

Factors Affecting the Nutritional Health of Tribal Children in Maharashtra

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ABSTRACT: The perception of health and health seeking behaviour among the tribal people world over is intertwined with lots of factors – their traditional beliefs, practices, nature of interaction with physical environment and changing social, cultural and economic domain. Tribal population world over has been exposed to a rapidly changing world around them, the depleted natural resources on which they are dependent and alien culture of monetary economy. Tribal people are mostly unable to cope with these new situations. Their social and cultural customs are in transition whereas in socio-economic front they are lagging far behind from others. Such incompatibility has made the tribal people more vulnerable to several other aspects. Health-care issue is one of such major areas that need to be address on war footing. Among several health problems faced by the tribal groups, the problem of malnutrition and under-nutrition is seen as the direct consequence of socio-economic disorganization of tribal societies. The study tries to find out the impact of socio-cultural, political and economic environment on nutritional status of tribal children in Maharashtra, India. The study is based on both primary and secondary data on health and nutritional status and also observation of several aspects of tribal people. The study reveals that shortage of land and forest resources, lack of suitable job opportunity at local level and exposure to non-tribal domain has made tribal people suffer from lots of health and nutritional problems.