. The teaching of life skills have become a mandatory part of school curriculum. The importance of food and the ill effects of wasting food should be made a part of the school curriculum so that the children can imbibe the value of food at the young age and develop the habit of respecting food.

- 14.** The hospitality industry (Food Service Sector) also needs to contribute in minimizing food wastage as they are one of the major stakeholders in organizing a social gathering.
- a. The hotels and restaurants should display as a policy matter that they do not encourage food wastage.
  - b. They should pack the unused/ unserved but ordered leftover food
  - c. When a social function is being organised they should display the message that “Please do not waste food” “Eat but not waste” or similar messages to remind the guests. This will have some sobering effect.
- 15.** Even invitation cards may carry the message that food should not be wasted and it is a social crime. People should be educated and encouraged to put the RSVP culture in practice and always develop the habit to confirm their presence in a social function.
- 16.** The Government departments and the public sector organization should observe austerity when they organize social events. Many of these organizations are also indulging in extravagance leading to food wastage.
- 17.** NGO’s May be identified and funds provided to collect excess food and distribute it to the needy in a clean and hygienic manner.
- 18.** Imparting Education and creating awareness is a slow process. Its effects will be visible after some years. Therefore the campaign should be vigorous and repetitive to remind the people about the ills of food wastage. However if these measures do not bring the desired effect then the government may consider the option of restricting the number of dishes through legal measures after a nationwide discussion and debate and arriving at a consensus. In a multi cultural democracy with a booming economy, where the hospitality industry is also providing employment to lakhs of people any restriction on social gatherings is a sensitive issue is an issue.

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### **ASSAM SECOND GUEST CONTROL ORDER, 1966\***

#### **1. Short title, extent and commencement.**

- (1) This Order may be called the Assam Second Guest Control Order, 1966—
- (2) It extends to whole of Assam.
- (3) It shall come into force at once

#### **COMMENTS**

##### *Section I.*

This Order was made by the Governor of Assam in exercise of the powers conferred by S. 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, read with the Notification of the Government of India in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (Department of Food) No. G.S.R. 888, dated the 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1961. This order has been superseded the Assam Guest Control Order, 1966 published *vide* Notification No. SDB 530/65, dated the 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1966.

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\* Published in the Assam Gazette, Extraordinary, dated 19<sup>th</sup> March, 1966.

This Second Order was published *vide* Notification No. SDB 530/65, dated the 19<sup>th</sup> March, 1966 in the Assam Gazette dated 19<sup>th</sup> March, 1966.

## 2. Definitions.

In this Order, unless the context otherwise requires, -

- (a) **“caterer”** means the proprietor or other person in charge of a catering establishment and includes an agent or servant who acts on behalf of such caterer;
- (b) **“catering establishment”** means a hotel, restaurant, eating house, café, tea shop, coffee house, free feeding center, club, canteen, or railway refreshment room and includes any other place of a like nature, open to the public, where food is prepared, supplied or consumed;
- (c) **“host”** means a person who either himself or through any other person undertakes to distribute or provide for consumption food in a party, entertainment or social or other function;
- (d) **“institutional establishment”** means a hospital, sanatorium, convalescent home, nursing home, orphanage, workhouse, infirmary, asylum or school providing food and includes any other establishment of a like nature;

- (e) **“cereal”** means rice, wheat, maize, bajra and products thereof;
- (f) **“prohibited foodstuffs”** means all foodstuffs prepared of or containing cereal;
- (g) **“residential establishment”** means a boarding house, apartment house, residential hotel, or nurses’ home and includes any other establishment of a like nature but does not include a private household.

**3. Restriction on preparation, consumption and distribution of prohibited foodstuffs.**

- (1) No person, or body of persons acting in concert either jointly or severally, other than a caterer at or in connection with one or more parties, entertainments or functions, shall, on any one day, either himself or themselves, prepare, serve, distribute or provide for consumption, or accept or contribute for service or distribution for consumption, any prohibited foodstuffs to more than twenty five persons (including the host or hosts) at ordinary parties or entertainments or social or other functions or to more than one hundred persons (including the host or hosts) in connection with marriages or funerals.

- (2) No caterer at the instance or for the benefit of himself or any person in connection with one or more of his own of such person's parties, entertainments or functions, shall, on any one day either himself or thorough any other caterer, serve, distribute or provide for consumption, or accept for service or distribution for consumption, any prohibited foodstuff to more than twenty five persons (including the host or hosts) at ordinary parties or entertainments or social or other functions or to more than one hundred persons (including the host or hosts) in connection with marriages or funerals.
- (3) No person shall accept or consume any prohibited foodstuff at or in connection with any party, entertainment, social or other function, marriage or funeral where the number of participants (including the host or hosts) exceeds twenty-five in the case of ordinary parties, entertainments or social or other functions, or where such number exceeds one hundred (including the host or hosts) in the case of marriages or funerals:

Provided that nothing in this clause shall apply to –

- (i) parties, entertainments or social or other functions in the premises serving as the headquarters of diplomatic or consular

representatives, or Government Missions of foreign countries;

- (ii) the proprietor, manager or other person-in-charge of a residential establishment, institutional establishment or catering establishment serving food to consumers or residents in the course of regular business and not in connection with any party, entertainment or social or other function given at the instance of himself or of any other person;
- (iii) the distribution of food containing any prohibited foodstuff by way of “bhog” or “prasad” or as part of a recognised religious ceremony, in any temple, mosque, gurdwara, church or other place of religious worship.

**4. Power of entry, search, seizure, etc.**

- (1) For the effective enforcement of the provisions of this Order, all Supply Officers not below the rank of the Sub-Inspector or a police officer of or above the rank of Sub-Inspector may, when he has reason to believe that a contravention of this Order has been, is being or is about to be committed, enter and search any premises, interrogate any person and seize any articles including their coverings in containers in respect of which he has

reason to believe that the contravention has been, is being or is about to be committed.

- (2) The provisions of Ss. 102 and 103 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (5 of 1998) shall, so far as may be, apply to searches and seizures under this clause.

### **COMMENTS**

#### *Section 4.*

This Code of Criminal Procedure has been amended by the Code of 1973 and the original Ss. 102 and 103 of the old Code have been combined into a single section in the new Code in S. 100 for convenience as they related to the same matter.

**MIZORAM GUEST CONTROL ORDER, 1972**

**1. Short title, extent and commencement.**

- (1) This Order may be called "Mizoram Guest Control Order, 1972".
- (2) It extends to the whole of Mizoram.
- (3) It shall come into force immediately.

**COMMENTS**

*Section I.*

This Order was made in exercise of the powers conferred by S. 5 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 read with Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Food) Order No. GSR 316 (E), dated 20-6-1972 by the Lt. Governor of Mizoram. This Order is similar to the Assam Second Guest Control Act, 1966.

**2. Definitions.**

In this Order unless the context otherwise requires –

- (a) **“caterer”** means the proprietor or other person in charge of a catering establishment and includes an agent or servant who acts on behalf of such caterer;
- (b) **“catering establishment”** means a hotel, restaurant, eating house, café, tea shop, coffee feeding center, club, canteen, railway refreshment room and includes any other place of a like nature, open to the public, where food is prepared, supplied or consumed;
- (c) **“host”** means a person who either himself or through any other person undertakes to distribute or provide for consumption food in a party, entertainment or social or other functions;
- (d) **“institutional establishment”** means a hospital, sanatorium, convalescent home, nursing home, orphanage, workhouse, infirmary, asylum or school providing food and includes any other establishment of a like nature but does not include a private house-hold;
- (e) **“prohibited foodstuffs”** means all foodstuffs prepared from or containing cereals or pulses and all sweets;
- (f) **“residential establishment”** means a boarding house, apartment house, residential hotel, or nurses’ home, and includes any other establishment of a like nature but does not include a private house-hold;

- (g) **“State Government”** means the Government of the Union Territory of Mizoram.

**3. Restriction on preparation, consumption and distribution of prohibited foodstuffs.**

- (1) No person, or body of persons acting in concert either jointly or severally other than a caterer at or in connection with one or more parties, entertainments or functions, shall, on any one day, either himself or themselves, prepare, serve, or distribute or provide for consumption, or accept or contribute for service or distribution for consumption, any prohibited foodstuff to more than 25 persons (including the host or hosts) at ordinary parties or entertainments or social or other functions or to more than 100 persons (including the host or hosts) or in connection with one or more of his own or such person’s parties, entertainments or functions, shall, on any one day either himself or through any other caterer serve, distribute, or provide for consumption, or accept or contribute for service or distribution for consumption, any prohibited foodstuff to more than 25 persons (including the host or hosts) at ordinary parties or entertainments or social or other functions or to more than 100 persons (including the host or hosts) in connection with marriages or funerals.
- (2) No person shall accept or consume any prohibited foodstuff at or in connection with any party,

entertainments, social or other function, marriage or funereal where the number of participants (including the host or hosts) exceeds 25 in the case of ordinary parties, entertainments or social or other functions or where such number exceeds 100 (including the host or hosts) in the case of marriage or funerals;

Provided that nothing in this clause shall apply to –

- (i) parties, entertainments or social or other functions in the premises serving at the headquarters of diplomatic or consular representatives of Government Missions of foreign countries;
- (ii) the proprietor, manager or other person in charge of a residential establishment, institutional establishment or catering establishment, serving food to consumer or residents in the course of regular business and not in connection with any party, entertainment or social or other function given at the instance of himself or of other person;
- (iii) the distribution of food containing any prohibited foodstuff by way of “bhog” or “prasad” or as part of a recognised religious ceremony in any temple, mosque, gurdwara, church, or other place of religious worship.

