

Iodine nutrition, bamboo shoot consumption, thiocyanate exposure, thyroid function, weight and height, and associations among them in the tribal children of Tripura, Northeast India

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Received: 11/09/2026

Accepted: 11/10/2026

Published: 20/10/2026

Cite this article: Ray I, Chandra AK, Debbarma SK, Mookerjee SK, Datta A, Singh LH. Iodine nutrition, bamboo shoot consumption, thiocyanate exposure, thyroid function, weight and height, and associations among them in the tribal children of Tripura, Northeast India. *Surg Child.* 2026;3(4):139-148. doi:10.51271/SOC-0087

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ABSTRACT

Aims: To evaluate the status of iodine consumption (IC) and bamboo shoot consumption (BSC) and their impacts on Tripura's iodized salt-consuming tribal population, this study aimed at assessing iodine nutrition, BSC, thiocyanate exposure, thyroid function, weight and height, and associations among them in Tripura's tribal children.

Methods: This cross-sectional study included 127 children aged 6-12 years from Deorachhara, Unakoti and Naithangchhara. The study assessed thyroid volume (TV), free thyroxine (FT4), free triiodothyronine (FT3), thyrotropin, thyroglobulin antibody (Tg-Ab), thyroid peroxidase antibody (TPO-Ab), urinary iodine (UI), urinary thiocyanate (USCN), salt iodine, water iodine, weight, height and BSC.

Results: The medians of BSC (grams/person/day), WI ($\mu\text{g/L}$), UI ($\mu\text{g/L}$), FT4 (pmol/L) and FT3 (pmol/L) were 83.3, 1.1, 103, 22.1 and 5.01 in Deorachhara; 119.0, 5.0, 100.0, 17.0 and 4.22 in Naithangchhara; and 166.7, 4.5, 143.0, 19.7 and 5.87 in Unakoti, respectively. Unakoti showed significantly higher thyrotropin and FT3 levels, and significantly lower FT4 level, weight, and height compared to Deorachhara. There were significant positive correlations between Tg-Ab and TPO-Ab in Unakoti and Naithangchhara, and USCN and TPO-Ab in boys. Deorachhara showed a significant negative correlation between TV and Tg-Ab. Naithangchhara showed significantly lower thyrotropin, FT4, and FT3 levels, and a significantly higher Tg-Ab level compared to Unakoti. Unakoti showed the highest underweight and thinness prevalence, whereas Naithangchhara showed the highest stunting prevalence.

Conclusion: Children with lower normal median free thyroid hormone levels showed a higher undernutrition prevalence and risks of autoimmune thyroid diseases, probably due to higher BSC and lower adequate IC.

Keywords: Thyroid gland, thyroxine, triiodothyronine, thyrotropin, autoantibodies, nutritional status

INTRODUCTION

Iodine, an essential trace element, is required by mammals for the production of thyroid hormones (TH)–thyroxine (T_4) and triiodothyronine (T_3).^{1,2} Thyroid gland produces 100% of T_4 and 20% of T_3 in men, and remaining 80% of T_3 is produced by extrathyroidal deiodination of T_4 in liver, kidney, brain, pituitary and brown fat.¹ Less than 1% of T_4 and T_3 remains as free F_4 (FT₄) and free F_3 (FT₃).¹ Free TH, being accessible to peripheral tissues, regulate various biological activities.³

To produce sufficient TH, daily iodine consumption (IC) should be at least enough to ensure a median urinary iodine (UI) level of 100 $\mu\text{g/L}$ indicating adequate iodine consumption (AIC).⁴ Foodstuffs deficient in iodine and/or rich in goitrogens may cause iodine deficiency (ID)^{1,2,5} which decreases TH.¹ In low TH (hypothyroidism), hypothalamic thyrotropin releasing hormone (TRH) stimulates pituitary gland to produce thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH)/thyrotropin which, in turn, stimulates thyroid gland to



release TH (predominantly FT_4). Besides, hyperthyroidism i.e., high TH (predominantly FT_4) decrease TSH inhibiting pituitary gland and hypothalamus.⁶ Prolonged TSH action produces goiter (enlargement of thyroid gland) by stimulating hypertrophy and hyperplasia.¹ Beside hypothyroidism and goiter, ID may also (a) increase the incidences of stillbirth, spontaneous abortion, congenital anomalies, low birth weight, young one's mortality, deaf-mutism, squint, spastic diplegia, cretinism,⁵ short stature,⁴ delayed bone maturation, retarded sexual maturation,¹ (b) damage brain in young ones,⁵ and (c) lower intelligence quotient up to 13.5 points.⁴ All these disorders are known as iodine deficiency disorders (IDD). Besides, both ID⁷ and excess IC^{4,7} may cause autoimmune thyroid diseases (AITD) by increasing thyroglobulin antibody (Tg-Ab) and thyroid peroxidase antibody (TPO-Ab). Excess IC may convert the higher Tg-Ab or TPO-Ab state to overt hypothyroidism.⁸ To control IDD, major strategies are sustainably eliminating ID by supplementing exogenous iodine through universal salt iodization (USI) program and monitoring IC periodically.⁴

In the context of thyroid function, Tripura's tribal population holds special relevance, because they traditionally consume bamboo shoot (BS) which contains antithyroid constituents like thiocyanate.⁹ Besides, the State of Tripura is iodine deficient¹⁰ and found goiter endemic,^{11,12} where effectiveness of the prophylactic USI program introduced in 1988¹¹ was not satisfactory.¹² But the information regarding the status of IC and bamboo shoot consumption (BSC) and their impacts on the thyroid gland and overall health of Tripura's iodized salt-consuming tribal population was scarce. Therefore, this study aimed at assessing thyroid pathophysiology, thyroid volume (TV), FT_4 , FT_3 , TSH, Tg-Ab, TPO-Ab, UI, urinary thiocyanate (USCN), salt iodine (SI), water iodine (WI), weight, height and BSC, and associations among them in the tribal children of Tripura.

METHODS

Ethics

This study was approved by the Institutional Human Ethical Committee, Department of Physiology, University of Calcutta, Kolkata, India (Date: 03.10.2013, Decision No:IHEC/PHY/CU/H-P 34/13) under the research study entitled "Studies on Anti-thyroidal Biomolecules in Bamboo-shoots of North-East and evaluation of their Molecular and Physiological actions in Thyroid disruptions". All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional research committee and the Helsinki Declaration.

