



# International Journal of Home Science

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## Integrating 'Eat Right Movement Campaign' into the school environment

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### Abstract

The Eat Right India Movement is a year-long social and mass media campaign of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). This food regulatory authority is reaching out to different schools and colleges and is organizing 'Eat Right Campus', wherein the officials are making children aware about safe food practices.

This study was an attempt to create awareness about eating healthy foods amongst school going adolescents. All the students of the two schools (300 students in private school and 180 students in government school) were sensitized to healthy eating habits by the conduct of various healthy nutrition related interactive activities. The study looked at the nutrition knowledge, attitude and practices followed by a selected group of students and introduced interventions to improve their existing nutritional awareness. The in-depth study sample consisted of 100 adolescents of age 11-13 years among them 50 each were from a government school and a private school. A standardized questionnaire method was developed and used to collect the relevant data of the students which included socio-economic, personal, health profile, diet profile and lifestyle particulars data (N=100). The data was analyzed statistically using appropriate statistical tests.

The nutritional intervention (nutrition classes, interactive activities, kitchen garden) to enhance the student's nutritional knowledge, attitude towards food and eating practices was successful as seen from the test scores after the nutritional intervention. The vegetable garden developed during the study in both schools was a constructive outcome of this study and will serve as an asset for future generation. The study was also able to convey the nutrition message to the parents who are the primary caregivers. Thus, this study was able to create positive nutritional awareness amongst the adolescents and their parents. It can be concluded that was successful in integrating the "Eat Right Movement" in this selected group of student community.

**Keywords:** Eat Right Movement, nutritional knowledge, attitude, practices, school going children, nutrition

### 1. Introduction

To improve the public health in India and to combat negative nutritional trends to fight lifestyle diseases, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, (FSSAI) launched 'The Eat Right Movement' on 10th July, 2018. The food industry, public health professionals, civil society and consumer organizations, influencers and celebrities came together on a common platform and pledged to take concrete steps to amplify 'The Eat Right Movement' in the country. This movement is aligned with the government's flagship public health programmes such as POSHAN Abhiyaan, Anemia Mukt Bharat, Ayushman Bharat Yojana and Swachh Bharat Mission.

'The Eat Right Movement' is built on two broad pillars of 'Eat Healthy' and 'Eat Safe'. It is a collective effort to make both the demand and supply side interventions through engagement of key stakeholders. On the demand side, it focuses on social and behavioural change among citizens and nudging citizens towards making the right food choices. On the supply side it focuses on nudging the food businesses to reformulate their products, provide better nutritional information to consumers and make investments in healthy food as responsible food business.

The 'Eat Healthy' pillar of the movement is about nudging citizens to make healthy food choices and building healthy food habits. It encourages them to choose nutritious and fortified foods in the right proportion and limit foods that are high in salt, sugar and fat. It also stresses upon the importance of physical activity and mental wellbeing. The 'Eat Safe' pillar is about

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ensuring food safety to prevent food borne diseases. It includes maintaining hygiene and sanitation, both personal and environmental, proper waste disposal, following safe food practices and combating adulteration.

**2. Objectives**

The main objectives of the study were to integrate “Eat Right Movement” campaign into the school environment and to improve the awareness of the students about nutrition and health. The sub objectives of the study are i) to assess the nutritional status of the school students, ii) to study the knowledge of school students about nutrition, iii) to improve eating habits of students through teaching nutrition and iv) to sensitize the parents about the “Eat Right Movement”.

**3. Methodology**

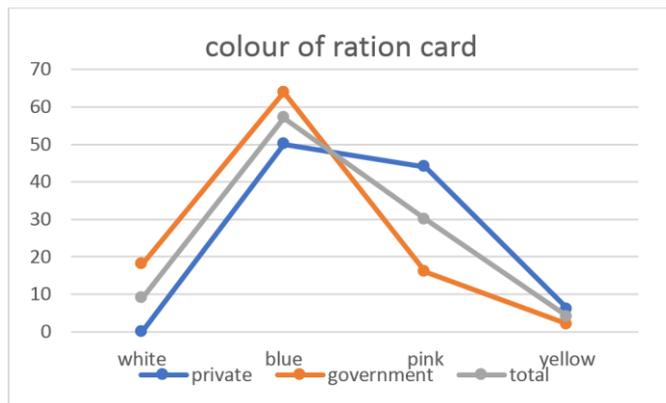
The area selected for the study was a private school (Crescent Residential High School, Azhicode) and a government school (Govt. UP School, Azhicode) in Nedumangad taluk of Thiruvananthapuram district. The population of the study selected was students of age 11-13 years of both private and government schools. A total of 100 samples were selected for the study using simple random sampling. Among the samples, 50 each were from private school and from government school. These students were chosen for collecting baseline data and conducting organized nutrition education. However all the students of the two school (300 students in private school and 180 students in government school) were sensitized to healthy eating habits by the conduct of various healthy nutrition related interactive activities. Cross-sectional survey method was used to collect information. A standardized questionnaire method was developed and used to collect the relevant socio-economic, personal, health profile, diet profile and lifestyle particulars data of the students. Nutrition knowledge was imparted through competitions and interactive activities. This included colour healthy food in the chart for class 1 & 2, drawing competition for class 3, identify and write healthy food for class 4 and 5, chart making competition for class 6 and 7, healthy bulletin board competition for class 6 and 7, developing/maintaining vegetable garden for class 6 and 7, nutrition education lecture for class 6 and 7, quiz competition for class 6 and 7 and interactive meeting with parents and teachers with the aim of inculcating ‘Eat Right’ in their daily life. Questionnaire to assess nutritional knowledge, attitude towards food and eating practices of the students was developed. The data collected were tabulated and statistically analyzed.