**4. Power to exempt.**

The State Government or an officer authorised by the State Government in this behalf may, for reasons to be recorded in writing by order, exempt any person or body of persons from the operation of any of the provisions of this Order.

**5. Power of entry, search, seizure etc.**

- (1) For the effective enforcement of the provisions of this Order any officer authorised by the State Government in this behalf or a police officer of or above the rank of Sub-Inspector may, when he has reason to believe that a contravention of this Order has been, is being or is about to be committed, enter and search any premises, interrogate any person and seize any articles including their coverings or containers in respect of which he has reason to believe that the contravention has been, is being or is about to be committed.
- (2) The provisions of Ss. 102 and 103 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (5 of 1898) shall, so far as may be, apply to searches and seizures under this clause.

## **COMMENTS**

### *Section 5.*

The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 has been repealed by the 1973 Code. Sections 102 and 103 of the old Code are now contained in S. 100 of the new Code.

**Annexure - 3**

**All J&K Banquet Hall & Caterers ... vs State Of J&K & Ors on 6 June, 2006**

**HIGH COURT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR AT JAMMU**

**OWPs No. 1237 of 04 and 1153 of 04**

**All J&K Banquet Hall & Caterers Association and ors**

**# O.P. Dogra and ors**

**Petitioners**

**State of J&K & Ors**

**Respondents**

**! M/s KS Johal and S.Sethi for the Petitioners**

**^ Mr BS Salathia, AAG for the Respondents.**

**Coram**

**Hon'ble Mr Justice Nirmal Singh**

**Dated: 06/06/2006**

**: JUDGMENT :**

Both these writ petitions involving the same law point shall stand disposed of by this common order.

Writ petition, OWP No.1237/04, has been filed by the President of All J&K Banquet Hall and Caterers Association and others running different banquet halls within the city of Jammu. The second writ petition bearing OWP No. 1153/04, has been filed by the petitioners who have booked different banquet halls for the marriage of their wards.

Petitioners in the above writ petitions have challenged the legality of order No.1463-GAD of 2004 dt. 27th Oct'04, (here-in-after referred to as the order), issued by the State of Jammu and Kashmir through Under Secretary to Government, General Administration Department, vide which the scale of hospitality on wedding and related ceremonies has been regulated as under:-

a) For non vegetarian cuisine:

i/ The number of guests on ring ceremonies shall not exceed 50 (fifty). ii/ The number of guests at the reception of Baraat including Baraatis and the relatives of the bride shall not exceed 200 (two hundred). iii/ The number of guests on the function organized by the family of the bridegroom (walima functions) including relatives shall not exceed 100 (hundred). v/ Maximum quantity of mutton (including chicken) to be prepared on the functions/ceremonies shall be as under:

### **Ceremony Quantity**

a/ ring ceremony 25 kgs

b/ reception of Baraat 100 kgs

c/ function organized 50 kgs

by the family of the bridegroom/walima function

vi/ Number of dishes to be served Seven

b) For vegetarian cuisine:-

i/ The number of guests on ring ceremony shall not exceed 50 (fifty). ii The number of Baraatis shall not exceed 125 ( one hundred twenty five). iii The number of guests at the reception of Baraat including Baraatis and relatives of the bride shall not exceed 250 (two hundred fifty). iv/ The number of guests on the function organized by the family of the bridegroom including relatives shall not exceed 250 (two hundred fifty). v/ There shall be no restriction on the quantity and the number of vegetable dishes to be served on any of the functions.

There shall also be no restriction about the quantity of sweets, fruits, tea and coffee or cold drinks on any of the functions."

Petitioners have impugned the above order being illegal and unconstitutional as the petitioners have got the fundamental right of celebrating and enjoying the functions like marriages, ring ceremonies etc. as per their rites and customs. It is stated that the action of the State by way of passing of order impugned is direct interference in the personal affairs of all the citizens.

Respondent-State on notice filed counter and denied the averments made in the writ petitions. It is pleaded that the order is legal, valid and constitutional and has been passed in the interest of public at large. In order to prevent extravagance and wastage of food items, the Government had taken a policy decision and issued a notification SRO 145/2004 dt. 25th May '04, under the provisions of Essential Commodities Act, 1955, to regulate the scale of hospitality in wedding and related ceremonies. It is stated that earlier a notification was issued in terms of SRO 455 dt. 11th Sept'73, which was kept in abeyance was revived on 25th May'04 vide SRO 145, referred to above, which too was kept in abeyance keeping in view the public importance. The earlier orders on the subject were rescinded with the approval of the Cabinet. It was further pleaded that the present order has been issued after calling the suggestions from different sections of the society. Therefore, this order is known as Guest Control Order.

I have heard learned counsel for the parties.

The first point which is to be determined is whether SRO 145, referred to above could be issued by the State under the provisions of Essential Commodities Act, 1955 (here-in-after referred to as the Act). Section 3 of the said Act in so far as relevant reads as under:-

"3. Powers to control, production, supply, distribution, etc. of essential commodities-(1) The Central Government, so far as it appears to be necessary or expedient for maintaining or increasing supplies of any essential commodity, or for securing their equitable distribution and availability at fair prices, may, by order provide for regulating or prohibiting the production, supply and distribution thereof, and trade and commerce therein.."

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of the powers conferred by sub section (1), an order made thereunder may provide:-

- a) for regulating by licences, permits or otherwise the production or manufacture of any essential commodity;
- b) for bringing under cultivation any waste or arable land whether appurtenant to a building or not, for the growing thereon of food-crops generally or of specified food crops, and for otherwise maintaining or increasing the cultivation of food crops generally, or of specified food crops;
- c) for controlling the prices at which any essential commodity may be bought or sold;
- d) for regulating by licences, permits or otherwise the shortage, transport, distribution, disposal, acquisition of any essential commodity; e) for prohibiting or withholding from sale of any essential commodity ordinarily kept for sale;
- f) for requiring any person holding stock of any essential commodity to sell the whole or specified part of the stock at such prices and to such persons or class of persons or in such circumstances, as may be specified in the order.
- g) for regulating or prohibiting any class of commercial or financial

transactions relating to foodstuffs or cotton textiles, which in the opinion of the authority making the order are, if unregulated, likely to be detrimental to public interest; h) for collecting any information or statistics with a view to regulating or prohibiting any of the aforesaid matters;

i) for requiring persons engaged in the production, supply or distribution of, or trade or commerce in, any essential commodity to maintain and produce for inspection such books, accounts and records relating to their business and to furnish such information relating thereto, as may be specified in the order; j) for any incidental and supplementary matters, including in particular the entering and search of premises, vehicles, vessels and aircrafts, the seizure by a person authorized to make such search of any articles in respect of which such person has reason to believe that contravention of the order has been, is being or is about to be committed, the grant or issue of licences, permits or other documents and the charging of fees therefor"

Mr KS Johal, learned counsel for the petitioners submitted that order is beyond the scope of Section 3(1) of the Act. He submitted that the order concerning the guest control is not permissible in law to be issued. It is further submitted that such a restriction imposed by the order is the direct interference in the personal life of a citizen, which is violative of Article 21 of the Constitution of India as every citizen of India has a right to live with dignity as per his means. Therefore, no such order can be issued under Section 3(1) of the Act.

I have considered this submission made by the learned counsel for the petitioners and find merit in it. A perusal of Section 3 of the Act indicates that if the Government is of the opinion that it is necessary or expedient so to do for maintaining or increasing supply of any essential commodity or for securing the equal distribution and availability at a fair price, it may by order provide for regulating or prohibiting the production, supply and distribution thereof and trade and commerce therein. From the provisions referred to above, it cannot be inferred by any stretch of imagination that the legislature intended by the said provision that Government can issue such an order or can regulate the personal life of an individual and infringe upon the freedom of a citizen to live with dignity. The object of enacting the provision under Section 3(1) of the Act is that the essential commodities are made available to the citizens at reasonable price and the same may be distributed equitably.

In the case in hand, there is no question of fixing the price for the essential commodity and making the same available to the citizens at reasonable price or their equal distribution but as per the order, the Government has fixed the number of guests who are to attend the function and the quantity of food stuffs which are to be served to the guests.

Mr Salathia, Additional Advocate General, appearing for the State submitted that even though order under Section 3(1) is not permissible, even then, this order has been issued as a policy decision and the same has been done keeping in view the social reforms so that the citizens may not indulge in extravagance and can save the food grains as the country is facing the scarcity of food. It is stated that the court cannot review the policy decision unless it is malafide, unreasonable, arbitrary, unfair and against the spirit of Constitution and law. In support of his argument, he relied upon the judgments of the supreme Court reported in 2001(3) SCC 635, Ugar Sugar Works Ltd. V. Delhi Administration and others, and 2003(4) SCC 289, Federation of Railway Officers Association and ors v. Union of India.