Study Population

Three hilly villages-Deorachhara, Unakoti, and Naithangchhara-were randomly selected for the study from the Tripura Tribal Autonomous District Council, Northeast India. Deorachhara and Unakoti are in Unakoti district, and Naithangchhara is in Dhalai district. These villages were sparsely populated and under USI program, besides all were similar in climate, economy, culture, education, dietary habits and available health facilities. As school-aged children have ability to reflect current status of iodine nutrition⁵ and urine samples collected at random from 40 subjects of an area

represent current status of iodine nutrition in that area,¹³ the willing tribal children aged 6-12 years receiving no medical treatment were selected randomly ensuring at least 40 subjects from each village. Thus, a total of 127 children (boys-59 and girls-68) were selected from these three villages. The study was conducted during the BSC period of 2015-2018.

Anthropometric Measurements

Weight and height have been widely and successfully used with reference to one another or age to assess health and nutritional risk, especially in children.¹⁴ So, weight and height were measured using a digital weighing scale and an anthropometric rod, and recorded to nearest 100 grams and centimeters, respectively. Body-mass index (BMI) was calculated using the formula: "BMI (in kilograms/square meters)=(weight in kilograms)/(height in meters)²".¹⁵ Body surface area (BSA) was calculated using Dubois and Dubois formula: "BSA (in square meters)=(weight in kilograms)^{0.425} × (height in centimeters)^{0.725} × 71.84 × 10⁻⁴".⁴ Weight, height and BMI of each child were compared with those of CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the United States) reference z-scores for the child's gender and age.¹⁶ A child with <-2SD (SD, standard deviation) weight-for-age, <-2SD height-for-age, <-2SD BMI-for-age, >1SD BMI-for-age or >2SD BMI-for-age was considered as underweight, stunted, thin, overweight or obese, respectively.¹⁵

Thyroid Ultrasonography

Echogenicity of thyroid gland was studied for detecting nodules and measuring TV following WHO (World Health Organization) ultrasonographic guidelines,⁴ using a portable compact color doppler ultrasound scanner system with a 7.5 MHz linear array transducer (GE LOGIQ E BT 12 Console with 12 L RS Linear Probe, Wipro GE Healthcare Pvt. Ltd) by a radiologist. Each thyroid lobe's volume was calculated by the formula: "Each thyroid lobe's volume (in milliliters)=0.479×(length in centimeters)×(width in centimeters)×(depth in centimeters)".⁴ TV was calculated by adding the volumes of right and left lobes. TV of each child was compared with the 97th percentile reference TV of iodine-sufficient children for the child's sex and age⁴ to diagnose as goitrous or normal.

Serum Levels of FT_4 , FT_3 , TSH, Tg-Ab and TPO-Ab

Serum was separated within 2 hours of fasting venous blood collection from each child and stored at -20°C until analysis. Serum levels of FT_4 , FT_3 , TSH, Tg-Ab and TPO-Ab were measured by ELISA microwell methods using the kits of FT_4 (Product Code: 1225-300, Accu-Bind ELISA Microwells, Monobind Inc., Lake Forest, CA 92630, USA), FT_3 (Calbiotech Inc., 10461 Austin Dr. Spring Valley, CA, 91978), TSH (Product Code: 325-300, Accu-Bind ELISA Microwells, Monobind Inc., Lake Forest, CA 92630, USA), anti-Tg-Ab (EUROIMMUN, Medizinische, Labordiagnostika, AG) and anti-TPO-Ab (EUROIMMUN, Medizinische, Labordiagnostika, AG), respectively.

Diagnostic tests to evaluate thyroid function: (a) Diagnostic criteria and values (both according to assay manuals): AITD: Tg-Ab (negative: <100 IU/ml, positive: ≥100 IU/ml); TPO-Ab (negative: <50 IU/ml, positive: ≥50 IU/ml). (b) Diagnostic criteria (according to published literature)¹⁷ and values



(according to assay manuals): Euthyroid: normal TSH (0.39-6.16 μ IU/ml [0.39-6.16 mIU/L]) and normal FT₄ (0.8-2.0 ng/dl [10.3-25.7 pmol/L]); Euthyroid hypothyroxinemia: normal TSH and low FT₄ (<0.8 ng/dl [<10.3 pmol/L]); Euthyroid hyperthyroxinemia: normal TSH, high FT₄ (>2.0 ng/dl [>25.7 pmol/L]) and low FT₃ (<1.4 pg/ml [<2.15 pmol/L]); Primary/Overt hypothyroidism: high TSH (>6.16 μ IU/ml [>6.16 mIU/L]) and low FT₄ [Hashimoto's thyroiditis: Primary hypothyroidism with positive Tg-Ab and positive TPO-Ab]; Secondary/central hypothyroidism: low TSH (<0.39 μ IU/ml [<0.39 mIU/L]) and low FT₄; Subclinical hypothyroidism: high TSH and normal FT₄; Primary hyperthyroidism: low TSH and high FT₄ [Graves disease: Primary hyperthyroidism with positive Tg-Ab, positive TPO-Ab and positive TRAb (thyrotropin receptor antibody)]; Secondary/TSH-mediated/central hyperthyroidism: high TSH and high FT₄; Subclinical hyperthyroidism: low TSH, normal FT₄ and high FT₃ (>4.2 pg/ml [>6.45 pmol/L]).

Urinary Iodine Level

Urine samples were collected from the selected children and stored at 4°C until analysis. Urine samples were collected ensuring at least 40 samples from each village.¹³ Urine samples' iodine contents were assayed following Karmarkar et al.¹⁸ method.

Urinary Thiocyanate Level

The dietary consumption of thiocyanate in a population is determined from the USCN.¹⁹ So, urine samples' thiocyanate contents were estimated following Aldridge modified method of Michajlovskij and Langer.²⁰

Salt Iodine Level

Iodized salt samples were collected from the families of selected children, ensuring at least 35 salt samples from each village, as 35 salt samples collected randomly from an area reflect USI program status in that area.²¹ Salt samples' iodine contents were estimated following iodometric titration method.⁴

Water Iodine Level

Samples of water used for drinking and house-hold works were collected from the families of selected children and stored at 4°C until analysis. Water samples' iodine contents were assayed following Karmarkar et al.¹⁸ method.

Bamboo Shoot Consumption

To determine per capita daily BSC in the selected villages, 61 randomly selected tribal families consisting of 270 members were interviewed regarding their consumed BS's types and forms, duration of BS availability in a year, consumption frequency per week, consumption amount per day, number of family members, and the information thus obtained was recorded.

