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Changing Bio-ecological Aspect of Food and Nutrition among Five Tribes of the Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu

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ABSTRACT The data on food and diet survey on five native tribe of the Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu, indicate the present condition of their food getting ways, food situation, food consumption patterns and their nutritional intake. The food and nutritional eco-system of these tribes of the Nilgiris are varied. The average daily diet consumption shows that Todas and Kotas are better over other tribes, Irula, Paniya and Kurumba, in order and the same is reflected in the mean composition of important nutrients. When these consumption patterns of nutrients are compared with recommended dietary allowance only Todas and Kotas meet the daily requirements. These have again clearly reflected through nutritional anthropometry. Only Todas and Kotas have food BMI values. The prevalence of Protein Energy Malnutrition and other nutritional deficiency signs are more among the Paniya, Kurumba and Irula than among Todas and Kotas. The findings of the present survey further indicate the association of the Nilgiri tribes with forests for food and sustenance and consequent changes in their food habits with the change of environment.