

## Awareness level of nutrition and health related problems in relation to socio-economic condition of tribal women of Kolli hills in Tamil Nadu

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### Abstract

A study was conducted regarding the awareness level of nutrition, health and health related problems in relation to socio-economic condition of tribal women of kolli hills in namakkal district. 100 tribal women in different age groups were selected randomly. Well-designed Questionnaire was given to the women and their responses were analyzed. It was found that the awareness level of tribal women regarding nutrition was 18 percent and regarding health was only 23 percent, and regarding government schemes was 77 percent. Awareness level of nutrition, health and health related schemes were compared with their socioeconomic status. It revealed that the level of education has shown positive uptrend regarding awareness. Nearly 50 percent of women engaged in agriculture and daily wages had more awareness than housewife than women who had engaged in other occupation. It was observed that more than 50 percent of women were not at all aware of their health problems.

**Keywords:** tribal women, kolli hills, nutritional awareness

### Introduction

Scheduled Tribes (STs) are indigenous, have their own distinctive culture, geographically isolated and are low in socio-economic conditions. For centuries, the tribal groups have remained outside the general development process due to their habitation in forests and hilly tracts. The total tribal populations of India is 8.6 per cent (Census of India, 2011). As many as 550 tribal

communities are residing in India, of whom 75 are declared as primitive tribal groups who are spread across the country. The tribal population is identified as the aboriginal inhabitants of our country. Tribal communities lag behind other communities with respect to attainment of income, education, health and other requisites for food and nutrition (Srinivasan and Mohanty, 2004 and Banik *et al.*, 2007).

### Scheduled Tribes Position in Tamil Nadu

**Table 1:** Percentage of Scheduled Tribes in State's total population, India (1981-2011)

STATE	1981	1991	2001	2011
Tamil Nadu	1.07	1.03	1	1.1

*Sources:* Census Report

Tribal population constitutes about 8% of the total population in India. They are particularly vulnerable to under nutrition, because of their geographical isolation, socio-economic disadvantage and inadequate health facilities. The scheduled tribes constitutes 1.1% (0.79 million) in the total population of 72.14 million of Tamil Nadu as per census 2011 which represents 0.76% in the total population of India and it constitutes 36 castes. A study was conducted to know the awareness level of nutrition, health and their related govt schemes in relation to socio-economic condition of Tribal Women of Kolli Hills in Namakkal District.

### Methodology

The Tribal women from Kolli hills in Namakkal District were selected for the study. 100 tribal adult women were selected at random in the entire Kolli hills region. Questionnaire method was used to study the awareness level of nutrition, health and their related issues, and Government schemes related to food, nutrition and health for the tribal women and also in relationship with the socioeconomic condition of the tribal women of kolli hills were studied.

### Results and discussion

The result of the study is discussed in the following.

**Table 2:** Socio economic condition of tribal women of kolli hills

S. No.	Socio-economic condition	No .of Women’s responses	
1.	Family Type	Nuclear	76
		Joint	24
		Total	100
2.	Family Size	Two Children	39
		More than Two Children	61
		Total	100
3.	Educational Status	Uneducated	58
		Primary	27
		SSLC	15
		HSLC	-
		Total	100
4.	Age	< 25 years	20
		25-50 years	58
		>50 years	22
		Total	100
5.	Occupation	Agriculture	35
		Daily wages	59
		Housewife	2
		Others	4
		Total	100
6.	Monthly Family Income Level (Rs.)	Rs.5000	49
		Rs.5001-10000	48
		>Rs.10000	3
		Total	100

Table 2: showed that nearly 75 percent of women respondents were nuclear family, 61 percent had more than two children in their family, 50 percent of the

respondents belongs to the monthly family income of Rs 5001-10000 and with daily wages group.

**Table 3:** awareness level of nutrition and nutrition related problems by tribal women in kolli hills

S.No.	Nutrition related Problems	Tribal Women Responses			Total Responses
		Known	Partially Known	Not Known	
1.	Malnutrition	12	16	72	100
2.	Obesity	18	17	65	100
3.	Protein Foods	9	8	83	100
4.	Carbohydrate Foods	6	17	77	100
5.	Importance of Vegetables intake	29	16	55	100
6.	Importance of Fruits intake	26	19	55	100
7.	Importance of Honey intake	37	39	24	100
8.	Importance of Minerals and Vitamins intake	12	11	77	100
9.	Importance of balanced diet intake	10	11	79	100
10.	Importance of Breast Feeding	39	41	20	100
11.	Goiter	4	3	93	100
12.	Dental Caries	3	6	91	100
13.	Anemia	43	49	8	100
14.	Night Blindness	3	7	90	100
15.	Food Supplements	5	7	88	100
16.	Food Adulteration	17	16	67	100
17.	Milk Adulteration	7	12	81	100
18.	Organic Foods	9	17	74	100
19.	Importance of Millets	39	38	23	100
20.	Junk Foods	27	39	34	100
	Overall percentage	17.75	19.45	62.80	100

The awareness level of nutrition and nutrition related problems by tribal women is very low and the awareness level is only 18 percent. Majority 63 percent of

respondents were not known to their health issues due to poor nutritional awareness.