Statistical Analysis

Means (SDs) and medians of age, TV, FT₄, FT₃, TSH, Tg-Ab, TPO-Ab, UI, USCN, WI, SI, weight, height and BSC were calculated using Microsoft Excel Office 2019. Two tail z-test (for n [children number] ≥ 30) and t-test (for n < 30) of Microsoft Excel Analysis Tool Pak were used to calculate mean differences' significance levels (p-values). First order

partial correlation coefficients (r) were calculated using the formula: " $r_{12.3} = (r_{12} - r_{13}r_{23}) / \sqrt{((1-r_{13}^2)(1-r_{23}^2))}$... $r_{23.1} = (r_{23} - r_{12}r_{13}) / \sqrt{((1-r_{12}^2)(1-r_{13}^2))}$ " [where 1=UI, 2=SI and 3=WI], and 9th order partial 'r' using the formula: " $r_{12.3456789X} = (r_{12.3456789X} - r_{1Y.3456789X}r_{2Y.3456789X}) / \sqrt{(1-r_{1Y.3456789X}^2)(1-r_{2Y.3456789X}^2)}$... $r_{XY.12345678} = (r_{XY.12345678} - r_{9X.12345678}r_{9Y.12345678}) / \sqrt{(1-r_{9X.12345678}^2)(1-r_{9Y.12345678}^2)}$ " [where 1=age, 2=TV, 3=FT₄, 4=FT₃, 5=TSH, 6=Tg-Ab, 7=TPO-Ab, 8=USCN, 9=UI, X=weight, and Y=height], and their p-values were obtained when t-values were calculated using the formula: " $t = r / \sqrt{(1-r^2) / (n - \text{number of variables})}$ ", and consulted with the critical t value table of two-tail test.²² The statistical charts were prepared using Microsoft Excel Office 2019.

RESULTS

Table 1 details children's demographic characteristics, variable means (SDs) and medians by village and total, and the significance levels (p-values) of mean differences across villages. Dietary survey on BS showed an overall median BSC of 119 grams/person/day for about 6 months from May to October. The studied families mainly consumed muli (*Melocanna baccifera*), mritinga (*Bambusa tulda*), rupai (*Dendrocalamus longispathus*), dalu (*Schizostachyum dullooa*), barak (*Bambusa balcooa*) and jai or bari (*Bambusa vulgaris* var. *vulgaris*) types of BS in cooked forms as curry, fry, prickle and boiled BS. Unakoti having significantly higher BSC showed significantly higher levels of TSH and FT₃, and significantly lower levels of FT₄, weight, height, BMI and BSA compared to Deorachhara. Besides, Naithangchhara having significantly lower UI showed significantly lower levels of FT₄, FT₃ and TSH, and significantly higher levels of Tg-Ab and BMI compared to Unakoti.

Table 2 shows the prevalence of underweight, stunting and thinness. Unakoti showed highest prevalence of underweight, and thinness, whereas Naithangchhara showed highest stunting prevalence.

Table 3 highlights the distribution pattern of FT₄, FT₃, TSH, Tg-Ab, TPO-Ab, UI, WI and SI. Normal levels of FT₄, FT₃ and TSH were observed in 92.9%, 81.1% and 93.7% children, respectively. Iodine level was ≥ 15 parts per million (ppm) in 80.3% salt samples.

Table 4 presents 9th order partial 'r' between different variable pairs along with p-values. There were significant positive correlations between TV and height in Unakoti, between Tg-Ab and TPO-Ab in Unakoti, Naithangchhara and total children, between TV and weight in Deorachhara and total children, between TPO-Ab and FT₃ in Deorachhara, between FT₄ and TSH in girls, between FT₄ and weight in total children, between age and Tg-Ab in total children, between UI and height in Naithangchhara and total children, between USCN and FT₄ in Naithangchhara and total children, between UI and TPO-AB and between USCN and TPO-AB in boys. Besides, there were significant negative corrections between TPO-Ab and TSH in Unakoti, between TV and Tg-Ab in Deorachhara, between Tg-Ab and FT₃ in boys, between TSH and weight in total children, between Tg-Ab and weight in boys, between age and UI in Naithangchhara and boys, and between UI and weight in total children.

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics, and levels of TV, FT₄, FT₃, TSH, Tg-Ab, TPO-Ab, UI, USCN, WI, SI and BSC by village and total, and significance levels of mean differences across villages among the studied tribal children in Tripura

