

# A STUDY ON NUTRITION DEPRIVATION AMONG THE GOND TRIBAL WOMEN IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT

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**Abstract:** Physical fitness and maintenance of sound health of an individual is directly related to the condition of nutrition. Appropriate nutrition helps man to maintain health and stay fit whereas inadequate nutrition decreases fitness and causes vulnerability to diseases. Constant undernourishment continues to exist widely, especially among women of different age group, because they are trapped in the sequence of poverty, inadequate nutritious food intake and illnesses. Finally, a women health affects the entire household and disturbs economic aspects of the family. A woman with deprived wellbeing will also be less productive in the labour market.

Frequency of anemia in developing countries is high and its occurrence is attributed to deficiency of iron. The nutritional deficiencies prevail more among the low income group. Anemia is very common in India particularly in the women of poor economic section of the country. The tribal women from Gondi Nagar are also lacking behind in decision making policy. The reason can be stated as lack of education as most of them only got the primary education, due to patriarchal society system. Women folk are least cared in terms of consumption and they were not allowed to work outside. They are believed to stay at home looking after the children and do all types of household works except a few. Moreover there is a lack of interaction with outside community so there is no sharing of ideas or knowledge and the male member whoever is working outside never used to talk to them about the different aspect of nutrition requirement in the body. The women lack awareness about the nutrition level which they can receive from different vegetables. Hence the present study on nutrition deprivation among the Gond tribal women resided in Gondi Nagar, Coimbatore district was carried out and the results were highlighted in the article.

**Keywords:** Deficiency, Malnutrition, Nutritional food.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Nutrition is a subject which is of great concerned and it talks about the whole issue of how much and to what quantity people are consuming nutritious food. Women are very delicate and they require more amount of food like iron, calcium compared to men. It is not necessary that only expensive food will have more amount of this nutrition. This study will help in understanding the actual nutrition level among the tribal women folk. Over all well being of population and human resources development is purely based on the nutritional diet followed by every individual of a society. Malnutrition is the effect of a range of factors including inadequate access to food, large size families, lack of basic minimal health care and lack of safe drinking water. The sign of malnutrition could be seen in the prevalence of specific nutrient deficiency disorders viz. anemia, night blindness and vulnerability to a number of contagious diseases (GoTN, 2005). Government of India has passed National Food Security Act 2013 on July 5, 2013 which marked a paradigm shift from welfare to rights based approach regarding food security (GoI, 2013). As per the act, 75% rural people are entitled to collect subsidized

food grains. In spite of all these efforts, still there is huge number of women folk suffer from under nourishment, malnutrition etc.

**Nutrition Chart**

TYPE OF WORK	FOOD TYPES	QUANTITY/DAY
<b>Moderate Work</b>	Calories	2230 Cal
	Protein	5.55gms
	Fats	25gms
	Calcium	800 Mb
	Iron	26 Mb
	Pulses	70 Gms
	Cereal	330 Gms
	Green Leafy Vegetables	100 Gms
	Other Vegetable	200 Gms
	Roots And Tubers	200 Gms
<b>Heavy Work</b>	Calories	2850 Cal
	Fats	30gms
	Calcium	800 Mb
	Iron	40 Mb
	Pulses	90 Gms
	Cereals	480 Gms
	Green Leafy Vegetables	100 Gms
	Other Vegetables	200 Gms
	Roots And Tubers	200 Gms

**Source:** Indian Council of Medical Research

The Gond tribal women residing in Gondi Nagar are also lacking in education in addition to nutrition deficiency. As per their culture, they were not allowed to work and there is no interaction with outside community. As a result, there is no sharing of ideas or knowledge on any aspects including nutritious food. Hence, the tribal women in this locality are not aware about the nutrition level and how to receive it from different vegetables/fruits. Basically this Gondi tribe migrated from Maharashtra, Gujarat etc. These tribal women are not consuming the basic nutrition which they should get and because of this reason they are having health complication and it is indirectly affecting them in child delivery. As like rural Indian women, these tribal women mostly have the leftover food in the home after serving to entire family. Hence the present study on nutrition deprivation among the Gond tribal women in Gondi Nagar, Coimbatore district has been carried out and the results were highlighted in the article.

**2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

- Saramma (1989) indicated that malnutrition is a severe health concerns which every Indian women folk faces and it intimidates their survival as well as their children. It is also added that the negative effects of undernourishment amid women is a consequence of combinations like work demands, special nutritional needs of women, resulting in increased vulnerability to illness and higher morbidity.
- Subal Das & Kaushik Bose (2012) though the tribal people have a close interaction with nature and fulfill their food requirement from nature, the tribal groups experience high nutritional stress.

