Nutritional dynamics of adolescent girls in selected tribal regions of Telangana, India

R Padmaja, K Kavitha, S Pramanik, P Babu and G Swathi

International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Patancheru 502324, India

The stage

Telangana's tribal districts of Adilabad, Komaram Bheem-Asifabad and Mancherial

Objective

To sensitize and provide the tribal population with affordable nutritious food products to supplement existing diets. Improved dietary diversity and increased nutritional intake is expected to benefit underweight children.

Approach

- Focus on nutrition of adolescent girls.
- Sample size: 1,463 adolescent girls from 38 villages covering 171 Anganwadi centres.
- Implemented by ICRISAT in collaboration with NRHM, Department of Women and Child Welfare, Government of Telangana and allied state government departments.

Findings

High level of undernutrition among adolescent girls in these regions

Nutritional status of adolescent girls in terms of anthropometric indicators

Indicator	Early adolescent (11 to 14 years)	Late adolescent (15 to 18 years)	Overall
Height (cm)	142.35 (7.99)	151.36* (4.80)	146.99 (7.76)
Weight (kg)	33.57 (6.58)	42.48* (5.23)	38.16 (7.06)
BMI (Kg/M^2)	16.38 (2.27)	18.54* (3.81)	17.49 (2.35)
BMI status			
Underweight	81.97	54.32	67.74
Normal	17.46	42.90	30.55
Overweight	0.56	2.79	1.71
Z score for BMI			
Stunting + thinness	12.25	4.78	8.41
Only stunting	20.14	26.96	23.65
Only thinness	12.96	13.81	13.40
Normal/stable	54.65	54.45	54.55

Values in the parentheses represent standard deviation (SD).
* The values of late adolescent groups are significantly different from those of the early adolescent group of respondents.
Source: Baseline survey, Nutri-food Basket project, ICRISAT, 2017.

Low dietary diversity

Dietary Diversity Scores of adolescent girls and pregnant and lactating women: Percentage of individuals.

Mandal	Members' status	Dietary diversity on a normal day		
		Low (Up to 3 food groups)	Medium (4 to 5 food groups)	High (More than 5 food groups)
Kasipet	Adolescent girls (N=586)	35.96	63.36	0.68
	Pregnant and lactating women (N=526)	40.15	58.69	1.16
Tiryani	Adolescent girls (N=441)	46.8	52.28	0.91
	Pregnant and lactating women (N=420)	51.21	48.06	0.73
Utnoor	Adolescent girls (N=428)	39.57	59.24	1.18
	Pregnant and lactating women (N=774)	33.77	63.34	2.89

Conclusion

- Limited awareness of nutrition, health and well-being.
- Rigid social and cultural norms that pose a challenge for women.
- A coordinated, goal-oriented approach should be adopted by involving varied stakeholders to bring about nutrition literacy and enhance the nutritional status of women, children and their communities.
- Adolescents should be targeted through efforts to disseminate information and updates.