Variable	Deorachhara (DC) (n=45) (M/F=0.80)	Unakoti (UK) (n=41) (M/F=0.78)	Naithangchhara (NC) (n=41) (M/F=1.05)	Total (n=127) (M/F=0.87)	Mean differences' significance level*		
	Mean (SD)/median	Mean (SD)/median	Mean (SD)/median	Mean (SD)/median	DC vs. UK	UK vs. NC	DC vs. NC
Age (yr)	9.02 (2.02)/9.56	8.37 (1.45)/8.24	8.68 (1.49)/8.75	8.70 (1.69)/8.77	0.084 (NS)	0.341 (NS)	0.371 (NS)
Weight (kg)	24.2 (6.6)/24.0	20.0 (3.6)/19.7	21.5 (3.7)/20.2	22.0 (5.2)/20.9	0.000 (S)	0.077 (NS)	0.016 (S)
Height (cm)	124.5 (12.3)/125.4	118.7 (7.7)/119.3	119.1 (9.2)/118.9	120.9 (10.3)/120.4	0.009 (S)	0.868 (NS)	0.020 (S)
BMI	15.3 (1.7)/14.9	14.1 (1.1)/14.1	15.0 (0.9)/15.1	14.8 (1.4)/14.6	0.000 (S)	0.000 (S)	0.370 (NS)
BSA (m ²)	0.92 (0.17)/0.93	0.82 (0.10)/0.82	0.84 (0.11)/0.82	0.86 (0.14)/0.84	0.001 (S)	0.311 (NS)	0.028 (S)
TV (ml)	0.85 (0.34)/0.86	0.83 (0.23)/0.85	0.79 (0.20)/0.76	0.82 (0.27)/0.82	0.650 (NS)	0.392 (NS)	0.250 (NS)
FT ₄ (pmol/L)	22.8 (6.1)/22.1	19.2 (4.8)/19.7	16.3 (3.5)/17.0	19.5 (5.6)/20.1	0.002 (S)	0.001 (S)	0.000 (S)
FT ₃ (pmol/L)	4.91 (1.44)/5.01	6.02 (1.57)/5.87	4.37 (0.84)/4.22	5.09 (1.48)/5.04	0.001 (S)	0.000 (S)	0.033 (S)
TSH (mIU/L)	2.66 (1.23)/2.13	3.25 (1.34)/3.02	1.40 (0.90)/1.31	2.44 (1.39)/2.23	0.034 (S)	0.000 (S)	0.000 (S)
Tg-Ab (IU/ml)	12.2 (2.5)/11.5	13.1 (5.2)/12.0	20.6 (15.4)/14.7	15.2 (10.0)/12.5	0.335 (NS)	0.003 (S)	0.001 (S)
TPO-Ab (IU/ml)	4.39 (1.59)/4.05	4.61 (2.04)/4.15	7.86 (21.40)/1.40	5.58 (12.25)/3.89	0.583 (NS)	0.333 (NS)	0.301 (NS)
UI (µg/L)	117.8 (69.3)/103	130.7 (49.9)/143	103.4 (51.0)/100	117.3 (58.4)/108	0.321 (NS)	0.014 (S)	0.269 (NS)
USCN (mg/dl)	1.08 (0.67)/0.9	0.95 (0.36)/0.9	0.92 (0.88)/0.5	0.99 (0.67)/0.8	0.228 (NS)	0.844 (NS)	0.324 (NS)
WI (µg/L)	2.18 (2.91)/1.1	6.32 (5.54)/4.5	5.83 (3.79)/5.0	4.69 (4.56)/3.0	0.000 (S)	0.642 (NS)	0.000 (S)
SI (ppm)	22.2 (11.0)/26.6	20.5 (12.3)/20.0	21.0 (7.4)/21.0	21.2 (10.4)/20.7	0.511 (NS)	0.840 (NS)	0.549 (NS)
BS (g/person/day)	125.6 (78.4)/83.3 (FN=15)	194.4 (118.0)/166.7 (FN=23)	131.7 (86.0)/119.0 (FN=23)	153.8 (101.4)/119.0 (FN=61)	0.037 [@] (S)	0.046 [@] (S)	0.826 [*] (NS)

BMI: Body-mass index, BSA: Body surface area, TV: Thyroid volume, FT₄: Free thyroxine, FT₃: Free triiodothyronine, TSH: Thyroid stimulating hormone, Tg-Ab: Thyroglobulin antibody, TPO-Ab: Thyroid peroxidase antibody, UI: Urinary iodine, USCN: Urinary thiocyanate, WI: Water iodine, SI: Salt iodine, BSC: Bamboo shoot, n: Children number, M/F: Male/female ratio, FN: Families' number, S: Significant, NS: Not significant, SD: Standard deviation
*: Two-tail t-test (@: Assuming Unequal Variances, #: Assuming Equal Variances) and z-test at $\alpha=0.05$ were performed to find out mean differences' significance level

Table 2. Prevalence of underweight, stunting and thinness by village, gender and total among studied tribal children in Tripura

Type of malnutrition	Prevalence					
	Deorachhara	Unakoti	Naithangchhara	Boys	Girls	Total
Underweight (<-2SD weight-for-age)	11 (24.4%)	21 (51.2%)	18 (43.9%)	25 (42.4%)	25 (36.8%)	50 (39.4%)
Stunting (<-2SD height-for-age)	12 (26.7%)	18 (43.9%)	21 (51.2%)	27 (45.8%)	24 (35.3%)	51 (40.2%)
Thinness (<-2SD BMI-for-age)	4 (8.9%)	10 (24.4%)	2 (4.9%)	4 (6.8%)	12 (17.6%)	16 (12.6%)

Malnutrition data presented in n (%), where n is children number, SD: Standard deviation, BMI: Body-mass index

Ninth order partial 'r' involving BMI and BSA replacing weight and height, respectively were also calculated (not shown in table). There were significant positive correlations between TV and BSA in Unakoti, Deorachhara and total children, between FT₄ and BSA in total children, and between UI and BSA in Unakoti and boys. There were significant negative correlations between UI and BMI in Deorachhara and total children, and between Tg-Ab and BMI in boys. There were no significant differences between the means of boys and girls for the study variables (not shown in table).

First order partial correlation among UI, WI and SI showed a significant positive correlation between UI and WI (not shown in table).

Figure 1 graphically represents the levels of BSC, FT₄, weight, height, and BMI, alongside the prevalence of undernutrition (underweight, stunting, and thinness) in Unakoti (which has a higher BSC and a lower FT₄) and Deorachhara (which has a lower BSC and a higher FT₄).

Figure 2 shows the scatter plots of FT₄ against weight, height, and BMI in Unakoti (which has a higher BSC and a lower FT₄) and Deorachhara (which has a lower BSC and a higher FT₄).

DISCUSSION

This study revealed the status of iodine nutrition, BSC, thiocyanate exposure, thyroid function, physical health, and associations among them in Tripura's studied children.

For optimal TH production, thyroid gland requires varying amounts of iodine based on age (years): 90 µg/day for children under 6, 120 µg/day for children aged 6-12, and 150 µg/day for adolescents and adults. Consistently meeting these requirements typically results in a median UI level of 100 µg/L, indicating AIC across all age groups.⁴ Median UI levels of 100-199 µg/L representing a range of AIC indicate adequate iodine nutrition.⁴ Besides, median UI levels (µg/L) of <20, 20-49, 50-99, 200-299 and ≥300 indicate severe ID, moderate ID, mild ID, more than AIC and excess IC, respectively.⁴ As per these criteria, the studied children had AIC.