**Table 4:** Awareness level of health and health related problems by tribal women in kolli hills

S.No.	Health & Health Related Problems	No. of Women Tribal Women Responses			Total
		Known	Partially Known	Not Known	
1.	Good Health	73	24	3	100
2.	Yoga/Meditation	17	19	64	100
3.	Family planning	41	26	33	100
4.	Menopause	54	42	4	100
5.	Diabetes Mellitus	49	47	4	100
6.	Hypertension(B.P)	32	39	29	100
7.	Heart Diseases	67	22	11	100
8.	Kidney Stone	37	39	24	100
9.	Delivery By Caesarean	39	36	25	100
10.	Abortion	49	42	9	100
11.	Post Menopausal Osteoporosis	11	17	72	100
12.	Test Tube Baby	9	8	83	100
13.	Obesity	19	17	64	100
14.	Cataract	7	9	84	100
15.	Mentally Retarded	12	19	69	100
16.	Dengue Fever	34	36	30	100
17.	Malaria	37	39	24	100
18.	Typhoid	22	37	41	100
19.	Chickenguniya	13	17	70	100
20.	AIDS/HIV	19	21	60	100
21.	Swine Fever	2	9	89	100
22.	Bird Flu	1	13	86	100
23.	Psoriasis	4	3	93	100
24.	Dental Flurosis	2	6	92	100
25.	Personal Hygiene	19	26	55	100
26.	Cancer	12	21	67	100
27.	Breast Cancer	6	8	86	100
28.	Uterine Cancer	19	17	64	100
29.	Oral Cancer	4	7	89	100
30.	Ill effects of Tobacco Chewing	8	9	83	100
31.	Ill effects of Alcohol Consumption	11	19	70	100
32.	Viral Fever	9	4	87	100
33.	Mentally retarded	8	7	85	100
34.	Tuberculosis	33	34	33	100
35.	Polio	38	41	21	100
	Overall percentage	23.34	22.29	54.37	100

Table 4: showed that awareness level of health and health related problems of tribal women of Kolli Hills. It was observed that more than 50 percent of women were not at

all knowing the health related problems. Only 23 percent of women had awareness about their health.

**Table 5:** awareness level of government schemes by tribal women in kolli kills

S. No.	Health & Health Related Problems	Tribal Women Responses			Total
		Known	Partially Known	Not Known	
1.	Public Distribution System	98	2	-	100
2.	Anganwadis	65	25	10	100
3.	Noon Meal Scheme in Schools	89	10	1	100
4.	Incentives to Pregnant Women Scheme	79	20	1	100
5.	Old Age Pension Scheme	76	23	1	100
6.	Family Planning Scheme	56	29	15	100
	Overall percentage	77.17	18.17	4.66	100

Table 5: showed that the awareness level of government schemes by tribal women was observed that more than 75

percent of tribal women had good awareness about government schemes related to food, nutrition and health.

**Table 6:** Awareness level of nutrition and nutrition related problems by tribal women of kolli hills in relation to their socio economic condition

S. No.	Socioeconomic Condition		No .of women’s responses	Awareness of Nutrition and Nutrition related problems by tribal women							
				Known		Partially Known		Not Known		Total	
				N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1.	Family Type	Nuclear	76	26	34	25	33	25	33	76	100
		Joint	24	12	50	3	13	9	37	24	100
		Total	100	38		28		34		100	
2.	Family Size	Two Children	39	19		7		13		39	
		>Two Children	61	29		8		24		61	
		Total	100	48		15		37		100	
3.	Educational Status	Uneducated	58	9		6		43		58	
		Primary	27	13		2		12		27	
		SSLC	15	13		1		1		15	
		HSLC	-	-		-		-		-	
		Total	100	35		9		56		100	
4.	Age	< 25 years	20	6		3		11		20	
		25-50 years	58	36		5		17		58	
		>50 years	22	6		3		13		22	
		Total	100	48		11		41		100	
5.	Occupation	Agriculture	35	16		6		13		35	
		Daily wages	59	25		6		28		59	
		Housewife	2	1		-		1		2	
		Others	4	1		1		2		4	
		Total	100	43		13		44		100	
6.	Monthly Family Income Level (Rs.)	Rs.5000	49	15		4		30		49	
		Rs.5001-10000	48	26		4		18		48	
		>Rs.10000	3	2		1		-		3	
		Total	100	43		9		48		100	

