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Assessment of nutritional status among primary school children availing mid-day meal scheme in government

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Abstract

The Mid-day Meal Scheme is a school meal programme of the Government of India designed to better the nutritional standing of school-age children nationwide. The programme supplies free lunches on working days for children in primary and upper primary classes in government, government aided, local body, Education Guarantee Scheme, and alternate innovative education centres, Madarsa and Maqtabas supported under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and National Child Labour Project schools run by the ministry of labour. Serving 120,000,000 children in over 1,265,000 schools and Education Guarantee Scheme centres, it is the largest of its kind in the world. The central and state governments share the cost of the Midday Meal Scheme, with the centre providing 60 percent and the states 40 percent. The central government provides grains and financing for other food. Costs for facilities, transportation, and labour is shared by the federal and state governments. The participating states contribute different amounts of money. The MDM scheme has many potential benefits: attracting children from disadvantaged sections (especially girls, Dalits and Adivasis) to school, improving regularity, nutritional benefits, socialisation benefits and benefits to women are some that have been highlighted. This study based on primary and secondary data, for present study selected schools named as Acharya Vihar and BDA Chandrasekharpur Govt. Primary school, size of samples 100 children. Information collected with the help of interview schedule, data analysed by using mean and frequency percentages, data presented by tables and figures. This study revealed that many school going children are getting benefit from mid-day meal scheme, with proper nutritious food. Children belonging from low income group were encouraged to study and gain knowledge by coming to school. Families coming from rural areas are still unwilling to send children to school. Awareness has to be done among parents so that they can send their children to school rather than keeping children at home. As school provides both knowledge as well as food to the children. Through mid-day meal scheme, children get the right nutrient intake at least for one time of meal.

Keywords: Mid-day meal, awareness, parents, and children

Introduction

Ever since Independence, India has been relying on the educational system for bringing about societal changes. It would not be an exaggeration to say that country expected education to do wonders for it. Keeping this in view many commissions and committees have been appointed by Governments from time to time, to give suggestions for improvement in the education system of the country. School age is a dynamic period of growth and development as children undergo physical, mental, emotional, and social changes during this period. It is one of the crucial periods of life, as about 40% of the physical growth and 80% of the mental growth take place during this period. The purpose of education is to identify the inner responsibilities of the individuals and provide all kinds of nourishment so as to enhance healthy growth and development of the individual to contribute to the wellbeing of the society. A hungry child is less likely to attend school regularly, Hunger drains of their will and ability to learn. Chronic Hunger can lead to malnutrition. Chronic hunger also delays or stops the physical and mental growth of children. Poor or insufficient nutrition over time means that children are susceptible to diseases like measles or dysentery, which can kill malnourished children. Malnutrition adversely affects Universalisation of Elementary Education. Even if a malnourished child does attend school, she finds it difficult to concentrate on and participate in the teaching learning activities in school. He or she therefore tends to drop out, because of the inability to cope with studies. If the child does not actually drop out his or her attainment level tends to be low. Education began in prehistory, as adults trained the young in the knowledge and skills deemed

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necessary in their society. In pre-literate societies, this was achieved orally and through imitation. Story-telling passed knowledge, values, and skills from one generation to the next. As cultures began to extend their knowledge beyond skills that could be readily learned through imitation, formal education developed. Schools existed in Egypt at the time of the Kingdom. Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits. Educational methods include storytelling, discussion, teaching, training and directed research. Education frequently takes place under the guidance of educators and also learners may also educate themselves. Education can take place in formal or informal settings and any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts may be considered educational.

Objectives

- To find out the nutrient intake of the Primary School Children.
- To assess the anthropometric measurement of the Primary School Children.
- To give some suggestions regarding the nutritional status of the Primary School Children.

Methodology

Selection of area is very essential part of data collection in each of survey. For the Present Study two primary schools were selected namely Acharya Vihar Government Primary School, BDA chandrasekharpur Government Primary School. For conducting the present study 100 samples were selected through purposive random sampling method. The process of selecting the sample was done by arranging the children in alphabetical order there are 100 samples in which 50 each samples were selected from two schools of Bhubaneswar city. Interview Method is selected to collect the information with a help of a questionnaire schedule. A close/open ended structure questionnaire schedule is prepared. The level of questionnaire/schedule will be that of lay man understanding. For conducting the study the data are collected by using pretested interview questionnaire method. The purpose of the study will be introduced to the respondents directly. The collected data are consolidated, tabulated, and analysed. Statistical analysis like percentage, average etc. are performed to interpret the finding. This includes the way in which the collected data is interpreted. It is done using tables and figures.

Results and Discussions

Nutrient intake of the Primary School Children

Cereals in the Diet

S. No.	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Daily	78	78
2.	Once a week	12	12
3.	Once a month	9	9
4.	Never	1	1
	Total	100	100

From the above it was analysed about the cereals in the diet of the respondents. 78% respondents responded that they take cereals daily in their diet, 12% respondents responded that they take cereals once a week, 9% respondents responded that they take cereals once a month and 1% respondents responded that they never take cereals in their diet.