In AIR 1961 SC 1731, P.J. Irani v. State of Madras and another, the Apex Court while interpreting the scope of judicial review vis-à-vis legislative policy has held as under:-

"The order passed by the Government can be the subject of judicial review by the Courts for finding out where (a) it was discriminatory so as to offend Art.14 of the Constitution, (b) the order was made on grounds which were germane or relevant to the policy and purpose of the Act, and (c) it was not otherwise malafide."

In Ugar Sugar Works Ltd. case, referred to above by the learned Additional Advocate General, it has been held as under:-

"It is well settled that the courts, in exercise of their power of judicial review, do not ordinarily interfere with the policy decisions of the executive unless the policy can be faulted on grounds of mala fide,

Unreasonableness, arbitrariness or unfairness etc. Indeed, arbitrariness, irrationality, perversity and mala fide will render the policy unconstitutional.."

In Federation of Railway Officers Association supra, it has been held as under:-

"Unless the policy or action is inconsistent with the constitution and the laws or arbitrary or irrational or abuse of power, the court will not interfere with such matters."

In view of the above judicial precedents, the policy decision can be reviewed if it is ultravires to the provisions of the Constitution and the Act and is arbitrary, unfair and unreasonable. In the case in hand, the State Government has no power under the Act to regulate with regard to the calling of guests in any function nor the State has the power to impose restrictions regarding serving of food stuffs. If such a restriction is imposed, it would amount to interference in the personal life of a citizen which is violation of article 21 of the Constitution of India. Every citizen has a right to live with dignity as per his

means and the State has no power to regulate the personal life a citizen. If the order is implemented, then before performing the ceremonies, the person concerned will have to contact the authorities and will have to give information about the number of guests who will attend the function and the quantity of food stuff along with the menu which is to be served to them. At the same time, the authority will have to keep a watch over the functions.

A citizen has a right to perform the wedding ceremonies according to his tradition and culture. It is the tradition in the society in every community to call the nears and dears at the wedding functions like ring ceremonies, marriages, receptions etc. The guests are also called as per the tradition prevalent in the community. The citizens spend the money on these functions as per their capacity. If any restriction is imposed, it will be in violation of Article 21 of the Constitution of India. Any Act, order or policy which is framed in violation of the fundamental rights of the citizens cannot be sustained. The State has a right to ask the citizen about the source of money which has been spent on the wedding ceremonies. If a person spends ill-gotten money, then the State has a right to take action. The Apex Court in the case of Ramsharan Autyanuprasi and another v. Union of India and ors, AIR 1989 SC 549, while interpreting life and personal liberty of an individual, has held as under:-

"It is true that life in its expanded horizons today includes all that give meaning to a man's life including his tradition, culture and heritage and protection of that heritage in its full measure would certainly come within the encompass of an expanded concept of Art.21 of the Constitution. Yet, when one seeks relief for breach of Art.21, one must confine oneself to some direct, overt and tangible act which threatens the fullness of his life or the lives of others in the community."

The Apex Court in the case of Francis Coralie Mullin v. The Administrator, Union Territory of Delhi and others, AIR 1981 SC 746, while interpreting 'life' held as under:-

"Of course, the magnitude and content of the components of this right would depend upon the extent of the economic development of the country, but it must, in any view of the matter, include the right to the basic necessities of life and also the right to carry on such functions and activities as constitute the bare minimum expression of the human self. Every act which offends against or impairs human dignity would constitute deprivation pro tanto of this right to live and it would have to be in accordance with reasonable, fair and just procedure established by law which stands the test of other fundamental rights"

The State Government earlier issued a notification SRO 455 dt. 11th Sept'73, fixing the scale of hospitality on wedding related ceremonies but the same was kept in abeyance keeping in view the public protest. The impugned order was also kept in abeyance due to the public protest but subsequently it has been enforced.

At the hearing, when it was pointed out to the learned Additional Advocate General, appearing for the State, as to why the aforesaid notification of 1973 was kept in abeyance, he submitted that the same was kept in abeyance taking into consideration the public opinion as the questions were raised about its enforcement. He submitted that before issuing the present notification, a Cabinet sub committee of the Ministers was constituted and the committee solicits the opinion of social organizations, NGOs and Voluntary organizations and after inviting the suggestions, the said notification has been issued. It is stated that the earlier notification issued in the year 1973 and the present one are verbatim.

Law is a regulator of human conduct but no law can effectively work unless there is an element of acceptance by the people in the society. The present order which is a public policy as asserted by the learned Additional Advocate General is against the wishes of the citizens and is ultravires to the Constitution as well as against the Act, which demonstrates from the fact that order issued in the year 1973 had to be kept in abeyance. The contention raised by the learned Additional Advocate General is that the impugned order has been issued after the sub-committee obtained the public opinion but from the record, it reveals that the impugned order has not been issued after obtaining the public opinion, rather the sub committee was constituted after issuance of order and subsequently, the opinion from the public was obtained. There is no legal bar that after the issuance of order, the State Government cannot obtain suggestions from the public but the order can be enforced only if the same is legal and enforceable.

The contention has been raised by the State counsel that the impugned order has been issued with the aim and object that people may not indulge in extravagance and can save the foodgrains as the country is facing scarcity of food. I have considered this aspect of the case. The State had issued SRO 455 on 11th Sept'73 i.e. more than three decades earlier. At that time, the country was facing acute shortage of food grains and was importing the food grains to meet the demand but due to green revolution, the country has not only become self sufficient in the production of food grains and eatables but is also exporting the same in substantial quantity. The country is today facing the problem of storing the food grains and these are being kept in the open and are being damaged. Petitioners have pleaded that about 15% of the food stock is only being consumed and more than 20% of the food stock gets rotten in godowns because of the non user and non consumption. Respondents have not controverted this fact.

The State has also taken a plea that this policy decision has been taken so that people may not indulge in extravagance. For that the State has to make the people aware that they should not indulge in extravagance and should save the money as well as the food which can be utilized for the welfare of the Society, but the State has no power to frame any such policy which is violative of the fundamental rights of the citizens.

As it has been noticed above, the impugned order is beyond the scope of Section 3(1) of the Act and is unenforceable. It is violative of the fundamental rights of the citizens, and therefore, cannot be sustained. It has not been mentioned in the policy decision in case anyone violates the same, who is competent to take cognizance of, whether the offence will be cognizable or non-cognizable, bailable or non-bailable and which court will be competent to try the offence.

For the reasons mentioned above, these petitions are accepted. The impugned order bearing No. 1463-GAD of 2004 dt. 27th Oct'04, is declared ultravires and is set aside.

There will be no order as to the costs.

**Fateh Lal vs State of Rajasthan on 27 January, 1988**

Rajasthan High Court

Rajasthan High Court

Fateh Lal vs State Of Rajasthan on 27 January, 1988

Equivalent citations: 1988 WLN UC 160

Author: M Chandra

Bench: M Chandra

JUDGMENT

Milap Chandra, J.

1. This revision petition has been filed under Section 397, Cr.PC 1973 against the order of the learned Additional Sessions Judge, Bhilwara dated October 9, 1980 by which he confirmed the conviction of the accused-appellant under Section 7 read with Section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act (here in after referred to as 'the Act') for contravening Clause 3 of the Rajasthan Guest Control Order, 1972 (here in after referred to as 'the Order') and sentence of three months rigorous imprisonment with a fine of Rs. 5000/-. The facts of the case giving rise to this revision may be summarised thus.
2. On 5-8-1974, A.S.I. Girdhari Lal PW 8 came to Maheshwarion-ka-Nohara, situated in Ward No. 6 on Bhilwara. He found there that the accused Fateh Lal was arranging a Mrityu Bhoj on the eve of the death of his fathar. Prepared articles and food stuff for about 200 persons were found there. On his report Ex. P/11, a case under Section 7 Rule with Section 3 of the Act was registered and investigation was commenced. He seized the food articles and food stuff and auctioned them for Rs. 530/-. Other articles and utensils were also seized and given in Supardgi. After he completing investigation, a challan was filed against the accused-petitioner, Mohan Lal and Chauthmal in the Court of the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Bhilwara. The learned Chief Judicial Magistrate framed a charge under Section 7 read with Section 3 of the Act and Clause 3 of the Order against all the

accused-persons. The prosecution examined eight witnesses and produced and proved 13 documents. All the three accused-persons denied the prosecution story. After hearing the parties, the learned Chief Judicial Magistrate acquitted the co-accused Mohan Lal and Chauthmal and convicted the accused Fateh Lal as said above. His appeal was also dismissed by the learned Additional Sessions Judge, Bhilwara by his judgment which has been challenged in the revision.

3. It has been contended by the learned Counsel for the accused-petitioner that "Mrityu Bhoj" to the extent of persons was permitted under the Rajasthan Guest Control Order, 1972 and also under the Raj. Prevention of "Mrityu Bhoj Act, 1960 and there is no evidence on record that "Mrityu Bhoj" was arranged for more than persons and on this ground alone, the revision petition deserves to be allowed. He also contended that the food articles were got prepared for sending to the temples and giving to the daughters and sisters of the deceased Kalyan Mal and such distribution to the temples and other co-relatives did not attract the provisions of clause 3 of the Guest Control Order. He lastly contended that in any view of the matter, it cannot be said that the food articles and stuff found by the ASI Girdhari Lal PW 8 were sufficient for feedings of more than 100 persons.
  
