

## Evaluation of Knowledge on Nutritional Facts of Tribal Women

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### ABSTRACT

*Rural women share abundant responsibilities in family, predominantly in food preparation. Nutritional knowledge has great importance in balance diet and fulfills specific requirements. Under nutrition is widely prevalent in the tribal areas of the country. Thus the study was conducted to assess the extent of present knowledge of tribal women about selected areas of nutritional facts. Data were collected by personal interview method. The age of the respondents were 30 to 56 years, monthly family income Rs. 1000 to 7000, belonged to nuclear and joint families equally, about quarter of women were illiterate, schooling up to primary level and secondary level each and majority were engaged in agriculture work. More than half of tribal women had medium level of knowledge about selected nutritional facts. The respondent were found the most knowledgeable about 'Fruits and vegetables are to be consumed daily' while the least knowledgeable about 'Fermented foods like Khaman, Dhokala provides predominantly Vitamin-B' and 'Cereals provides predominantly carbohydrate' nutritional facts. The study implies that the information on certain nutritional facts could be spread to increase the awareness about human nutrition among the tribal women for their wellbeing.*

**Keywords:** Nutritional facts, knowledge, tribal women

### INTRODUCTION

Rural women in our country share abundant responsibilities and perform a wide spectrum of duties in running the family. Prepare food for all the family member is one of the important jobs they perform (Dipal & Keshav, 2009). Thus, women play an important role in the selection, preparation and serving of food of the member of the family. Nutritional knowledge has great importance in proper management of food, application of balance diet and specific requirements of people of different age groups.

Under nutrition is widely prevalent in the tribal, urban, rural and slum areas of the country, especially among vulnerable sections of the population namely pre-school, school going children, expectant and nursing women (Maya Kumari et.al. 2010).

Government has introduced many programmes like Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Mid-

Day School Meal (MDM) to overcome malnutrition since long. But the result is still not up to the mark. Observation clearly indicates that there is enough food available, thus malnutrition can be improved through proper education and awareness (Agha et. al., 2005).

Thus, this is high time to evaluate the present knowledge of women about human nutrition. On the basis, the result of the same some areas could be identified on which knowledge is to be spread among rural women that act as precautionary measures to prevent malnutrition. The result of the study would be useful to find out the areas and laid down the policies for nutrition education program to be introduced by government, non-government organizations or an institution working in this area. The present study was thus undertaken for the same purpose.

### METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Gujarat State during

January-February 2013. The selected villages come under Umarpada and Mandvi talukas of Surat District. The villages were selected using purposive sampling based on accessibility. The study was confined to the women of age group 30 to 60 years only. Randomly 100 subjects willing to participate in the study were chosen.

A survey schedule was prepared to collect various information regarding subjects. Nutrition awareness of selected group of respondent was measured using self-developed questionnaire. The questionnaire divided into three parts, Part-A consisted of General Information, Part-B covered basic aspects of day to day food habits while knowledge on nutritional facts of food was measured using Part-C. To test the knowledge of women, a set of 15 questions of multiple choice nature related to nutritional facts of food were used. Questions emphasized on sources of nutrients. The questions were approved by the panel of experts and pre-tested on a non-sample population having similar socio-economic background.

Personal interview method was used for data collection. The variable in the study were age, education, family type, type of work, income. The data was analyzed for the percentage, mean, SD using MS-excel.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted on hundred tribal women of different villages of two talukas of Surat district to evaluate their extent of knowledge about nutritional facts.

### Socio-demographical characteristics

The entire respondents were personally contacted and asked the set of questionnaire. The responses were noted. Data generated after statistical analysis are depicted in Table 1.

The range of age of tribal women was 30 to 56 years, with an average age of  $36.86 \pm 11.03$  years. About half (47%) women were of young age where as nearly the same (42%) women were of middle age group. The old women were just 11%. Nuclear and joint families were almost same in number as similar to Shweta *et. al.* (2011). Assessment of educational status of tribal women showed that, percentage of illiterate, schooling up to primary level and secondary level were almost same and in ordinance with Aziz *et. al.* (2007). The family income was ranged from Rs. 1000 to 7000 per month. Half of the family had annual income up to Rs. 25,000. More than half of the subjects surveyed were engaged in agriculture work since they are having their own land. Rests

were engaged either in labor in agriculture, agriculture along with animal husbandry. Eight per cent tribal women were doing service and five per cent were studying.

**Table: 1 The Socio-demographic characteristics of the tribal women** n = 100

Sr. No.	Particulars	Per cent
1	<b>Age group (years)</b>	
	Young (up to 35)	47.00
	Middle (36 to 50)	42.00
	Old (above 50)	11.00
2	<b>Education status</b>	
	Illiterate	27.00
	Primary	27.00
	Secondary	22.00
	Higher Secondary	10.00
	Graduate	14.00
3	<b>Family Type</b>	
	Joint	47.00
	Nuclear	53.00
4	<b>Family Income</b>	
	Up to 25,000	50.00
	25,001 to 50,000	30.00
	50,001 to 75,000	11.00
	Above 75,000	01.00
5	<b>Occupation</b>	
	Labour	07.00
	Agriculture and Animal Husbandry	12.00
	Agriculture	52.00
	Service	08.00
	Study	05.00
	Household work	16.00

### Knowledge about nutritional facts

To assess the knowledge on nutritional facts of tribal women a standardized set of questions were asked to individual during survey. A score of one was given for each correct answer. The respond given by the farm women on the questions asked to them are presented in decreasing order in

Table 2.