Bioavailability of iodine in an area is generally reflected in its WI. An area is considered as severe, moderate, relative iodine deficient or iodine sufficient depending on whether WI level (µg/L) is <4, 4-10, >10-20 or >20, respectively.²³ As per these criteria, the studied villages were severe to moderate iodine deficient, overall being severe iodine deficient which

Table 3. Distribution pattern of FT₄, FT₃, TSH, Tg-Ab, TPO-Ab, UI, WI and SI among studied tribal children in Tripura

Variable		Range			
FT ₄ (pmol/L)					
<10.30 (low level)*		10.30–25.74 (normal level)*		>25.74 (high level)*	
3 (2.4%)		118 (92.9%)		6 (4.7%)	
Total				127 (100%)	
FT ₃ (pmol/L)					
<2.15 (low level)*		2.15–6.45 (normal level)*		>6.45 (high level)*	
2 (1.6%)		103 (81.1%)		22 (17.3%)	
Total				127 (100%)	
TSH (mIU/L)					
<0.39 (low level)*		0.39–6.16 (normal level)*		>6.16 (high level)*	
6 (4.7%)		119 (93.7%)		2 (1.6%)	
Total				127 (100%)	
Tg-Ab (IU/ml)					
≥100 (i.e. positive)*		<100 (i.e. negative)*		Total	
0 (0.0%)		127 (100%)		127 (100%)	
TPO-Ab (IU/ml)					
≥50 (i.e. positive)*		<50 (i.e. negative)*		Total	
1 (0.8%)		126 (99.2%)		127 (100%)	
UI (µg/L)					
<20 (severe ID)	20-49.(moderate ID)	50–99 (mild ID)	100–199 (adequate)	200–299 (>adequate)	Total
6 (4.7%)	16 (12.6%)	36 (28.4%)	63 (49.6%)	6 (4.7%)	127 (100%)
WI (µg/L)					
<4 (severe ID)	4-10 (moderate ID)	>10–20 (relative ID)		>20 (adequate)	Total
73 (57.5%)	42 (33.1%)	12 (9.4%)		0 (0.0%)	127 (100%)
SI (ppm)					
<15 (below adequate)		≥15 (adequate)		≥30 (above adequate)	
25 (19.7%)		74 (58.3%)		28 (22.0%)	
127 (100%)					
Data presented in n (%), where n is children number. Note FT ₄ : Free thyroxine, FT ₃ : Free triiodothyronine, TSH: Thyroid stimulating hormone, Tg-Ab: Thyroglobulin antibody, TPO-Ab: Thyroid peroxidase antibody, UI: Urinary iodine, WI: Water iodine, SI: Salt iodine, ID: Iodine deficiency; *Values as per assay manuals					

Data presented in n (%), where n is children number. Note FT₄: Free thyroxine, FT₃: Free triiodothyronine, TSH: Thyroid stimulating hormone, Tg-Ab: Thyroglobulin antibody, TPO-Ab: Thyroid peroxidase antibody, UI: Urinary iodine, WI: Water iodine, SI: Salt iodine, ID: Iodine deficiency, *Values as per assay manuals

confirmed our previous report.¹⁰ However, this study showed a positive correlation between UI and WI ($p < 0.05$) as was observed by Lv et al.²⁴ All these suggested that though these villages were iodine deficient, water available in these villages was a significant source of the consumed iodine.

Generally, achieving ≥ 15 ppm iodine in $\geq 90\%$ salt samples indicate USI program's satisfactory effectiveness.⁴ As per this criterion, effectiveness of the ongoing USI program under this study was not satisfactory. However, USI program under this study was better in effectiveness than that of 1996–98.¹² Besides, SI had no correlation with UI. All these suggested that the ongoing USI program was not a significant source of consumed iodine.

Usually, Total Goiter Rates (TGR) of 0.0–4.9%, 5.0–19.9%, 20.0–29.9% and $\geq 30\%$ indicate 'no', 'mild', 'moderate' and 'severe' IDD, respectively.⁴ Besides, thyroid nodule prevalence in children normally varies within 1.0–1.5%.²⁵ This study showing all children with normal TV and 0.8% children with thyroid nodules suggested that IDD were not major problems in these villages. This study's TV was lower than that of excess IC area.²⁶

This study's village-wise and overall means/medians of FT₄, FT₃ and TSH were in normal ranges. This study's overall means of FT₄ and FT₃ were higher and lower, respectively than that of excess IC area,²⁶ and higher in both cases than that of AIC area.²⁷ This study's overall median TSH was lower than

that of excess IC²⁶ and AIC areas.²⁷ Overall, 86.1% studied children were euthyroid. This study also showed high FT₃ in 17.3% children, being highest (34.1% children) in Unakoti having highest mean and median levels of BSC, TSH and FT₃. All these suggested that BS might have increased FT₃, probably by elevating TSH. This study's thyroid dysfunction prevalence (1.6% subclinical hypothyroidism and 2.4% euthyroid hypothyroxinemia) was lower than that of AIC area.²⁷

This study's overall median Tg-Ab was lower than that of AIC area,²⁷ and the prevalence of positive Tg-Ab (0%) and positive TPO-Ab (0.8%) were lower than that of excess IC area.²⁶ Generally, AITD prevalence in children varies within 0.5–3% in areas having no ID.²⁸ Thus, it appeared that positive thyroid auto-antibodies were not major problems in these villages.

This study's median BSC (grams/person/day) during BS-growing seasons varied from 83.3 in Deorachhara, 119 in Naithangchhara to 166.7 in Unakoti, overall being 119 which were higher than that of Australia and New Zealand (where BSC varied within 31–70 grams/person/day).²⁹ This study showing higher BSC ($p = 0.037$) associated with higher levels of TSH ($p = 0.034$) and FT₃ ($p = 0.001$), and lower levels of FT₄ ($p = 0.002$), height ($p = 0.009$), weight ($p < 0.001$), BMI ($p < 0.001$) and BSA ($p = 0.001$) in Unakoti than in Deorachhara-suggested that higher BSC might have lowered FT₄, subsequently impacting height, weight, BMI, and BSA, with a concurrent

Table 4. Ninth order partial correlation coefficients (r) and significance levels (p-values) for some variable pairs involving age, TV, FT₄, FT₃, TSH, Tg-Ab, TPO-Ab, UI, USCN, weight and height by village, gender and total among studied tribal children in Tripura