**3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To ascertain the levels of nutrition among the tribal women.
2. To find out the health problems of the respondents due to lack of nutrition.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

- **Area of study:** The study was conducted among Gond tribes in Gondi Nagar which is situated in Coimbatore District. Those Gond tribes have basically migrated from parts of Maharashtra and Gujarat. It is a community with approximately 1000 population and everyone follows the Christianity religion. Almost every male member in the community follows the same hereditary occupation of selling traditional medicines in different parts of the country whereas the women were not allowed to work outside, they were supposed to stay at home and do the household works. Most of the girls have received only their primary education and they don't get much exposure to outside community. Most of them stay in a tent house.
- **Research Design:** In this research the researcher used descriptive research design.
- **Universe and Sampling:** The universe of the study is the Gond tribal women folk living in Gondi Nagar, Coimbatore District. By adopting accidental sampling, the researcher collected 50 samples for the purpose of the current study.
- **Tools of data collection:** The researcher prepared a self-structured interview schedule to collect the data from the tribal women with the following classifications: Women receiving nutritious food, varieties of food consumed, Women suffering from under nutrition and Women falling under over weight or under weight.
- **Period of study:** The data collection was done during the month of January 2014. Per day 5 to 6 respondents have been studied, the time varied from person to person.

#### 5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE STUDY

**AGE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS:** Table 1 shows the age group of the respondents who were taken for the study. 34 per cent each of the respondents belong to the age group of 18 to 22 years and 22 to 26 years, 14 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of 26 to 30 years, eight per cent each of the respondents belong to the age group of 30 to 34 years and 34 to 38 years and two per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of 38 to 42 years.

**OCCUPATION OF THE RESPONDENTS:** Table 2 shows that majority does the household works whereas only one-tenth were working as daily wage earner and the rest were doing other types of work like filing the iron in the factory, working in petty shops and so on.

**NUTRITIONAL FOOD TAKEN BY THE RESPONDENTS:** Table 3 shows the frequency of the nutritional food taken by the respondents

- **Non-Vegetarian food:** More than one third of the respondents were having non-vegetarian food weekly, one-tenth was not having it at all and another one-tenth was having it daily.
- **Green leafy vegetables:** 28 per cent of the respondents consume green leafy vegetables weekly, 32 per cent daily and 30 per cent were not having it at all.
- **Dal:** Less than three fourth of the respondents had dal daily, one fifth of the respondents they had weekly and another one-tenth had it rarely.

**RESPONDENTS AWARENESS ON NUTRITIVE VALUE:** Table 4 represents the awareness of the respondents towards the nutritive value of foods taken by them. 78 per cent of the respondents are aware of the nutritive values and 22 per cent of them are not aware of the nutritive values.

**DIFFERENT HEALTH PROBLEMS FACED BY THE RESPONDENTS:** Table 5 shows that four per cent were having low blood pressure, 10 per cent were anemic. 10 per cent had suffered from fever where as eight per cent was suffering from weakness and four per cent was suffering from headache sometimes. Apart from all this other health related diseases faced by the respondents were eyes problem, muscular pain, body pain, allergies and so on.

**NUTRITION STATUS:** Table 6 shows the nutrition status of the respondents taken for the study. Based on the nutrition chart the above table shows that 72 per cent were having low nutrition status whereas the rest were having normal nutrition status.

## SUGGESTIONS

- Sensitisation activities on importance of nutrition, nutritive value and cost effective seasonal vegetables and fruits.
- Organising health camps in the community to screen and identify the malnourished women.
- Efforts to communicate in their known language to overcome remove the barrier.
- Improving access of these migrated tribal women to the services offered by Anganwadi / Balwadi centres.

## 6. CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

This study gives a clear picture that due to lack of proper health records, these tribal women are forced to go to traditional healers to treat their illness. Study also shows that the intake of nutrition such as greens, vegetables and fruits was very scarce among the tribal women. Deficient of vegetables leads to deficiency of several nutrients such as calcium, iron, vitamin A vitamin C etc. Thus nutrition is the most significant factors that influence growth and development of an individual, especially women reproductive organs. Therefore a necessary intervention including sensitisation activities on the issues of malnutrition is an immediate requirement. The intervention must be planned as part of the mainstreamed regular intervention by the state nodal department for nutrition so that the intervention will be a sustainable one.

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**TABLE 1: AGE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Age	Frequency	%
18-22	17	34.0
22-26	17	34.0
26-30	7	14.0
30-34	4	8.0
34-38	4	8.0
38-42	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 2: CAREER OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Type of occupation	Frequency	%
Daily wage earner	5	10.0
Household work	44	88.0
Others	1	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 3: FREQUENCY OF NUTRITIONAL FOOD TAKEN**

Nutritional Food	Frequency	No. of respondents	&
Non-vegetarian food	Daily	5	10.0
	Weekly	20	40.0
	Monthly	9	18.0
	Rarely	6	12.0
	Not having at all	10	20.0
	Total	50	100

<b>Green &amp; vegetables</b>	Daily	16	32.0
	Weekly	14	28.0
	Monthly	5	10.0
	Not having at all	15	30.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Dal</b>	Daily	35	70.0
	Weekly	10	20.0
	Rarely	5	10.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 4: RESPONDENTS AWARENESS ON NUTRITIVE VALUE**

Awareness	Frequency	%
Yes	39	78.0
No	11	22.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 5: DIFFERENT HEALTH PROBLEMS FACED BY THE RESPONDENTS**

Health problems	Frequency	%
Decrease in blood pressure	2	4.0
Anemic	5	10.0
Fever	5	10.0
Weakness	4	8.0
Headache	2	4.0
Others	10	20.0
Not applicable	22	44.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 6: NUTRITION STATUS**

Types	Frequency	%
Low	36	72.0
Normal	14	28.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>