**Table 2: Knowledge score of tribal women on selected nutritional facts** n = 100

Sr. No.	Nutritional facts	Per cent
1	Fruits and vegetables are to be consumed daily.	61*
2	Fruits provide predominantly vitamins and minerals.	48#
3	Ghee and oil provides predominantly fat in the diet.	48#
4	Milk is a complete food	46#
5	Amla and citrus fruits provides predominantly vitamin-C	46#
6	Daily 7 to 10 glasses of water needs to be drink.	45#
7	Vegetables provide predominantly vitamins, minerals and fiber.	43#
8	Soyabean provides the best protein in the diet.	36#
9	Pulses provide predominantly protein.	34#
10	Sunlight, particularly in early morning, provides vitamin-D.	33#
11	Sprouted pulses provide predominantly protein and vitamin-C.	30#
12	Raw fruits and vegetables with peel provides predominantly fibers.	29#
13	Carrot provides predominantly vitamin-A.	23#
14	Fermented foods like <i>Khaman</i> , <i>Dhokala</i> provides predominantly Vitamin-B.	10@
15	Cereals provide predominantly carbohydrate.	09@

Mean 36.07

SD 13.94

\* = Most knowledge

# =More knowledge

@= Least knowledge

Table 2 indicates that the tribal women had the most knowledge about only one selected nutritional fact *i.e.* ‘Fruits and vegetables are to be consumed daily’ (61%). Only two numbers of selected nutritional facts were least knowledge by the tribal women *viz.* ‘Fermented foods like *Khaman*, *Dhokala* provides predominantly ‘Vitamin-B’ (10%) and ‘Cereals provides predominantly carbohydrate’ (9%). Tribal women were using cereals, preparing *Khaman*, *Dhokala* but don’t know the importance of that, might be the reason for

the same. Tribal women more aware about remaining facts in the middle range *i.e.* 50 to 22 %. These facts were found to be communicated by *Anganwadi* and health workers or even through various mass media. Tribal women thus had the knowledge about this facts might be the reason for the same.

#### Extent of knowledge about nutritional facts

The extent of above mentioned nutritional facts were analyzed on the bases of score. Accordingly, respondents were classified as having high (above 8), low (below 2) medium (in-between 2 to 8) level of knowledge as presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Knowledge level of tribal women on selected nutritional facts** n = 100

Sr. No.	Knowledge Level	Per cent
1	High	25.00
2	Medium	54.00
3	Low	21.00

Mean 5.42

SD 3.28

Above table reveals that, the majority (54%) tribal farm women had medium level of knowledge regarding selected nutritional facts which is slightly lower (64%) and higher (29.02%) as compared to the results obtained by Dipal and Keshav (2009) and Shweta *et. al.* (2011), when they conducted surveyed on farm women of Gujarat state and Hill women of Utarakhand state, respectively. Twenty five per cent tribal women had high level of knowledge and almost equivalent respondent had low level (21%) of knowledge on the selected nutritional facts. The percentage of high level of knowledge obtained during this study is exactly similar to results obtained by Dipal and Keshav (2009). The demographic area for both the studies was similar *i.e.* Gujarat state might be the reason for similarity. The fact again supported through the studies carried out in Uttarakhand state (Shweta *et. al.*, 2011) and Bihar state (Maya Kumari *et. al.*, 2010) where they found 4.56% and 0% high level of knowledge, respectively. The low level of knowledge for both studies were very high 66.32% and 77.33%, respectively and found quite high as compared to present study. This type of information might be communicated by *Anganwadi* and health workers or even through various mass media in more effective way could be one of the reasons for the same.

#### CONCLUSION

The range of age of tribal women was 30 to 56 years. They were belonging to Nuclear and joint families almost same in number. About quarter of women was illiterate,

schooling up to primary level and secondary level each. The family income was ranged from ₹ 1000 to 7000 per month. More than half of the subjects surveyed were engaged in agriculture work since they are having their own land. More than half of tribal women had medium level of knowledge about selected nutritional facts. The tribal women were found the most knowledgeable about 'Fruits and vegetables are to be consumed daily' nutritional fact. That might be due to its communication through various mass media. They were the least knowledgeable about 'Fermented foods like *Khaman*, *Dhokala* provides predominantly Vitamin-B' and 'Cereals provides predominantly carbohydrate' nutritional facts. Though they were using such food in their diet but don't know the importance of the same. Comparison of the data on level of knowledge of selected tribal women in the present study revealed that information on some areas of nutritional facts might be communicated more effectively and there is need similar type of efforts in other areas.

#### IMPLICATION

Knowledge on the nutritional facts least aware by tribal women could be spread through various mass media like television, radio, exhibition, personal communication using *Anganwadi*, Primary Health Centers etc.

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