



## Contribution of indigenous foods towards nutritional status of tribal communities of India – August 2023



The George Institute  
for Global Health  
India

### Facts:

- Although indigenous people make up just 6 percent of the global population, they account for about 19 percent of the extreme poor worldwide.
- India, a land of numerous cultures and people, is home to 104 million Indigenous Peoples, who constitute 8.6% of the total national population.
- Despite living in a rich biodiverse environment, Indian tribal communities are disproportionately affected by hunger and malnutrition, particularly among women and young children.

### Project Cycle:

2017 – 2023

### Partners:

All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi  
Rutgers University, New Jersey, United States

### Supporters:

DBT/Wellcome Trust India Alliance

### Principal Investigator:

Dr Suparna Ghosh-Jerath

### Background:

- Indigenous people retain knowledge of their land and indigenous food systems rooted in historical continuity within their region.
- Despite a rich agrobiodiversity, Indian tribal communities have high levels of malnutrition, particularly among women and young children.
- This study employed a food systems approach to assess the contribution of indigenous foods (IFs) towards dietary diversity and nutrient intake among tribal communities of Jharkhand.

### Aims:

- To evaluate the potential of IFs in contributing to dietary diversity and nutrient intake for improving food security and nutritional status among vulnerable tribal communities of Jharkhand.

### Methods:

- This was an exploratory, cross-sectional mixed-method study with a longitudinal component of dietary intake assessment to account for seasonal variations in food and nutrient intake.
- Four tribal communities were studied: Santhal, Munda, Ho and a particularly vulnerable tribal group, Sauria Paharia.

### Impact:

- Information from this study will be useful for identifying potential solutions to promote nutritious and affordable food-based recommendations, utilising local and culturally acceptable foods.

### Contact:

To find out more about this project and its principal investigators or The George Institute please contact contact Abhishek Shandilya +91 11 4158 8091-93 or AShandilya@georgeinstitute.org.in

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