4. The learned Public Prosecutor tried her best to support the judgment under revision. The learned Chief Judicial Magistrate, Bhilwara framed charge against the accused to the effect that on August 5, 1974, he arranged a "Bhoj" on the 12th day of the death of his father for 200 persons and got prepared for them "Laddu", "Barfi" and other food articles and there by he has committed an offence punishable under Section 7 read with Section 3 of the Act and the Rajasthan Guest Control Order. Admittedly, 'Mrityu Bhoj' for less than 100 persons was and is permissible under the Rajasthan Guest Control Order and Rajasthan Prevention of Mrityu Bhoj Act. To sustain a conviction for the breach of Clause 3 of the Order, it is necessary to prove that the "Mrityu Bhoj" was arranged from more than 100 persons. Admittedly, no person was found eating when the police raided Mabeshwarion-ka-Nohara. The site plan Ex. 1 mentions that besides the two Halwaies, 5-7 children, Mohan Lal, Meetha Lal, Kanhaiya Lal, Radha Kishan and Basanti Lal were found there. The seizure memo Ex. P 2 shows that the following food articles and stuff were found there and seized by the police: (1) 64 Kgs. of "Laddu"; (2) 25 Kgs. of "Barfi"; (3) 20 Kgs. of wheat and floor; (4) 4 Kgs. of Wet,' wheat floor; (5) 4 Kgs. of boiled potatoes; and (6) 4 Kgs. of used Ghee. On the basis of there food articles and stuff, the learned lower courts held that the accused Fateh Lal arranged "Mrityu Bhoj" for 200 persons and accordingly convicted and sentenced him as said above. Not a single prosecution witness the including ASI, Girdharilal PW8 has said that these food stuff and articles were sufficient for "Mrityu Bhoj" of 200 persons. Conviction can be based only on the legal evidence and not on the surmises. But the version that in the circumstances of a case it was difficult for the prosecution to get independent and direct evidence, cannot be a

ground to dispense with such evidence. Conviction of the accused cannot be sustained on the basis of conjectures, suspensing even a strong probability of guilt.

5. Sunderlal PW 2 has deposed that the food articles and stuff were for 60-70 persons. Meethalal PW3 has deposed that the articles were prepared for giving feast to the families and sending them to the temples. Mohanlal PW 4 has deposed that "Laddus" and "Barfis" were prepared for giving to the sisters and daughters of the deceased. Chanmal PW 5 has deposed that the "Mrityu Bhoj" was arranged for giving feast to the daughters and sisters of the deceased. Meethalal PW 3 has disclosed in his cross-examination that no invitation of the feast was given to any member of the community. Mohanlal PW 4 has deposed that "Mrityu Bhoj" is prohibited in his community Kanhaiyalal PW 7 has stated that he had no invitation for the feast.
6. In view of these facts and circumstances, it is very difficult to hold that the feast was being arranged for more than 100 persons. The revision petition deserves to be allowed.
7. In the result, the revision petition is allowed. The accused-petitioner is acquitted of the offence punishable under Section 7 read with Section 3 of the Act and Clause (3) of the Rajasthan Guest Control Order, 1972.

## Annexure -5

### THE PUNJAB MARRIAGE FUNCTIONS (PROHIBITION OF OSTENTATIOUS DISPLAYS AND WASTEFUL EXPENSES) (REPEAL) ACT 2006

(Pb. Act I of 2006)

### CONTENTS

#### SECTIONS

1. Short title and commencement.
2. Repeal and Savings.

### THE PUNJAB MARRIAGE FUNCTIONS (PROHIBITION OF OSTENTATIOUS DISPLAYS AND WASTEFUL EXPENSES) (REPEAL) ACT 2006

(ACT I OF 2006)

[28 March 2006]

*An Act to repeal the Punjab Marriage Functions (Prohibition of Ostentatious Displays and Wasteful Expenses) Act, 2003.*

**Preamble.**— Whereas it is expedient to repeal the Punjab Marriage Functions (Prohibition of Ostentatious Displays and Wasteful Expenses) Act, 2003 in the manner hereinafter appearing;

It is hereby enacted as follows:-

- 1. Short title and commencement.**— (1) This Act may be called the Punjab Marriage Functions (Prohibition of Ostentatious Displays and Wasteful Expenses) (Repeal) Act 2006. (2) It shall come into force at once.
- 2. Repeal and Savings.**— (1) The Punjab Marriage Functions (Prohibition of Ostentatious Displays and Wasteful Expenses) Act, 2003 (Act No.V of 2003) is hereby repealed. (2) Notwithstanding the repeal of the said Act under sub-section (1), the previous operation of law, validity of any action taken, order issued, directions given, any action duly done, any penalty or punishment awarded, judgment or order of any court of authority, liability imposed or proceedings initiated thereunder shall not be affected.

## Annexure -6

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<sup>1[1]</sup>This Act was passed by the Punjab Assembly on 16 March 2006; assented to by the Governor of the Punjab on 24 March 2006; and was published in the Punjab Gazette (Extraordinary), dated 28 March 2006, pages 3827-28.

## Punjab Marriage Functions Act 2003

### <sup>2[1]</sup>THE PUNJAB MARRIAGE FUNCTIONS (PROHIBITION OF OSTENTATIOUS DISPLAYS AND WASTEFUL EXPENSES) ACT 2003

(Pb. Act V of 2003)

[14 February 2003]

*An Act to prohibit wasteful expenses on marriages and ceremonies related thereto.*

**Preamble.**— Whereas it is expedient to provide for the prohibition of wasteful expenses on marriages and ceremonies related to it and to make provisions connected therewith and ancillary thereto;

It is hereby enacted as follows:-

**1. Short title, extent and commencement.**— (1) This Act may be called the Punjab Marriage Functions (Prohibition of Ostentatious Displays and Wasteful Expenses) Act 2003.

(2) It extends to the whole of the Province of the Punjab.

(3) It shall come into force at once.

**2. Definitions.**— In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context –

(a) “Committee” means a Committee constituted under section 7;

(b) “Government” means the Government of the Punjab;

(c) “marriage” shall include all ceremonies, preceding and succeeding the formal wedding whether religious or social rituals such as mayun, mehndi, barat, nikah, rukhsati, walima and other related festivities;

(d) “one dish” means one salan with rice and roti or nan and one sweet dish; and

(e) “prescribed” means prescribed by rules made under this Act.

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<sup>2[1]</sup>This Act was passed by the Punjab Assembly on 7 February 2003; assented to by the Governor of the Punjab on 8 February 2003; and, was published in the Punjab Gazette (Extraordinary), dated 14 February 2003, pages 273 to 275.

**3. Prohibition of ostentatious celebrations.**— No person celebrating his marriage or the marriage of any other person shall –

- (i) decorate or cause to be decorated any street, road or public park or any place other than a house or a building, where marriage ceremony is being held, with lights or illumination;
- (ii) explode or allow any one to explode cracker or other explosive device including firing by firearm;
- (iii) display or allow any one to display fire works;
- (iv) display or allow any person to display dowry to the public eye.

**4. Restriction on wasteful expenses.**— (1) No person celebrating his marriage or the marriage of any other person shall serve or allow any one to serve meals or other edibles to the persons in connection with a marriage in a club, hotel, restaurant, wedding hall, community centre, community park or any other place, except soup or, hot or cold soft drinks:

Provided that one dish may be served at the Walima ceremony to a maximum number of three hundred invitees, including hosts, attending the ceremony:

Provided further that in case the number of invitees, including hosts, attending the Walima ceremony exceeds three hundred, no meal shall be served except soup or, hot or cold soft drinks.

(2) Nothing contained in sub-section (1) shall apply to the eating of meals within the house by the members of family celebrating the marriage, and the house guests.

**5. Application of the Act to hotels, restaurants, etc.**— No person owning or running a hotel, restaurant, wedding hall, community center, or club being the site of marriage ceremony or any caterer shall serve or allow any one to serve any meals or edibles to the persons participating in the marriage ceremony except as provided in section 4.

**6. Committees for prohibition of wasteful expenses on marriage.**— Government shall, by notification in the official Gazette, constitute a Committee for each Union, Tehsil or Town, which shall perform such functions as may be prescribed.

**7. Enforcement of provisions of the Act.**— The District Coordination Officer at district level, Tehsil Municipal Officer or Town Municipal Officer at tehsil or,

as the case may be, town level, Secretary union council at the Union Council level and Local Government & Rural Development Department at provincial level shall take all necessary measures for the enforcement of the provisions of this Act and shall be assisted by the Committees, in this regard, constituted under section 6.

**8. Offences.**— Whoever contravenes the provisions of sections 3, 4 or 5 shall be guilty of an offence punishable with fine which shall not be less than one hundred thousand rupees and not more than three hundred thousand rupees.

**9. Cognizance of offences.**— No court shall take cognizance of an offence under this Act except on a complaint in writing made by the Committee or the Authorities mentioned in section 7, in the manner prescribed.

**10. Disposal of food and other edibles.**— The food and other edibles procured, prepared, arranged or set for serving in contravention of this Act shall be disposed of in the manner prescribed.

