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Influencing factors for the changes of diet pattern of Vedda people

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Veddas in Sri Lanka are aboriginal people, who are having well genetically mapped history and posing higher threat of extinction rapidly (Dayananda, 2006). It has observed that their dietary- patterns have changed and hence there are many nutritional based health issues among the present generation. Thus the present study is focused to determine the evolution of the diets and factors influencing for the changes of the diet pattern of the Vedda people in order to prevent them from diet related health disorders.

To map the evolution of the diet of Vedda people from their descendents of Balangoda man (10,000 BC) the period was divided in to three sections, as at the time of 10,000 BC, 1900s and as today. Information on diet of the Balangoda man and the Veddas, who lived in 1900s was gathered and the present dietary practices were assessed by pre tested structured questionnaire. Forty two Vedda families at Kotabakiniya and Wathu Yaya regions were interviewed and questions were directed towards the current food variation, frequencies and the factors affecting for the present dietary pattern.

Transition from high protein diet to high starchy diet (rice every day-98%, bread several times per week-90%) was identified as the principal change of the diet pattern. Popularization of junk foods such as toffee (82% everyday) and ice packets (72% everyday) was also discovered. The key factors affecting for the change in diet pattern were poverty (29.41%), and government influences (23.52%). This can be subjected to further studies to asses, whether these diet changes could lead to the food related health consequences among the Vedda people.