Variable pair	Deorachhara (n=45)	Unakoti (n=41)	Naithangchhara (n=41)	Boys (n=59)	Girls (n=68)	Total (n=127)
TV & weight	r=0.5351, p<0.001 (S)	r=-0.0014, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.0823, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.2048, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.3213, p<0.02 (S)	r=0.2625, p<0.01 (S)
TV & height	r=-0.0844, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.4432, p<0.02 (S)	r=0.0610, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.0235, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.1428, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.0967, p>0.05 (NS)
FT ₄ & TSH	r=-0.1582, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.2472, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.0623, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.1102, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.2676, p<0.05 (S)	r=0.1589, p>0.05 (NS)
FT ₄ & weight	r=0.1623, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.2080, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.0853, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.2408, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.0801, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.2005, p<0.05 (S)
Tg-Ab & TV	r=-0.3743, p<0.05 (S)	r=0.0788, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.0725, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.0323, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.1646, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.0710, p>0.05 (NS)
TPO-Ab & TSH	r=0.2909, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.3578, p<0.05 (S)	r=-0.2597, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.0313, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.0941, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.0719, p>0.05 (NS)
Tg-Ab & TPO-Ab	r=0.1073, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.6258, p<0.001 (S)	r=0.3773, p<0.05 (S)	r=0.7366, p<0.001 (S)	r=0.3220, p<0.02 (S)	r=0.3822, p<0.001 (S)
Age & Tg-Ab	r=0.2373, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.0506, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.2498, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.1031, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.2749, p<0.05 (S)	r=0.2025, p<0.05 (S)
Tg-Ab & FT ₃	r=-0.0574, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.00184, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.1067, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.2770, p<0.05 (S)	r=-0.0676, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.0974, p>0.05 (NS)
UI & TPO-Ab	r=0.1311, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.0606, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.1083, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.3658, p<0.01 (S)	r=0.0234, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.0731, p>0.05 (NS)
UI & weight	r=-0.3232, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.1021, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.2893, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.2899, p<0.05 (S)	r=-0.1904, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.1878, p<0.05 (S)
UI & height	r=0.2758, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.2534, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.3733, p<0.05 (S)	r=0.3958, p<0.01 (S)	r=0.1520, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.2425, p<0.01 (S)
Age & UI	r=-0.0765, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.2124, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.3865, p<0.05 (S)	r=-0.3208, p<0.05 (S)	r=0.0170, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.1580, p>0.05 (NS)
USCN & TPO-Ab	r=-0.0780, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.0955, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.1556, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.3196, p<0.05 (S)	r=-0.1170, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.0280, p>0.05 (NS)
USCN & FT ₄	r=0.0091, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.0396, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.5613, p<0.001 (S)	r=0.1520, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.2068, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.1969, p<0.05 (S)
TPO-Ab & FT ₃	r=0.4543, p<0.01 (S)	r=-0.1762, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.2117, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.2278, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.0092, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.0060, p>0.05 (NS)
TSH & weight	r=-0.0775, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.0647, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.2352, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.2553, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.2616, p<0.05 (S)	r=-0.2423, p<0.01 (S)
Tg-Ab & height	r=-0.1852, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.0158, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.0376, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.2952, p<0.05 (S)	r=-0.1465, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.0089, p>0.05 (NS)
Tg-Ab & weight	r=0.2731, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.1613, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.2382, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.3274, p<0.05 (S)	r=-0.0859, p>0.05 (NS)	r=-0.1257, p>0.05 (NS)
TPO-Ab & weight	r=0.0628, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.1632, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.1679, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.3196, p<0.05 (S)	r=0.0945, p>0.05 (NS)	r=0.0597, p>0.05 (NS)

TV: Thyroid volume, FT₄: Free thyroxine, FT₃: Free triiodothyronine, TSH: Thyroid stimulating hormone, Tg-Ab: Thyroglobulin antibody, TPO-Ab: Thyroid peroxidase antibody, UI: Urinary iodine, USCN: Urinary thiocyanate, n: Children number; S: Significant, NS: Not significant

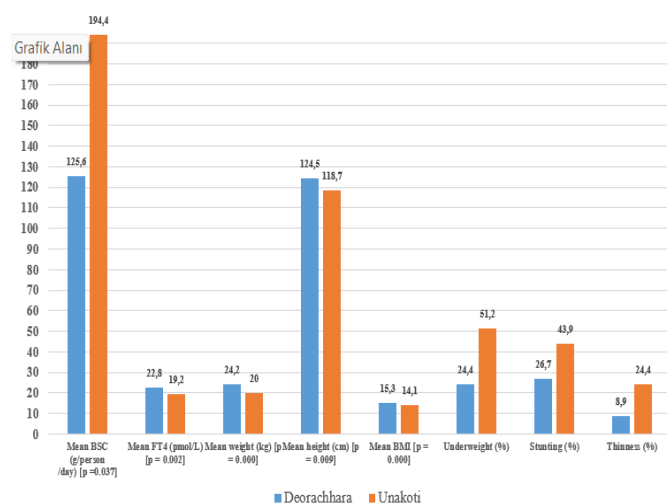


Figure 1. Graphical representation of the levels of BSC (bamboo shoot consumption), FT₄ (free thyroxine), weight, height, and BMI, alongside the prevalence of malnutrition (under-weight, stunting, and thinness) in Unakoti (which has a higher BSC and a lower FT₄) and Deorachhara (which has a lower BSC and a higher FT₄)

BSC: Bamboo shoot consumption, FT₄: Free thyroxine, BMI: Body-mass index

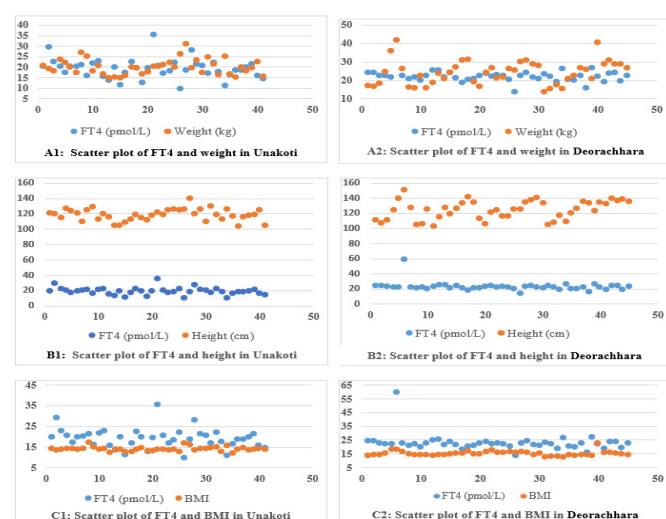


Figure 2. Scatter plots of FT₄ (free thyroxine) against weight, height, and BMI (body-mass index) in Unakoti (which has a higher BSC [bamboo shoot consumption] and a lower FT₄) [panels A1, B1, and C1] and Deorachhara (which has a lower BSC and a higher FT₄) [panels A2, B2, and C2], respectively