**11. Rules.**— Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

**MARRIAGES (PROHIBITION OF WASTEFUL EXPENSES) ORDINANCE,  
1997  
ORDINANCE XLVIII OF 1997**

**[Gazette of Pakistan, Extraordinary, Part I, 15th March, 1997]**

No. F.2(1)/97-Pub, dated 15-3-1997.--The following Ordinance made by the President is hereby published for general information:-

Whereas it is expedient to provide for the prohibition of wasteful expenses on marriages and ceremonies related thereto;

And whereas, the National Assembly is not in session and the President is satisfied that circumstances exist which render it necessary to take immediate action;

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by clause (1) of Article 89 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the President is pleased to make and promulgate the following Ordinance:--

**1. Short title, extent and commencement.—**

(1) This Ordinance may be called the Marriage (Prohibition of Wasteful Expenses) Ordinance, 1997.

(2) It extends to the whole of Pakistan

(3) It shall come in to force on the sixteenth day of March, 1997 and shall remain in force for a period of two years from its commencement.

**2. Definitions.--**In this Ordinance, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context—

(a) "Committee" means an Ehtesab Committee constituted under section 6; and

(b) "marriage" shall include all ceremonies, preceding and succeeding the formal wedding whether religious or civil rituals such as nikah, rukhsati, walima, mehndi, rasme-hina, and other functions and celebrations connected with marriage and related festivities.

**3. Prohibition of ostentatious celebrations.--**(1) subject to subsection (2), no person celebrating his marriage or the marriage of any other person shall--

(a) decorate or cause to be decorated any house or building including any space appertaining thereto, street, road or other place whether owned by him or otherwise with lights or illumination;

(b) explode or allow any one to explode cracker or other explosive device including firing by firearm; or

(c) display or allow any one to display fire-works.

(2) Nothing contained in subsection (1) shall prohibit the use of such lights as are ordinarily necessary to lit the house or any other place being the site of marriage.

**4. Restriction on wasteful expenses.--**(1) No person celebrating his or the marriage of any other person shall serve or allow any one to serve meals or other edibles to the persons participating in the marriage in a club, hotel, restaurant, wedding hall, community center or any other public place except hot and cold soft drinks.

(2) Nothing contained in subsection (1) shall apply to the eating of meals within the house by the members of the family celebrating the marriage or the house guests.

**5. Application of the Ordinance to hotels, restaurants, etc.--**No person owning or running a hotel, restaurant, wedding hall, community centre, or club being the site of marriage ceremony or any caterer shall serve or allow any one to serve any meals or edibles to the persons participating in the marriage ceremony other than hot and cold soft drinks.

**6. Committees for prohibition of Wasteful Expenses on Marriage.--**The Provincial Government shall, by notification in the official Gazette, constitute an Ehtesab Committee for each sub-division, Tehsil or Taluka which shall, in accordance with the rules made under this Ordinance, be responsible for implementation of the provisions of this Ordinance.

**7. Offences.--**Whoever contravenes the provisions of section 3 section 4 or section 5 shall be guilty of an offence punishable with fine which shall be not less than one hundred thousand rupees and not more than three hundred thousand rupees.

**8. Cognizance of offence.--**No Court shall take cognizance of an offence under this Ordinance except on a complaint in writing by the Committee.

**9. Rules.--**The Provincial Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, make rules carrying out the purpose of this Ordinance.

## Annexure - 8

*Punjab Marriage Functions Rules, 2002* 87

**GOVERNMENT OF THE PUNJAB**  
**LOCAL GOVERNMENT & RURAL**  
**DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Dated Lahore, the 25th February, 2003.

### **NOTIFICATION**

No. SOV(LG)5-7/2003. In exercise of the powers conferred upon him under Section 11 of the Punjab Marriage Functions (Prohibition of Ostentatious Displays and Wasteful Expenses) Act, 2003 (V of 2003), the Governor of the Punjab is pleased to make the following rules:-

1. **Short title and commencement.**- (1) These rules may be called the Punjab Marriage Functions (Prohibition of Ostentatious Displays and Wasteful Expenses) Rules, 2003.

(2) They shall come into force at once.

2. **Definitions.**- (1) In these rules, unless the subject or context otherwise requires-

(a) "Act" means the Punjab Marriage Functions (Prohibition of Ostentatious Displays and Wasteful Expenses) Act, 2003; and

(b) "Government" means the Government of the Punjab in the Local Government & Rural Development Department.

(2) All other terms and expressions used in these rules but not herein defined shall have the same meanings as are assigned to them in the Act.

3. **Constitution of Committees.**- (1) For each Union, Town or Tehsil there shall be constituted a Union Committee, Town Committee or, as the case may be, Tehsil Committee to be known as the Marriage Function Committees. They shall comprise the following:

- (a) Union Committee:
- (i) Secretary Union Council Convener
  - (ii) Two persons to be Members  
nominated by the District  
Coordination Officer concerned.
- (b) Tehsil Committee or Town Committee Convener
- (i) Tehsil Municipal Officer or  
Town Municipal Officer
  - (ii) Two persons to be nominated Members  
by the concerned District  
Coordination Officer concerned.

**4. Functions of the Committees.-** The Committees shall perform the following functions:-

- (a) take measures to create awareness among the people about the adverse effects of ostentatious displays and wasteful expenses on the occasion of marriage and related ceremonies;
- (b) inspect such marriage functions suo moto or on an application received from any person; and
- (c) scrutinize the complaints received from the general public or authorities mentioned in Section 7 of the Act before forwarding the complaints to the court of competent jurisdiction for trial.

**5. Provide information.-** Every patwari, lambardar and member of the Union Council shall be responsible for providing information regarding violation of the provisions of the Act in the areas of their respective jurisdiction.

**6. Cognizance of offences.-** (1) On receipt of an application from any person, the Committee concerned shall scrutinize the complaint. If a person reports to the authorities mentioned in Section 7 of the Act, they shall refer the complaint to the Committee for taking further action.

(2) After such scrutiny and enquiry by the Committee as may be deemed necessary, if an offence is made out under Section 8 of the Act, the Convener of the Committee shall forward the same to the court of competent jurisdiction for trial.

7. **Undertaking.**- Owners or management or proprietor, as the case may be, of wedding/banquet halls, clubs, hotels, restaurants, community centers, community parks, etc. or any other place which is used for such functions, or any caterer shall be required to obtain an undertaking from the host about the number of guests, nature of function and food to be served (see Schedule-1).

8. **Joint responsibility.**- Owners or management or proprietor, as the case may be, of the wedding/banquet halls, clubs, hotels, restaurants, community centers, community parks, caterers, etc. and the person in whose favour booking was made shall be held jointly and severally responsible for any breach of Section 5 of the Act.

9. **Committee not to cause disruption.**- The Committee while inspecting the marriage ceremony shall not cause any disruption to the ceremony/function. *Punjab Marriage Functions Rules, 2002* **89**

10. **Implementation of the provisions of Act.**- (1) The District Coordination Officer shall hold monthly meetings to review the implementation of the provisions of the Act in the District concerned and forward a report to the Government.

(2) The Government may issue such directions for implementation of the provisions of the Act as may be deemed fit.

11. **Disposal of food and other edibles.**- The food and other edibles procured, prepared, arranged or set for serving in contravention of the Act shall be taken into possession and distributed among the needy and destitute people by the District Coordination Officer, the Tehsil Municipal Officer or, as the case may be, the Town Municipal Officer of the District, Tehsil or Town concerned.

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**SCHEDULE - I**  
**UNDERTAKING**

I \_\_\_\_\_ S/O \_\_\_\_\_ Caste \_\_\_\_\_

Resident of \_\_\_\_\_ Tehsil \_\_\_\_\_

District \_\_\_\_\_ holding National Identity Card No.

\_\_\_\_\_ do hereby confirm that marriage ceremony/function of

\_\_\_\_\_ (nature of function) is going to be celebrated

on \_\_\_\_\_ (date) at \_\_\_\_\_ (venue) for which

the undersigned undertakes that no provision of the Punjab Marriage

Functions (Prohibition of Ostentatious Displays and Wasteful Expenses) Act,

2003 and the rules made thereunder shall be violated and in case of any

violation the authorities as envisaged in the Act would be competent to

proceed against me in accordance with law. I also undertake that while

celebrating the marriage function, prohibition and restrictions as contained in

sections 3 and 4 of the Act shall be observed with full care and caution.

**Signature of the Person**

**Celebrating the Function**

Witness \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF PAKISTAN**

(ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)

**PRESENT**

Mr. Justice Nazim Hussain Siddiqui, C.J.

Mr. Justice Javed Iqbal

Mr. Justice Tassadduq Hussain Jillani

**CONSTITUTION PETITIONS No.23 OF 1999 & 21 OF 2004**

**CMA NO. 1466/2001**

Ch. Muhammad Siddique and 2 others .... PETITIONERS

VERSUS

Government of Pakistan through Secretary, Ministry of Law and  
Justice Division, Islamabad and 2 others

..... RESPONDENTS

(Const.P.No.23/99)

Government of Punjab through Secretary, Law, Justice &  
Parliamentary Department, Lahore & another

.... ... RESPONDENTS

(Const.P.No.21/2004)

For the petitioners:

Mr. Maqbool Elahi Malik, Sr.ASC

Mr. Khalil Ahmed ASC  
Mr. M.A. Zaidi, AOR  
Sh. Masood Akhtar, AOR (absent)

For the respondents:  
(Const.P.23/99)  
Raja Muhammad Irshad  
Deputy Attorney General  
Ch. Akhtar Ali, AOR.

