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Nutritional Health of Tribal Children in India: Bridging Cultural Perceptions and Objective Assessments

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ABSTRACT The assessment of objective data on tribal children's malnutrition has been analysed with subjective interpretations through contextual background information about the cultural beliefs and practices, and environmental determinants in this article. This posits a stand to understand the biomedical perspective encompassing a holistic and humane context. The study uses data from the report of Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS), India 2019. Statistically significant differences highlight the greater vulnerability of Scheduled Tribe (ST) children to growth retardation and anaemia compared to other social categories. However, tribal children fare better with vitamin A and D deficiency. While tribal children are more likely to face socioeconomic challenges, they also benefit from diets enriched with wild foods, which enhance their Vitamin A and D levels in contrast to Scheduled Caste (SC) and Other Backward Class (OBC) children. The extensive literature review and discussion indicate the adverse influence of socio-cultural practices and depletion of traditional resources on the health status of tribal children.