BSC: Bamboo shoot consumption, FT₄: Free thyroxine, BMI: Body-mass index



compensatory increase in TSH and FT_3 . This scenario aligned with the known effects of primary hypothyroidism. Besides, this study showing the trends of positive correlation between Tg-Ab and TPO-Ab proportionate to BSC in three villages, being significant in Unakoti ($p<0.001$), Naithangchhara ($p<0.05$) and total children ($p<0.001$) suggested a positive association between Tg-Ab and TPO-Ab, and this was possibly because of increased BSC. This study also showed the trends of positive to negative correlations (i) between TV and height, being significantly positive in Unakoti having highest BSC ($p<0.02$), and (ii) between TPO-Ab and TSH, being significantly negative in Unakoti having highest BSC ($p<0.05$). These correlations suggested (i) a positive association between TV and height, a finding that has been previously reported,³⁰ and (ii) a negative association between TPO-Ab and TSH, a finding that contradicted previously reported positive correlation between these two,³¹ and these were possibly because of higher BSC. Furthermore, this study showed the trends of positive to negative correlations (i) between TV and Tg-Ab, being significantly negative in Deorachhara having lowest BSC ($p<0.05$), and (ii) between FT_4 and weight, being positive in the village having lower BSC and significantly positive in total children ($p<0.05$). These correlations suggested (i) a negative association between TV and Tg-Ab, a finding that has been previously reported,³² and (ii) a positive association between FT_4 and weight in total children, and these were possibly because of lower BSC. But this study was unable to ascertain cause-effect relationship among the variables of these correlations. This study also showed the trends of positive to negative correlations between TV and weight, being significantly positive in Deorachhara having lowest BSC ($p<0.001$) and total children ($p<0.01$). These correlations suggesting a positive association between TV and weight, a finding that has been previously reported,³⁰ indicated that higher weight enhanced TV, a finding that has also been previously reported,³³ and these were probably because of lower BSC. Besides, this study showed the trends of positive to negative correlations between TSH and FT_4 , being positive in the village having higher BSC and significantly positive in girls ($p<0.05$). This positive correlation suggested that elevated TSH enhanced FT_4 in girls, potentially increasing the risk of TSH-mediated hyperthyroidism, and this effect was possibly because of higher BSC. Literature has already reported BS's association with reduced T_4 and increased TV in rats.³⁴ Besides, there have been some reports on BS's antithyroid action. BS has been reported to contain thiocyanate¹² which decreases thyroidal iodine uptake,²⁹ and 2,4-dihydroxy benzoic acid³⁵ which inhibits thyroid peroxidase (TPO) activity.³⁶ BS has also been reported to reduce TH synthesis decreasing the activities of sodium-potassium adenosine triphosphatase ($Na^+-K^+-ATPase$) and diiodinase.³⁷ However, it has already been reported that iodine can partially mitigate BS's antithyroid action.^{34,38}

This study's median UI ($\mu g/L$) were 103 in Deorachhara, 143 in Unakoti, and 100 in Naithangchhara. This study showing lower UI ($p=0.014$) associated with lower levels of FT_4 ($p=0.001$), FT_3 ($p<0.001$) and TSH ($p<0.001$), and higher levels of Tg-Ab ($p=0.003$) and BMI ($p<0.001$) in Naithangchhara than in Unakoti-suggested that lower AIC might have (i) decreased FT_4 and FT_3 , which remained associated with decreased TSH, and (ii) increased BMI and

Tg-Ab. This scenario reflected a potential risk of secondary/central hypothyroidism. These findings appeared reflecting the findings of a previous study²⁷ that reported Tg-Ab's strong associations with lower levels of UI, FT_4 and FT_3 in an area having median UI of $150 \mu g/L$. Besides, this study showed the trends of positive correlation between TV and BSA proportionate to UI in three villages, being significant in Unakoti ($p<0.01$), Deorachhara ($p<0.01$) and total children ($p<0.001$). These correlations suggested a positive association between TV and BSA, a finding that has been previously reported,³⁰ and this was possibly because of higher AIC. This study showing the trends of negative to positive correlations between FT_4 and BSA, being positive in the village having lower UI and significantly positive in total children ($p<0.01$) suggested a positive association between FT_4 and BSA, and this was possibly because of lower AIC. However, this study was unable to decide cause-effect relationship among the variables of these correlations. Furthermore, this study showed the trends of negative to positive correlations (i) between age and Tg-Ab, being positive in the village having lower UI and significantly positive in total children ($p<0.05$), and (ii) between Tg-Ab and FT_3 , being negative in the village having lower UI and significantly negative in boys ($p<0.05$). These correlations suggested (i) an increase in Tg-Ab with the advancement of age in total children, a finding that has been previously reported in females,³⁹ and (ii) a negative association between Tg-Ab and FT_3 in boys, a finding that has been previously reported in school children,²⁷ and these were probably because of lower AIC.

This study showing a positive correlation between USCN and TPO-Ab ($p<0.05$) in boys suggested that thiocyanate increased TPO-Ab in boys, a finding that supported the reported hypothesis that excess thiocyanate may promote thyroid autoantibodies.⁴⁰ This study showing a positive correlation between UI and TPO-Ab ($p<0.01$) being associated with the positive correlation between USCN and TPO-Ab in boys suggested that both increased iodine excretion and increased thiocyanate elevated TPO-Ab, potentially indicating ID in boys. Because increased UI, while sometimes linked to increased IC, can also reflect increased iodine excretion, especially when influenced by thiocyanate.⁴¹ This study showing a negative correlation between age and UI ($p<0.05$) being associated with the positive correlation between UI and TPO-Ab in boys suggested that problem of increased TPO-Ab probably got reduced with the advancement of age in boys. This study showing a positive correlation between TPO-Ab and FT_3 in Deorachhara having highest mean USCN ($p<0.01$) suggested a positive association between TPO-Ab and FT_3 , a finding that contradicted the previously reported negative correlation,³¹ implying a probable link between elevated levels of TPO-Ab and FT_3 with ID which was potentially mediated by thiocyanate in Deorachhara. Because an increase in T_3 by ID has already been reported⁴ and an increase in TPO-Ab by ID has already been suggested in this study.

