

Nutrition and Health
among
Tribal Populations of India

A bio-cultural Approach



Nutrition and Health among Tribal Populations of India:

A bio-cultural Approach

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Extent of Chronic Energy Deficiency Among Central Indian Tribes

R. K. Gautam, D. K. Adak and P. Bharati

INTRODUCTION

Chronic energy deficiency (CED) can be estimated by body mass index (BMI), it is a non-invasive, less expensive and more reliable techniques of nutritional assessment; which is widely being used for cross sectional surveys. India is the home to large number of indigenous people, who are still untouched by the lifestyle of the modern world. With more than 84.4 million, India has the largest population of the tribal people in the world. Out of 1.25 billion populations of India 8% are tribes. They are widely distributed all over the country. In some the states their concentration is more than 90%. Each tribe has its own identity and culture which varies greatly from each other. The tribes have their distinct socio-economic, cultural, political and religious institutions. At present about six hundred and ninety seven tribal groups inhabit in different parts of India. More than half of the Indian tribal population is concentrated in the state of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Jharkhand and Gujarat.

Knowledge of nutritional status of a community is necessary to have a comprehensive idea about its development process (Bhattacharya et al. 1994). In developing countries like India, anthropometry, despite its inherent limitations, still remains the most practical tool for assessing the nutritional status of the community (Ghosh et al. 2001). Wide inter