For the respondents:  
(Const.P.21/04)  
Syed Shabbar Raza Rizvi  
Advocate General Punjab  
Ms Afshan Ghazanfar  
Assistant Advocate General

Dr. Qazi Khalid Ali  
Additional Advocate General Sindh

Mr. Jehanzeb Rahim  
Advocate General NWFP

Raja Abdul Ghafoor, AOR/ASC on  
behalf of Advocate General,  
Balochistan

Applicant:  
(CMA 1466/2001)  
Dates of hearing:  
Mr. Muhammad Hanif Abbasi  
(in person)  
23 & 24.9.2004

## JUDGMENT

NAZIM HUSSAIN SIDDIQUI, C.J. – The above petitions have been filed under Article 184(3) of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973.

2. In Petition No. 23/1999, petitioners have challenged the *vires* of the Marriage Functions (Prohibition of Ostentatious Displays and Wasteful Expenses) Ordinance, 2000 (Ordinance No. II of 2000), hereinafter referred to as the Ordinance No. II of 2000, whereby restriction on wasteful expenses on the occasion of marriage ceremonies has been imposed.

3. In Petition No. 21/2004, petitioners have challenged the *vires* of the Punjab Marriage Functions (Prohibition of Ostentatious Displays and Wasteful Expenses) Act, 2003 (Act No. V of 2003), hereinafter referred to as the Act No. V of 2003, limiting the number of invitees to 300 and placing restriction of one dish food only thereunder.

4. Mr. Muhammad Hanif Abbasi through C.M.A. No. 1466/2001 in Petition No. 23/1999 prayed to be added as a party. The same is allowed and he is added as a respondent in Petition No. 23/1999.

5. Prior to the Ordinance No. II of 2000, the Marriage (Prohibition of Wasteful Expenses) Ordinance, 1997 (Ordinance No. XLVIII/1997) was promulgated by the Federal Government whereby restriction on wasteful expenses on the occasion of marriage ceremonies was imposed for a period of two years. Later on this Ordinance was enacted by the Parliament as the Marriages (Prohibition of Wasteful Expenses) Act, 1997 (Act No. XXI of 1997), which expired on 15.3.1999 in terms of section 1 (3) *ibid*. On 17.4.1999, the Marriage Functions (Ostentatious Displays) Ordinance, 1999 (Ordinance No. III of 1999) was promulgated and the restriction on wasteful expenses was reimposed for a period of two years. Petitioners challenged the *vires* of the Ordinance No. III of 1999 by filing Constitution Petition No. 23/1999 in this Court. Since the Ordinance No. III of 1999 was not laid before the National Assembly as envisaged by Article 89 of the Constitution, it stood repealed on expiry of four months. On 13.1.2000 the Ordinance No. II of 2000 was promulgated, which holds the field and is applicable throughout Pakistan. Accordingly, petitioners filed an amended petition in this behalf.

6. Sections 4 and 5 of the Ordinance No. II of 2000 are subject matter of Petition No. 23/1999, which are produced below for ready reference: -

“Section 4: **Restriction on Wasteful Expenses.** – (1) No person celebrating his or the marriage of any other person shall serve or allow any one to serve meals or other edibles to persons participating in the marriage in a club, hotel, restaurant, wedding hall, community centre or any other place except hot and cold soft drinks.

(2) Nothing contained in sub-section (1) shall apply to the eating of meals within the house by the members of the family celebrating the marriage or the house guests.

**Section 5: Application of the Ordinance to hotels, restaurants, etc.** – No person owning or running a hotel, restaurant, wedding hall, community centre or club being the site of marriage ceremony or any caterer shall serve or allow anyone to serve any meals or edibles to the persons participating in the marriage ceremony other than hot and cold soft drinks.”  
(*underlined for emphasis*)

7. On 14.2.2003, the Punjab Marriage Functions (Prohibition of Ostentatious Displays and Wasteful Expenses) Act, 2003 was passed by the Provincial Assembly and its sections 4 and 5, which have been challenged in Petition No. 21/2004, are as follows: -

“4. **Restriction on wasteful expenses.** – (1) No person celebrating his marriage or the marriage of any other person shall serve or allow anyone to serve meals or other edibles to the person in connection with a marriage in a club, hotel, restaurant, wedding hall, community centre, community park or any other place, except soup or, hot or cold soft drinks:

Provided that one dish may be served at the *Walima* ceremony to a maximum number of three hundred invitees, including hosts, attending the ceremony: (*underlined for emphasis*)

Provided further that in case the number of invitees, including hosts, attending the *Walima* ceremony exceeds three hundred, no meal shall be served except soup or, hot or cold soft drinks.

(2) Nothing contained in subsection (1) shall apply to the eating of meals within the house by the members of family celebrating the marriage, and the house guests.

“5. **Application of the Act to hotels, restaurants, etc.** – No person owning or running a hotel, restaurant, wedding hall, community centre, or club being the site of marriage ceremony or any caterer shall serve or allow anyone to serve any means or edibles to the persons participating in the marriage ceremony except as provided in section 4.”

8. It is asserted by Mr. Maqbool Elahi Malik, ASC that petitioners are law abiding citizens and believe in supremacy of the Injunctions of Islam. He contended that the Ordinance No. II of 2000 as well as the Act No. V of 2003 are beyond the legislative competency of the respective legislatures as they are against an express *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him). He argued that the celebration of *Walima* being *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him) is obligatory in nature and no restriction could be imposed thereon. According to him, the money spent on such function does not fall within the scope of “*Asraaf*”. He submitted that right from the beginning all the laws on the subject including the Ordinance No. II of 2000 were never implemented, as such, there was no need to make such laws. It is urged that *Walima* according to some *Ahadith* continued for 7 days and the perusal of yet other *Ahadith* reveals that while celebrating *Walima*, there shall be an element

of festivity, good meals and exchange of gifts, etc. He contended that restricting the meals to one dish and limiting the number of invitees to 300 under the Act No. V of 2003 are against *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet as he had never, directly or indirectly, imposed any condition on its celebration. It is also contended that these laws directly affect the business of marriage halls, caterers, tent service, light decoration, cooks, waiters and indirectly affect the business of power looms, tent makers, screen printers, chair makers, steel crockery, pipe, carpet, *Daris*, etc. and are hit by Articles 18 and 25 of the Constitution. He referred, *inter alia*, to the following *Ahadith*: -

“The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said: “Give a wedding banquet, even though with one sheep.” (Al- Bokhari & Muslim with reference to *Mishkat Hadith 3 : 56*).

“The Holy Prophet (PBUH) offered a wedding banquet on the occasion of his marriage with *Zainab* and offered a good meal to the Muslims”.

(Narrated by *Anas: Sahih Al-Bokhari – Hadith : 84*).

“The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said, “set the captives free, accept the invitation (to a wedding banquet), and visit the patients.” (Narrated by *Abu Musa – Hadith : 103*)”

9. Raja Muhammad Irshad, learned Deputy Attorney General while controverting the above pleas, contended that a law on the subject has been enacted to curb/discourage wasteful expenses and that what in fact is prohibited is the wasteful expenses as these types of expenditure are widening economic disparity. According to him, *Walima* is only “*Mubah*”, i.e. a

permitted act and not obligatory. He submitted that this is also the opinion of the Islamic Ideological Council. He maintains that such wasteful expenses create frustration and disappointment among the masses as more than 90 per cent of the population of the country cannot afford huge expenses in this regard with the result that the poor parents of girls are exposed to financial disasters. Further, many social vices are cropping up due to the financial problems resulting from lavish expenditures on the occasion of marriage. In support of his contentions, he cited various *Ahadith*.

10. Syed Shabbar Raza Rizvi, learned Advocate General Punjab submitted that the provincial legislation on the subject (Act No. V of 2003) is not in conflict with the Ordinance No. II of 2000. It is in the nature of slight improvement, in that, one dish meals have been allowed to be served to a limited number of guests in line with the *Ahadith* of the Holy Prophet according to which *Walima* meals were served to the invitees in groups of 10.

He submitted that the provincial law also envisages total prohibition on serving of meals at the public places. He candidly stated that in case of repugnancy, the federal law will prevail and the provincial law to the extent of repugnancy, be void in terms of Article 143 of the Constitution. He, however, contended that the federal law did not fix the number of guests, therefore, there was no inconsistency.

11. The learned Advocate General submitted that Constitution petition No. 23 was filed in 1999, which was heard and decided on 9.11.2002, but there is no judgment on the record of the case. He also submitted that the *vires* of the legislation made by the Federal Government on the subject in 1997 came up for consideration before the Lahore High Court in *Iftikhar v. Province of Punjab* (1998 CLC 1508) but the writ petition was dismissed as not maintainable. The judgment of the High Court attained finality as no appeal was filed against it. The present petitions were filed under Article 184(3) of the

Constitution, which can only be entertained if a question of public importance with reference to the enforcement of any of the Fundamental Rights conferred by Chapter 1 of Part II is involved. No member of the public challenged this law, which means that no one is aggrieved. It is only few contractors who have come to this Court. These petitions, therefore, are not entertainable. He submitted that the Government can be directed to ensure implementation of the law.

12. Dr. Qazi Khalid Ali, Additional Advocate General, Sindh and Raja Abdul Ghafoor, learned ASC/AOR appearing on behalf of the Advocate General Balochistan have adopted the arguments of the Advocate General Punjab.