Furthermore, this study showing positive correlations between USCN and FT_4 in Naithangchhara having lowest UI ($p<0.001$) and total children ($p<0.05$) suggested that increased thiocyanate raised FT_4 in children, and lower AIC might have favored this. However, thiocyanate has already been reported to increase FT_4 .⁴² The mechanism through which thiocyanate



increases FT_4 is still unclear, as thiocyanate decreases TH synthesis inhibiting iodide transport and incorporation of iodide to thyroglobulin.⁴² However, thiocyanate has been reported to decrease protein-bound T_4 levels and thereby to increase FT_4 in rats.⁴²

Unakoti having highest BSC showed highest prevalence of underweight (51.2%) and thinness (24.4%), whereas Deorachhara having lowest BSC showed lowest prevalence of underweight (24.4%) and stunting (26.7%). Besides, Naithangchhara having lowest UI showed highest stunting prevalence (51.2%) and lowest thinness prevalence (4.9%). All these suggested that BS might have increased underweight and thinness, whereas lower AIC might have increased stunting and thereby lowered thinness. By gender, boys had highest prevalence of underweight (42.4%) and stunting (45.8%), whereas girls had highest thinness prevalence (17.6%). All these suggested that boys were more susceptible to underweight and stunting, and girls to thinness.

This study's overall means of age, weight, height, BMI and BSA were lower than that of the children drinking water containing higher iodine and having higher obesity prevalence.⁴³ This study showing positive correlations between UI and height in total children ($p<0.01$), and between UI and BSA in boys ($p<0.02$), and negative correlations between UI and weight ($p<0.05$), and between UI and BMI in total children ($p<0.02$) suggested that higher IC increased height sometimes increasing BSA, decreased weight and thereby lowered BMI, whereas lower IC increased weight and thereby enhanced BMI. The increase in height by increased IC was possibly because of boosting of bone development and growth by increased TH, specially FT_3 , resulted from increased IC. Because FT_3 has been reported to stimulate bone development and growth.⁴⁴ Besides, the decreases in weight and thereby decreases in BMI by increased IC might be linked to body fat reduction resulted from enhanced calorogenesis by increased TH, particularly FT_3 , resulted from increased IC. Because FT_3 has also been reported to elevate calorogenesis, increasing basal metabolic rate, thermogenesis and lipolysis.⁴⁴ Furthermore, this study showing positive correlations between FT_4 and weight ($p<0.05$), and between FT_4 and BSA ($p<0.01$) in total children suggested that increased FT_4 associated with increased weight was reflecting a trend of weight gain (associated with increased BSA). Because a study observed that individuals with higher baseline FT_4 showed preference for a high fat and a high protein diet and, therefore, hypothesized that individuals with higher baseline FT_4 would gain more weight.⁴⁵ Besides, TSH exhibiting negative correlation with weight in total children ($p<0.01$) in this study suggested that TSH reduced weight which was likely to be associated with body fat burning. Because literature reported that (i) the presence of TSH receptors in liver and adipocytes (in addition to thyroid) suggests TSH's role in influencing thermogenesis, adipogenesis, lipolysis/lipogenesis, and (ii) increased TSH in obese one is a compensatory mechanism to counter weight gain.⁴⁵ This study showing a positive correlation between Tg-Ab and height ($p<0.05$) in boys suggested that an increase in height might have produced relative ID by increasing iodine requirement against lower AIC, and this ID was probably linked to raised Tg-Ab in boys. This study showing

negative correlations between Tg-Ab and weight ($p<0.05$), and between Tg-Ab and BMI ($p<0.05$) suggested that Tg-Ab remained associated with lower weight, and consequently with lower BMI. However, this study couldn't settle cause-effect relationship between higher Tg-Ab and lower weight.

However, this study's Tg-Ab and TPO-Ab showing no positive associations with TSH suggested that they were not risk factors for differentiated thyroid cancer (DTC). Because the combination of Tg-Ab, TPO-Ab and high TSH was identified as a risk factor for DTC.⁴⁶

The strengths of this study were (1) conducting the research in three different villages, and (2) investigating the same fourteen variables in each village. This research design allowed for a more robust and nuanced understanding of the phenomena being studied by capturing diverse perspectives and analyzing the interplay of multiple variables across three villages with varied quantitative profiles.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. The study (1) being cross-sectional, was not always able to determine cause-effect relationship among the variable pairs, and (2) did not consider (a) intakes of (i) dietary nitrates, fluorides, calcium, magnesium and isothiocyanate which reduce absorption and incorporation of dietary iodine, and (ii) vegetables of Cruciferae family, cassava, maize, peanuts, walnuts, lima beans, sweet potatoes, millets, soya bean containing glucosinolates and goitrins which block iodine incorporation in TH and suppress T_4 secretion, and (b) status of iron, zinc, copper, selenium, vitamin A and vanadium-deficiency of which may cause hypothyroidism.¹

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Tripura's studied tribal children with lower normal median FT_4 levels showed a higher prevalence of underweight and thinness, and were at risk of developing TSH-mediated hyperthyroidism and AITD (increased TPO-Ab and Tg-Ab levels), possibly due to elevated levels of thiocyanate and other antithyroid substances derived from higher BSC. Additionally, studied tribal children with lower normal median FT_4 and FT_3 levels showed a higher stunting prevalence, and were at risk of weight gain and increased Tg-Ab levels, possibly due to lower AIC. However, further studies are needed to confirm these findings and to elucidate the underlying mechanisms.

ETHICAL DECLARATIONS

Ethics Committee Approval

This study was approved by the Institutional Human Ethical Committee, Department of Physiology, University of Calcutta, Kolkata, India (Date: 03.10.2013, Decision No:IHEC/PHY/CU/H-P 34/13).

Informed Consent

Informed consent was obtained from a parent or legal guardian. Where appropriate, age-adjusted assent was also obtained from the child. The inclusion of vulnerable populations in this study adhered to national and



international ethical guidelines. Extra care was taken to ensure voluntary participation, understanding, and protection of participant dignity and autonomy.

Peer Review Process

This manuscript was subject to external peer review.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest related to this study.

Financial Disclosure

This study was funded by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science Technology, Government of India, New Delhi under North Eastern Region (NER) Twinning Project MAP-240/2013 (Sanction Number BT/471/NE/TBP/2013, dated 26th December, 2014). Author Ajoy Datta received fellowship from DBT, Government of India.

Author Contributions

Concept: AKC; Design: IR, AKC; Control: AKC; Resources: IR; Materials: IR, AD; Data Collection and/or Processing: IR, AD; Analysis and/or Interpretation: IR, AKC, SKD, SKM; Literature Review: IR, AKC, SKD, SKM; Writing the Article: IR; Critical Review: AKC; Final Approval: IR, AKC, SKD, SKM, AD, LHS; Accountability: IR, AKC, SKD, SKM, AD, LHS.

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