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| **Agency and Anxiety: Consumption, Sustainability and Structural Change in the case of Kerala, India** |
| **Background/Objectives**Consumerism in Kerala, in southern India, is the highest in the country, mirroring the rapid rise in prosperity in the Global South. Current levels of consumerism also reflects growing threats to sustainability. Household appliances, beauty products, meat and automobiles are most consumed while waste and its management is now a serious problem in the state. This oral presentation outlines the key findings from a study that examines perceptions and practices of consumption, personal well-being and environmental sustainability across urban-rural populations in the state.**Methods**In-depth interviews were carried out in high/low SES households in Kerala, and with key informants including academics, activists, and government officials. **Results**The study identified gaps between awareness and practice of sustainable consumption. There was strong recognition of the negative impacts of consumption on personal and environmental wellbeing. However, the ability to practice sustainable consumerism was limited by structural factors. Consequently, consumption was associated with *anxieties*: particularly, around the powerlessness over what is consumed, loss of control and agency over the process of consumption, and its impacts on the individuals and the environment. The two areas where this consumption anxiety was most revealed were in food and waste. Class differentials reflected inequalities in agency. **Discussion**The lens of consumption *agency* and *anxieties* offers a novel perspective of contemporary relationships between individual agency, structural determinants and sustainability practices in the Global South. Contrary to conventional understanding of inequality, the findings suggest that the social gradient is not a direct reflection of control over the process and environmental impacts of consumption. Indeed, access to land as much as income levels were reported as influencing consumption agency. To this end, it was the middle-class, not necessarily the poor, that was most vulnerable in the consumption process. From a health promotion perspective, this analysis informs a new understandings of the determinants of ecological and sustainable practices in transitional societies. **Keywords**Consumption, Sustainability, Food, Waste, Agency, Anxiety |