

KNOWLEDGE OF NUTRITIONAL PRACTICES AMONG THE TRIBAL WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Tribal people are the most conservative, orthodox and superstitious, which affect their growth and development in all walks of life. Study objective was to assess the present knowledge of tribal women about selected areas of nutritional practices. A study was carried out in two talukas of Dahod district in which six villages were selected purposively. Data were collected by personal interview method. Hundred tribal women purposively selected for the study. An average age of them was 37.01 years, monthly income was found ₹1000 to 5000, most of tribal women belonged to joint family; half of the women were illiterate. More than half of tribal women had medium level of knowledge about selected nutritional practices. The women were found the most knowledge about "Consumption of large amount of tea would lower down the hemoglobin level in the body" while the least knowledge about "consumption of two-three glasses of milk and eight-nine glasses of water daily for maintain good health". The study implies that the information and importance of certain nutritional practices could be spread to increase the awareness about human nutrition among the tribal women for their development.

Key words: nutritional practices, knowledge, tribal women

INTRODUCTION

Tribal people are the most conservative, orthodox and superstitious which affect their growth and development in all walks of life particularly for women (Rajjihari, 2008). Tribal diets are different from the entire population as they include certain common foods and different manner (Mittal, 2006). Tribal women's health varies because of such factors as local disease prevalence, health related behavior, women education and exposure to health information. Nutritional anemia and malnutrition were major problem among the tribal women are found by several studies. Nutritional knowledge has great importance for improving dietary behavior and good health. The present study was thus undertaken for the same purpose.

OBJECTIVE

To know the knowledge of nutritional practices among the tribal women of Dahod district

METHODOLOGY

A survey was carried out in Devgadh Baria and

Limkheda talukas of Dahod district of Gujarat. The study was confined to the 100 women whose age belonged to 25 to 60 years as well as they were willing to participate were selected from the six villages for the study. The data was collected through personal interview method and set of 15 questions of nutritional practices of food were used. The questions were multiple choice, true or false and fill in the blanks related to food groups, health and disease. The data was analyzed by using the statistical tools i.e. percentage, mean and SD.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The socio-economic characteristics of the tribal women

The data presented in Table 1, revealed that the range of age of tribal women was 25 to 60 years with an average age of 37.01 years. About 52 percent of women were of young age and 38 percent of women having middle age that is 36 to 50 years. Only 10 percent of the women were above 50 years of age. From the data on educational status it is seen that 52 percent of the women were illiterate and 2 percent of the women were graduates. The tribal women who got education up to secondary school level were 23 percent. Most

of tribal women lived in a joint family that is 58% while 42 percent were from nuclear families. Family incomeranged from Rs.1000 to 5000 per month. About 78% of families had an annual income up to Rs 25,000. Most of the women were engaged in agricultural work along with animal husbandry (79 percent) and only 12 percent of women were engaged in labour work. More than half the of respondents lived in “kachhamakan” (46 percent) while 34 percent of the respondents lived in “pakkamakan.”

Table 1 : The Socio economic characteristics of the tribal women

n=100

Sr. No	Particulars	No.	Percent
1	Age group (years)		
	Young (up to 35)	52	52.00
	Middle (I n Between 36 to 50)	38	38.00
	Old (above 50)	10	10.00
2	Education status		
	Illiterate	52	52.00
	Primary	19	19.00
	Secondary	23	23.00
	Higher Secondary	04	04.00
	Graduate	02	02.00
3	Family type		
	Joint	58	58.00
	Nuclear	42	42.00
4	Family Income		
	Up to ₹ 25,000	78	78.00
	₹ 25001 to 50,000	17	17.00
	₹ 50,001 to 75,000	05	05.00
	Above ₹ 75000	00	00.00
5	Occupation		
	Agriculture	07	07.00
	Agriculture and animal husbandry	79	79.00
	Agriculture and labour	02	02.00
	Labour	12	12.00
6	Residence		
	PakkaMakan	34	34.00
	Kachha	46	46.00
	Mix	20	20.00

