

# Traditional foods of tribal households of Southern Odisha

■ ABHA SINGH AND B.N. SADANGI

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See end of the paper for authors' affiliations

Correspondence to :

**B.N. SADANGI**

Social Science Division, Central Rice Research Institute, CUTTACK (ODISHA) INDIA  
Email: singhabha21@yahoo.co.in

■ **ABSTRACT :** A study was conducted to know the traditional foods of tribal families, present dietary pattern and major food combinations of tribal diet in Koraput and Rayagada district of Odisha. A total of 240 households were interviewed to know the daily, weekly, monthly and occasional diet pattern of tribal families. Cereal/millet was the main source of energy and also protein in their diet because consumption of pulses or non-vegetarian food was very less. Tamarind had a great role in their diet as daily they were preparing charu. Average consumption of tamarind in each family was about 1-2 quintals per year which they collect from forest. Seasonal foods were very important for tribals and were taken only during special season. It is prominently observed that tribal households have some traditional foods and food habits which are very much detrimental to the nutritional security for example- eating mango seed kernel powder, tamarind seed powder, poisonous mushroom, and rotten meat etc. may create health related problems and sometimes fatal situations. Massive awareness programmes and provision of subsidized food especially during the period of food scarcity would be more appropriate.

■ **KEY WORDS :** Tribal, Traditional foods, Diet, Mandia pez, Charu

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Odisha is inhabited by 62 tribes with a total strength of approximately six million (5,915,067) constituting 22.43 per cent of the total State population. Tribal population is ethnic in composition, smaller in size having subsistence economy based on forest, wages and shifting cultivation. Shifting agriculture on unproductive and uneconomic holdings under un-irrigated condition in the undulating terrains with traditional skill and primitive implements raise only one crop during the monsoon, and therefore, they have to supplement their economy by other types of subsidiary economic activities. They have simple technology, simple division of labour, small-scale units of production and no investment of capital. The production, distribution and consumption are limited to the family. The ability of a household to command sufficient resources for food and basic needs is largely dependent upon social, material and economic conditions. In this paper, an attempt has been made to examine the traditional foods and various food combinations of the tribes of Rayagada and Koraput districts of Odisha.

## ■ RESEARCH METHODS

The study was carried out in two hilly and tribal dominated districts namely; Koraput and Rayagada of Odisha during 2008-09. Two blocks namely Badunga and Laxmipur in Koraput and Rayagada and Kashipur in Rayagada district were selected for investigation. Two villages in each of the

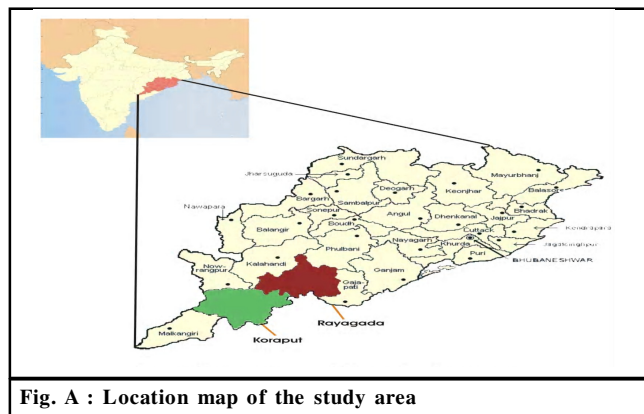


Fig. A : Location map of the study area