



Interventions Using Wild Edibles to Improve the Nutritional Status of Khasi tribal Women

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ABSTRACT Seven hundred and thirty five women of three physiological states Non-Pregnant Non Lactating, Pregnant and Lactating were respondents of the study to ascertain dietary deficiencies of important micronutrients like calcium, iron and b-carotene. Twenty-seven wild green edibles were selected on the basis of rapid rural appraisal and analyzed for the contents of the micronutrients. On observing the dietary deficiency of key nutrients in comparison to the Recommended Dietary Allowance it was found that calcium, iron and b-carotene was deficient in all the physiological states observed. Wild edibles rich in calcium (mg %) included *F.cunea* (665.8), *P.major* (427.8) and *B.roxburghii* (336.5). *C.diffusa* (11.6 mg%) and *O.corniculata* (16.7 mg %) were rich in iron and wild edibles rich in β -carotene (mg %) included *S. acmella* (6105.7), *S.oleoraceus* (4051.6), *F.cymosum* (2708.4) and *F.cunea* (2537.9). If around 50% of the micronutrient were considered available to the body then the wild edibles could take care of around 83% of the dietary deficit of the nutrients and around 52% of the recommended levels for the nutrients. This in the cases of iron and b-carotene would be fulfilled if the amount consumed were doubled to 200g/d where the requirements were high as in case of pregnancy and lactation. Therefore, these leaves could form an important part in combating dietary deficiencies of vitamin A, iron and calcium, which are the primary causes of night blindness and other vitamin A related deficiencies, anemia and osteoporosis especially among women and children in India. Due to its therapeutic value these leaves could form a part of low cost nutritional therapy that has been advocated by the Indian government to combat these serious deficiencies.

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