Table-6 showed that women in joint family had more than 50 percent awareness than nuclear family and the awareness level was almost more than 50 percent in both two children family and more than two children family. And, level of education has shown positive uptrend regarding awareness. Middle age group (25-50 years) has

more than 50 percent awareness than the young age and old age group. Nearly 50 percent of women engaged in agriculture and daily wages had more awareness than housewife and women having other occupation. Monthly Family income level of Rs.5001-10000 has more than 50 percent of awareness.

**Table 7:** awareness level of good health and health related problems in relation to socioeconomic condition of tribal women in kolli hills

S. No.	Socioeconomic Condition		No .of women’s responses	Awareness of good Health and health related problems (%)							
				Known		Partially Known		Not Known		Total	
				N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1.	Family Type	Nuclear	76	23	30	20	26	33	44	76	100
		Joint	24	4	17	1	4	19	79	24	
		Total	100	27		21		52		100	
2.	Family Size	Two Children	39	29	75	6	15	4	10	39	
		>Two Children	61	28	46	20	33	13	21	61	100
		Total	100	57		26		17		100	
3.	Educational Status	Uneducated	58	12	21	6	10	40	69	58	100
		Primary	27	6	23	2	7	19	70	27	100
		SSLC	15	8	54	2	13	5	33	15	100
		HSLC	-	-		-		-		-	
		Total	100	26		10		64		100	
4.	Age	< 25 years	20	10	50	3	15	7	35	20	100
		25-50 years	58	39	67	9	16	10	17	58	100
		>50 years	22	9	41	7	32	6	27	22	100
		Total	100	58		19		23		100	
5.	Occupation	Agriculture	35	15	43	9	26	11	31	35	100
		Daily wages	59	17	29	19	32	23	39	59	100
		Housewife	2	1	50	-	-	1	50	2	100
		Others	4	2	50	1	25	1	25	4	100
		Total	100	35		29		36		100	
6.	Monthly Family Income Level (Rs.)	Rs.5000	49	7	14	15	31	27	55	49	100
		Rs.5001-10000	48	29	60	9	19	10	21	48	100
		>Rs.10000	3	2	67	1	33	-	-	3	100
		Total	100	38		25		37		100	

Table 7: showed that awareness level is more in Nuclear family. Family size of small and large progressively on upward trend in educated women (as the education level increases, the awareness level too is increased). Middle age group (25-50 years) has more than 50 percent awareness than the young age and old age group. Nearly 50 percent of women engaged in agriculture and daily wages had more awareness than housewife and women having other occupation. Monthly Family income level of Rs.5001-10000, has more than 50 percent of awareness.

### Findings

It could be observed that women from the highest income group mainly have good health status, consequent upon taking adequate nutritional and health care practices while as the women from low income group have low health status. This is due to taking inadequate nutritional and health care practices.

The awareness level of nutrition and nutrition related problems by tribal women was very low only 18 percent. It was observed that more than 50 percent of women were not at all knowing the health related problems and awareness level was only about 23 percent only. It was observed that more than 75 percent of tribal women were aware of the govt schemes related to food, nutrition and health. And, level of education has shown positive uptrend regarding awareness. Nearly 50 percent of women engaged in agriculture and daily wages had more awareness than housewife, and women having other occupation. Monthly Family income level of Rs.5001-10000, has more than 50 percent of awareness. It was observed that more than 50 percent of women were not at all knowing the health related problems and their awareness level was only about 23 percent only.

### Conclusion

Female literacy and subsequent awareness to several Food, Nutritional and Health aspects of life are the key factors for healthy life for all human societies. The tribal people have their own views and perceptions about diseases and ailments. Accordingly, they follow their own line of health care practices. Bandana Sachdev (2012) revealed that the tribal people do not prefer to visit hospitals frequently and this study also revealed the same fact. Low level of awareness about Food, Nutrition and Nutrition related issues especially among the tribal adult women as indicated by the present survey, there is a need for dissemination of mass information, education and communication in the tribal communities in order to increase their awareness about intake of nutrient rich food.

The nutritional status of the tribal women was quite low. Hence there is a need to increase nutritional status of the tribal women with the support of any nutrition supplementation or fortification program.

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