13. Mr. Jehanzeb Rahim, learned Advocate General, NWFP submitted that in view of the *Ahadith* quoted by learned Deputy Attorney General and learned Advocate General, Punjab, there is a consensus that while celebrating *Nikah*/marriage, avoidance of "*Asraaf*" and "*Tabzeer*" should be the principal guiding factors. He further submitted that the Ordinance has been challenged on two scores, viz. (a) it is against the Holy *Quran* and the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet and (b) it militates against Articles 18 and 25 of the Constitution. He submitted that under Article 227 read with Article 203D of the Constitution, the jurisdiction to declare any law against the Injunctions of Islam is vested in the Federal Shariat Court and the judgment of that Court is binding on the High Courts while this Court sits in appeal against the judgment of the Federal Shariat Court. He further submitted that the Council of Islamic Ideology examined this law and opined that the restrictions contained in it are in accordance with the Holy *Quran* and *Sunnah*. He also submitted that the case law laid down by this Court consistently postulates that the Courts while interpreting provisions of any law must lean in favour of its constitutionality. He contended that this Court does not have the power under Article 184(3) of the Constitution to strike down a law on the ground that it is against the Injunctions of Islam. He contended that Article 25 is not attracted as the petitioners have not shown that some of the marriage halls are permitted to serve meals but others are not so permitted. To the contrary, the restriction applies to all the marriage halls and hotels alike. Further, the restriction is within the parameters of Article 18, which permits the State to make law aimed at regulating trade, etc. The restriction has been imposed in the public interest and is not unreasonable.

14. Mr. Muhammad Hanif Abbasi, applicant in CMA No.1466/2001, submitted that for a long time he remained associated with the business of marriage hall and after having realized that it was absolutely against *Shari'ah*, he gave up the said business and that on the basis of his personal experience, he has no

hesitation to say that at public places in line with the spirit of the Ordinance No. II of 2000, such functions be prohibited and the Ordinance No. II of 2000 be implemented in letter and spirit. He submitted that the impugned legislation is in consonance with the Injunctions of *Shari'ah* and by their implementation, no *Shari'ah* law is violated.

15. Both learned Advocate General Punjab and Advocate General NWFP challenged the maintainability of these petitions on the ground that original jurisdiction of this Court under Article 184(3) of the Constitution could not be invoked. Under what circumstances, said Article can be invoked, recently we have laid down law on this subject in the case reported as *Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif v. Federation of Pakistan* (PLD 2004 SC 583) and the relevant discussion is in paras 16, 17, 18 and 19 of the judgment, which are as follows:

“16. Clause (3) of Article 184 and sub-clause (c) of clause (1) of Article 199 of the Constitution are for the enforcement of any of the fundamental rights conferred by Chapter 1 of Part II. For their proper appreciation, they are reproduced below: -

“Article 184(3): Without prejudice to the provisions of Article 199, the Supreme Court shall, if it considers that a

question of public importance with reference to the enforcement of any of the Fundamental Rights conferred by Chapter 1 of Part II is involved, have the power to make an order of the nature mentioned in the said Article.”

“Article 199(1): Subject to the Constitution, a High Court may, if it is satisfied that no other adequate remedy is provided by law, - - - -

(c) on the application of any aggrieved person, make an order giving such directions to any person or authority, including any Government exercising any power or performing any function in, or in relation to, any territory within the jurisdiction of that Court as may be appropriate for the enforcement of any of the Fundamental Rights conferred by Chapter 1 of Part II.”

17. Articles 199 and 184(3) regulate the jurisdiction of the Superior Courts and do not oust it. Perusal of clause (3) of Article 184 unequivocally postulates that two conditions are precedent for invoking said clause. Firstly, the petition must clearly demonstrate that the grievance relates to violation of fundamental rights. Secondly, the violation is of nature of public importance, which has been interpreted to mean any invasion of individual freedom, liberty, fundamental rights, including effectiveness and safeguard for their implementation. Therefore, having regard to the connotation of the words “*public importance*” the facts and circumstances of each case would have to be scrutinized on its own merits. 18. With the assistance of learned counsel for the parties, we have surveyed the relevant case law. In

*Manzoor Elahi's case*, (PLD 1975 SC 66), *Benazir Bhutto's case* (PLD 1988 SC 416), *Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's case* (PLD 1993 SC 473), *Wasey Zafar's case* (PLD 1994 SC 621), *I.A. Sharwani's case* (1991 SCMR 1041) and the *Employees of Pakistan Law Commission's v. Ministry of Works* (1994 SCMR 1548), questions of general public importance, which affected the people at large, were involved. In *Asad Ali's case* (PLD 1998 SC 161), the Supreme Court entertained petition directly for the reason that the issue affected the judicial system of the country. The finding and conclusion of the Supreme Court in *Syed Zulfiqar Mehdi v. Pakistan International Airlines Corporation* (1998 SCMR 793) have never been deviated from. It is advantageous to quote the relevant observation occurring at page 801 of the report, which reads as under: -

“The issues arising in a case, cannot be considered as a question of public importance, if the decision of the issues affects only the rights of an individual or a group of individuals. The issue in order to assume the character of public importance must be such that its decision affects the rights and liberties of people at large. The adjective ‘public’ necessarily implies a thing belonging to people at large, the nation, the State or a community as a whole. Therefore, if a controversy is raised in which only a particular group of people is interested and the body of the people as a whole or the entire community has no interest, it cannot be treated as a case of public importance.”

19. Same view has recently been taken in *Watan Party's case* (PLD 2003 SC 74). It was a 5 – member Bench judgment to which one of us

(Nazim Hussain Siddiqui, now Chief Justice) was a party, wherein reliance was placed on *Manzoor Elahi's case* and the above view was

endorsed. For facility of reference, the relevant observations in the latter case are reproduced below: -

“Now, what is meant by a question of public importance. The term ‘public’ is invariably employed in contradistinction to the terms private or individual, and connotes, as an adjective, something pertaining to, or belonging to the people, relating to a nation, State or community...”

“The learned Attorney-General is clearly right in saying that a case does not involve a question of public importance merely because it concerns the arrest and detention of an important person like a Member of Parliament. In order to acquire public importance, the case must obviously raise a question, which is of interest to, or affects the whole body of people or an entire community.”

Although the Supreme Court thereafter in a number of cases, such as *Amanullah Khan v. Chairman, Medical Research Council* (1995 SCMR 202) and *Mrs. Shahida Zahir Abbasi v.*

*President of Pakistan* (PLD 1996 SC 632) has taken a different view, yet the cases under Article 184(3) have been brought within the parameters of the observations referred to above.”

Petitioners have alleged violation of fundamental rights guaranteed under Articles 18 and 25 of the Constitution. The questions raised in these petitions are of great public importance, which involve interpretation of various provisions of the Constitution. The decision of this Court, one way or the other, will directly affect the entire population of the country. We, therefore, hold that the petitions are maintainable.

16. On the second day of hearing of these matters, viz. 24.9.2004, Mr. Maqbool Elahi Malik, learned counsel for the petitioners made a request to withdraw both these petitions, which was vehemently opposed by learned Deputy Attorney General on the ground that the petitioners themselves are convinced after hearing arguments on 23.9.2004 that their petitions could not succeed, as such as a last resort, they wanted to save the Act No. V of 2003 promulgated by the Punjab Provincial Assembly. Request of learned counsel could not be allowed as questions of great public importance have been raised in these petitions, which require authoritative pronouncement by this Court. Furthermore, question of inconsistency of a provincial law (the Act No. V of 2003) with a federal law (the Ordinance No. II of 2000), in view of Article 143 of the Constitution, has surfaced, which is to be gone into.

17. The thrust of the arguments of learned counsel for the petitioners was that holding of *Walima* being *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him) is obligatory in nature. Since the impugned legislation has been passed against the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him), the same is liable to be struck down.

18. Perusal of various *Ahadith* quoted by the learned counsel appearing in these petitions and many such others unambiguously reveals that *Walima* is a feast arranged on the occasion of marriage. It comes from the root ( ) meaning *to join together*. This is so called as it is held on the occasion of joining of wife and husband together. Majority of the jurists hold that it is a *Sunnah* while a few hold that it is *Mustahab* (commendable) and a few others are of the view that it is *Wajeb* (compulsory). The feast invariably is given by the husband.

19. *Anas bin Malik* reported that ‘*Abd al-Rehman b. ‘Auf* came to the Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) and he had yellow stains on him. The Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) asked him what that was. He said, he had married an *Ansari* woman. The Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) asked: “How much have you paid as *mahr* to her? He said: “Gold equal to the date seed. Thereafter the Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) said: Perform *Walima* even if it be of one sheep. *Yahya b. Sa’id* reported that the Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) used to perform *Walima* and there would be neither bread nor meat. *Ibn Shihab* reported *al-A’raj* to have said that *Abu Huraira* narrated that that *Walima* was the worst of meals to which the rich are invited and the poor are ignored. *Anas b. Malik* reported: A tailor prepared some food and invited the Apostle of Allah (may peace be

upon him). *Anas* said: I too went with the Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) to participate in the food. The tailor put before him barley bread and pumpkin curry. *Anas* said: I saw the Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) seeking out from the dish pieces of pumpkin and eating them. From that day pumpkin had become my favourite. *Anas* also reported: On the occasion of wedding feast of Prophet with *Safiya*, there was no bread or meat, and dates, dried curd and clarified butter were offered. *Safiya* daughter of *Shaiba* said the Prophet held a wedding-feast for one of his wives with two *mudds* [1 Mudd =  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a kilogram] of barley. *Abu Mas'ud al-Ansari* said: One of the *Ansar* whose *Kunya* was *Abu Shu'aib* had a servant who sold meat. He said, "Prepare for me food, which will be enough for five; perhaps I shall invite the Prophet along with four others." He prepared a small meal for him, and then he went and invited him. A man followed them, and the Prophet said, "A man has followed us, *Abu Shu'aib*, so if you wish you may let him join us, but if you wish you may leave him outside." He replied, "No, I shall let him join us." *Anas* said the Prophet held a wedding-feast for *Safiya* with meal and dates.