Pulses in the Diet

S. No.	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Daily	64	64
2.	Once a week	18	18
3.	Once a month	12	12
4.	Never	6	6
	Total	100	100

From the above table it was observed about pulses in the diet by the respondents. 64% respondents responded that they take pulses daily in their diet, 18% respondents responded that they take pulses once a week in their diet, 12% respondents responded that they take pulses once a month, and 6% respondents responded that never took pulses in their diet.

Vegetables in the Diet

S. No.	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Daily	71	71
2.	Once a week	18	18
3.	Once a month	9	9
4.	Never	2	2
	Total	100	100

From the above table it was noted about the vegetables in the diet. 71% respondents agreed that they take vegetables daily in their diet, 18% respondents agreed that they take vegetables once a week in their diet, 9% respondents agreed that they take vegetables once a month, and 2% respondents agreed that they never take vegetables in their diet.

Sweets in the Diet

S. No.	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Daily	6	6
2.	Once a week	21	21
3.	Once a month	65	65
4.	Never	8	8
	Total	100	100

From the above table it was observed about the sweets in the diet of the respondents. 6% respondents agreed that they take sweets daily in their diet, 21% respondents responded that they take sweets once a week in their diet, 65% respondents responded that they take once a month in their diet, and 8% respondents responded that they never take sweets in their diet.

Non Veg Products in the Diet

S. No.	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Daily	4	4
2.	Once a week	8	8
3.	Once a month	86	86
4.	Never	2	2
	Total	100	100

From the above table it was observed about the non-veg products in the die of the respondents. 4% respondents responded that they take non veg products daily in their diet, 8% respondents responded that they take non veg products once a week in their diet, 86% respondents agreed that they take non veg products once a month and 2% respondents agreed that they never take non veg products in their diet.

Dairy products in the diet

S. No.	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Daily	6	6
2.	Once a week	26	26
3.	Once a month	64	64
4.	Never	4	4
	Total	100	100

From the above table it was observed about the dairy products in the diet by the respondents. 6% respondents agreed that they take dairy products in their diet daily, 26% respondents agreed that they take dairy products once a week, 64% respondents responded that they take dairy products once a month, 4% respondents responded that they never take dairy products in their diet.

Junk Foods in the Diet

S. No.	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Daily	10	10
2.	Once a week	67	67
3.	Once a month	21	21
4.	Never	2	2
	Total	100	100

From the above table it was analysed about the junk foods in the diet of the respondents. 10% respondents responded that they take junk food daily in their diet, 67% respondents responded that they take junk food once a week in their daily diet, 21 % respondents responded that they take junk foods in their diet once a month and 2% respondents responded that they never took junk food in their diet.

Anthropometric Measurements of the Respondents

S. No.	Particulars	Frequency (%)	Percentage
1.	Weight		
	21-25 kg	37	37
	26-30 kg	63	63
	Total	100	100
2.	Height		
	111-120cm	68	68
	121-130cm	32	32
	Total	100	100

From the above table it was observed that 37% respondents belonged to 21-25kg, 63% respondents belonged to 26-30kg of weight. 68% respondents belonged to 111-120cm, and 32% respondents belonged 120-130cm of height respectively.

Weight for Age (BMI)

IAP (Indian Academy of Paediatrics) and ICMR Classification

S. No.	Grades	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Normal >80%	75	75
2.	Grade I 70-80%	12	12
3.	Grade II 60-70%	3	3
4.	Grade III 50-60%	6	6
5.	Grade IV >50%	4	4
	Total	100	100

From the above table it was observed that 75% respondents belonged to normal >80%, 12% respondents belonged to Grade I 70-80%, 3% respondents belonged to Grade II 60-70%, 6% respondents belonged to Grade III 50-60%, and 4% respondents belonged to Grade IV >50% respectively.

Suggestions Regarding the Nutritional Status of the Primary School Children

- Fair ways of publication of tenders certainly would affect the transaction that will lessen the losses as well as corruption.
- A dedicated team of experts/supervisor should be engaged for ensure quality in all aspect, i.e. Quality, Quantity of the food, maintain time of MDM being served to the children & maintain of Hygiene & sanitation in the school premises.
- Food that are served to the children of different age needs nutritious diet in their everyday meal with an whole some composition of nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, protein and fat. Children, however, need different amounts of specific nutrients at different ages.
- The ingredient of the food materials should be of good quality of high standard without any bias towards the budget or quality.
- Usually children in schools often do not have access to clean drinking water. There have many cases of children falling sick after drinking water from hand pumps or other contaminated water sources. This is resulting in many School children often falling sick. Children are forced to drink water from unsafe sources such as hand pumps or directly from bore well pipes. To Ensure the clean drinking water for the use of children are to made mandatory by making budgetary provision in each school with a water purifier and storage tank with enough capacity to meet the requirement of the children in the school.

Conclusion

It is concluded that Primary School Children were in Acharya Vihar Government Primary School, BDA chandrasekharapur Government Primary School and all the respondents were boys and girls. All the children were provided with proper amount of mid-day meal food. It is found that 75 percent of the respondents belonged to normal category.

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