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Forest related primitive tribes: Indigenous foods nutritional status, bio accessibility and retention of nutrients using processing methods in India

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The present study is under taken for the evaluation of nutritional information from indigenous foods consumed by forest-related primitive tribal groups (FRPT) and nutrient retention using cooking methods. Food consumption and its safety in tribal communities are still not well understood. Tribal population in India constitutes second largest country in the world, next to Africa with 8.6% of Indian population. Among the tribal groups, few tribes were considered as FRPT and depend on nature for 90% of their food supply. The economy of these tribes is closely associated with the ecological factors and their habitats. The incidence of poverty in tribal areas is around 64%. Among tribal population, health problems vary widely, however, all health indicators fall below the population living in plain areas. The reasons may have literacy, personnel hygiene and poverty so on. The average daily consumption of all the foods (g/CU/day) by these tribes is lower than the recommended levels. Indigenous foods are main source followed by cereals and rice formed the bulk of the diet in their life. The intake of nutrients by these tribes was marginally lower when compared to other tribes in India. But prevalence of under nutrition among preschool children was lower (37.13%) than that reported for the other tribes (40.66%). The chronic energy deficiency (CED) among adults was about 41%. A recent study carried out by NNMB on tribes reported steady increase in the prevalence of diet related chronic diseases like overweight and obesity, hypertension and diabetes mellitus, etc. The present results were shown that protein and vitamin content were higher than normal food. Maximum retention of nutrients like carotenoids and minerals were observed in microwave cooking followed by sautéing methods. Bio accessibility of carotenoids was noticed more than the commonly consumed foods. This may be due to high content of dietary fiber in indigenous foods. This study will help to monitor the above tribe nutritional and health aspects. Since high morbidity was noticed in tribal population, the effective measure can be taken to improve the nutrition status, sanitation and personal hygiene in this tribal group.

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