Knowledge level of the Tribal women on selected nutritional practices

To study the knowledge of nutritional practices among the tribal women set of questions were asked to the

individual during the survey. A score of one was given for each correct answer and zero was given for a wrong answer or if no answer was given by the tribal woman. The response given by the tribal women on questions asked to them are presented in decreasing order of knowledge level in table-2

Table 2 : Knowledge of the tribal women on selected nutritional practices

n=100

Sr. No	Knowledge of Nutritional Practice	Percent
1	Consumption of large amount of tea that lower down Hb level in the body	92*
2	Excessive consumption of sugar,salt,oil,ghee can leads to chronic diseases(diabetes,kidney problem, heart problem)	70*
3	We should change the cooking oil regularly for maintain good health	62*
4	Combination of cereal and pulses in the food prepration gives complete protien	58*
5	Fermented pulses and green leafy vegetables should be included in the diet for increasing Hb level of the body	56*
6	Milk and milk products should be consumed regularly for healthy bone development	49#
7	Washing of rice 3-4 times properly before cooking destroy water soluble nutrients	47#
8	Whole cereals pulses and fruits vegetables in the diet can prevent constipation	41#
9	Fruits and vegetables should be consumed daily for good health	38#
10	Consumption of green leafy vegetables regularly is required for proper function of eye,skin and bone	27#
11	Increasing consumption of amla that will help in increasing immunity power of the body	22#
12	Regular using of soyabean in the diet will provide protein	18@
13	Peels of fruits and vegetables help in digestion because it contain fibers	13@
14	Two –three glasses of milk should be consumed daily for good health	12@
15	Eight –nine glasses of water should be taken daily for good health	10@

Mean = 41.13

SD = 23.44

*=Maximum knowledge(above 50 percent)

#= Moderate knowledge (20-50 percent)

@=Least knowledge (less than 20 percent)

Table 2 indicates that the tribal women had the maximum knowledge about five selected nutritional practices that is 92% of the respondents knew that “Consumption of large amounts of tea would lower down the Hb level in the body.” Knowledge about facts such as ill effects of consumption of salt ,sugar etc, changing of cooking oil, combination of cereals and pulses for complete protein etc were high. About six of the selected nutritional practices were only moderately known to the women . This included “Consumption of milk and milk products for healthy bones,leaching of water soluble nutrients due to excessive leaching, prevention of constipation etc. About 9 -20 % knowledge was prevalent for four of the nutritional practices. This lowknowledge was related to consuming two-three glasses of milk and eight-nine glasses of water daily for maintain good health.

The extent of knowledge on nutritional practices was analyzed on the basis of the scores obtained. Accordingly, respondents were classified as having high (eight and above eight), medium (in between three to eight) ,low (two and lower than two) levels of knowledge as presented in table-3

Table 3 : Knowledge level of tribal women on selected nutritional practices

n=100

Sr. No.	Knowledge level	Number	Percent
1	High level (eight and above eight)	30	30.00
2	Medium level(three and above)	68	68.00
3	Low level (two and below two)	02	02.00

The Table shows that majority (68%) of the tribal women had medium level of knowledge while 30% of the tribal women had high levels of knowledge. Only 2% of the tribal women had low levels of knowledge.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the present study that the majority of the tribal women were aged between 25 to 60 years .They belonged to joint families mainly. More than half of the women were illiterate .The family income ranged from Rs 1000 to 5000 per month. Most of the respondents (79 percent) were engaged in agriculture work and animal husbandry. Less than half (46 percent) of the women lived in “kachhamakan”. Maximum of the tribal women (68 percent) had medium level o knowledge about selected nutritional practices. Tribal women were found to be the most knowledgeable about the consumption of large amount of tea that lower down Hb level in the body. They had the least knowledge about the fact that peels of fruits and vegetables help in digestion because it contain fibers,two –three glasses of milk should be consumed daily for good health and eight-nine glasses of water should be taken for good health.

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