20. It may be observed that *Walima* is an invitation to meals given by the bridegroom intended basically to make the factum of marriage known to the people of the locality lest there is any doubt about the new relationship between a man and a woman. The *Walima* given by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) on the eve of his marriage with *Zainab* referred to above consisted of one sheep and it was taken by the people as a big feast. On the eve of his marriages with *Safiya* and *Umm-e-Salama*, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) had offered a small quantity (two seers) of *jau*, *halais* – a sweet made of cheese, butter and sugar, or dates. On one such occasion the Holy Prophet (PBUH) had asked *Anas* to go into the street and call the people to the meals in the house of the Prophet. The following principles are deducible from the above discussion: -

- *Walima* invitation is a pre-Islamic concept liked and adopted by the Holy Prophet (PBUH);
- Only such items be given in *Walima* as the person celebrating *Walima* can afford from his own resources;
- The invitation of *Walima* should be offered to all and sundry in the vicinity and should not be confined to relatives, friends, influentials, etc.

21. The *Walima* and other marriage functions prevalent in our society had been made a source of ostentatious display of wealth inasmuch as the wealthy people spent huge moneys on the occasion of *Baraat*, *Walima* and other functions. This has taken the form of *Asraaf* (extravagance), which is strictly prohibited in the Holy Quran. The Holy Quran says: -

22. We have also gone through the research note placed on record, which was submitted before the Islamic Ideological Council in respect of *Walima*. It concludes that such functions shall be free from "*Asraaf*" and "*Tabzeer*" and such functions shall also be free from such actions and deeds, which are prohibited in Islam and may lead towards un-Islamic actions and deeds. No doubt, *Walima* is a *Sunnah*, but always it shall be within limits as narrated in

various *Ahadith* quoted above. Extravagance i.e. ostentatious and wasteful expenditures on the occasion of *Walima* are always discouraged right from the very beginning. By enormous expenditure of above nature, social vices are created leaving behind horrifying consequences. These evils have generated social inequalities in the society.

23. It is significant to note that right from 1953 till 1978 various legislative instruments were promulgated in order to overcome these problems. Some of them are: -

- 1) Economy of Food (Control) Order, 1953;
- 2) Meals in Establishments Control Order, 1953;
- 3) Foodstuffs (Regulation of Consumption) Order, 1958;
- 4) West Pakistan Economy of Food Order, 1958;
- 5) West Pakistan Economy of Food Order, 1966;
- 6) Punjab Economy of Food Order, 1972 and
- 7) Punjab Economy of Food Order, 1975.

The Order of 1953 provided that on the occasion of marriage, death or any other ceremony or function, no person acting as host shall distribute, serve or offer or cause to be distributed, served or offered any edible to more than 25 persons at one meal. Likewise, other Orders from serial No. 2 to 7 were promulgated for exercising economy relating to food. The Ordinance No. II of 2000 is in continuation thereof.

24. The statement of objects and purposes of the impugned legislation as mentioned in the Preamble to the Ordinance No. II of 2000 reads as under: -

“Whereas it is expedient to provide for the prohibition of ostentatious displays and wasteful expenses on marriages and ceremonies related thereto.” As far as ostentatious displays are concerned, the Ordinance provides prohibition on decoration of the venue of marriage with lights or illumination, etc. The provision in the Ordinance governing this aspect of the matter is found in section 3 thereof, which reads as under: -

“Section 3. **Prohibition of ostentatious celebrations.** – (1) Subject to sub-section (2), no person celebrating his marriage or the marriage of any other person shall –

(a) decorate or cause to be decorated any house or building including any space appertaining thereto, street, road or other place, whether owned by him or otherwise, with lights or illumination;

(b) explode or allow anyone to explode cracker or other explosive device including firing by firearm; or

(c) display or allow any one to display fireworks.

(2) Nothing contained in sub-section (1) shall prohibit the use of such lights as are ordinarily necessary to lit the house or any other place being the site of marriage.”

25. Sections 4 and 5 of the Ordinance No. II of 2000 provide for hot and/or cold soft drinks. Learned counsel for the petitioners vehemently argued that the Ordinance No. II of 2000 has imposed a ban on holding of *Walima*. It is not correct. This law never prohibited holding of *Walima*. People are at liberty to celebrate marriage and *Walima*. What is prohibited is extravagance and ostentatious display of wealth. This is quite in line with the teachings of Islam. Islam lays great emphasis on simple way of life. It is the duty of the State to take steps to encourage the celebration of marriage ceremonies in simple and informal ways, such as performance of *Nikah* in the mosque of the locality so that the element of inconvenience/harm is eliminated from the society.

26. In our view, the Ordinance No. II of 2000 has been framed with the noble object of prohibiting extravagance and ostentatious displays on the marriage functions. It is an important step to prepare the society as a whole for a change in its behaviour towards this issue and thereby curb the tendency of wasteful expenses so as to relieve the poorer segments of the society of the undue burden of exorbitant expenditures incurred on these occasions.

27. The exploitative customs observed on the eve of marriage ceremonies in our country and the social evils emanating therefrom have not only added to the miseries of the poor but have put at stake their very existence too. It is customary in our society that ostentatious display of *Jahez* and other dowry articles takes place in front of all the guests with a view to making it known to them as to what is being given to the bride by her parents and the parents of the bridegroom. Dowries are given and now also openly demanded. The lower middle and poor classes of society are being crushed under the evils of extravagance and ostentatious displays of wealth. It is unacceptable as it is against all norms and values known to a civil society. It must stop. The functions celebrated on the eve of marriage such as *Mayun*, *Mehndi/Rasm-e-hina*, *Baraat*, etc. and even the custom of giving large dowries all are of Hindu origin and have nothing to do with the Islamic concept of marriage. The Muslims of the subcontinent had offered great sacrifices for the establishment of an independent State wherein they could lead their lives in accordance with the teachings of Islam as laid down in the Holy *Quran* and the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him). The Constitution of Pakistan contains sufficient provisions whereby the State is obliged to take steps to eradicate social evils. The issue in hand needs to be seen in this larger context.

28. Item 5 in the Concurrent Legislative List, Fourth Schedule to the Constitution, speaks about 'marriage and divorce, infants and minors; adoption'. *Walima* emanates from marriage and the Federal Government is competent to enact law on said subject. Indeed, the Federal Government has already enacted law in the shape of Ordinance No. II of 2000, which is valid and in force. The Government of the Punjab was not legally competent to enact the Act No. V of 2003. On this point, Article 143 is clear and it reads as under: -

"143. If any provision of an Act of a Provincial Assembly is repugnant to any provision of an Act of Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament), which Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament) is competent to enact, or to any provision of any existing law with respect to any

of the matters enumerated in the Concurrent Legislative List, then the Act of Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament), whether passed before or after the Act of the Provincial Assembly, or, as the case may be, the existing law, shall prevail and the Act of the Provincial Assembly shall, to the extent of the repugnancy, be void."

Perusal of above Article clearly shows that the Act No. V of 2003 enacted by the Punjab Provincial Assembly is inconsistent with the Ordinance No. II of 2000 promulgated by the Federal Government, as such is void. The Ordinance No. II of 2000 holds the field as it was neither withdrawn nor amended nor struck down by this Court, as such the Punjab Provincial Assembly enacted the Act No. V of 2003 in violation of the spirit of the Constitution. Besides, two materially different laws on the same subject – one passed by the Federal Legislature and the other by a Provincial Legislature, are against the spirit of federation. Since Federal law has supremacy under Article 143 of the Constitution, as such the law enacted by the Provincial Assembly, viz., the Act No. V of 2003 being *ultra vires* is struck down.

29. In the light of the above discussion, we decide as under: -
- Constitution Petitions Nos. 23/1999 and 21/2004 are dismissed;
  - C.M.A. No. 1466/2001 in Constitution Petition No. 23/1999 is disposed of in above terms;
  - The Act No. V of 2003 passed by the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab is struck down;
  - The Ordinance No. II of 2000 holds the field and is applicable throughout Pakistan and the guests be served in terms of sections 4 and 5 *ibid* quoted above.

CHIEF JUSTICE

JUDGE

JUDGE

ANNOUNCED AT ISLAMABAD

This the, 5th day of November, 2004

CHIEF JUSTICE

There are people in the world so hungry,  
that God cannot appear to them  
except in the form of bread

Mahatma Gandhi



Conducted by

Centre for Consumer Studies  
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