**4. Result and Discussion**

The Public Distribution System of Kerala State has distributed 4 types of ration cards that are colour coded. The colours are white, blue, pink and yellow. The families with income above Rs.100000 were given white card (Non-Priority). The families with income above Rs.25000 were given blue card (Non-Priority subsidy or Above Poverty Line -APL). The families with income below Rs.25000 were given pink card (Priority or Below Poverty Line -BPL). And the families with landless labourers, marginal farmers, artisans, crafts men, widows, sick persons, illiterate, disabled adults with no means of subsistence fall under yellow card (Most economically backward section of society, Antyodaya Anna Yojana Beneficiaries -AAY).

Majority of the student’s family had blue (57%) coloured ration card which indicates that their income was below Rs.25000. This was followed by pink (44%) coloured in

government school and white (18%) in private school. A small percentage owned yellow (6%) coloured ration cards in government school and pink (16%) coloured in private school. No one in government school had white coloured ration card. Only 2% had yellow coloured in private school.

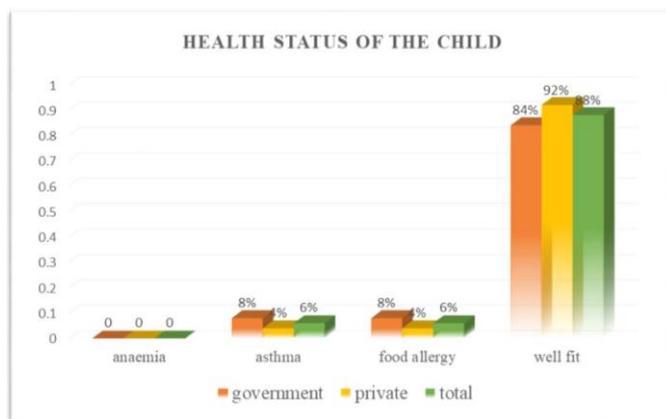


**Fig 1:** Colour of the ration card owned by the student’s family

Health profile of the students were analyzed using anthropometric data which includes height, weight and health related conditions. The study showed that the boys were taller than the girls whereas weight of the girls were greater than boys. Similar pattern was seen in both schools. According to Indian standards, average height for boys of age 11 years, 12 years and 13 years were 140 cm, 147 cm and 153 cm and their average weight were 32.2 kg, 37 kg and 40.9 kg respectively. In the case of girls, the average Indian height for ages 11 years, 12 years and 13 years were 142 cm, 148 cm and 150 cm and the average weight were 33.7 kg, 38.7 kg and 44 kg respectively. Most of the students were healthy (88%). None of the students in both schools had any clinical signs of anaemia. It was found that eight per cent each in government school had asthma and food allergy; while it was four per cent each in private school.

**Table 1:** Height and weight of the study subjects (N=100)

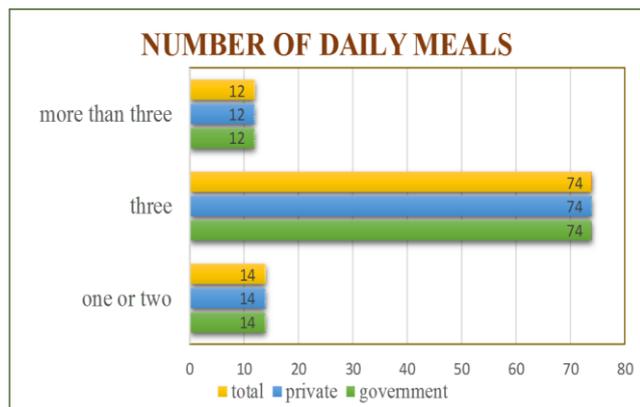
Variables	Samples (N=100)					
	Government school children (n=50)		Private school children (n=50)		Total	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Height	144.25 cm	138 cm	140.7 cm	138.4 cm	142.5 cm	138.2 cm
Weight	33.65 kg	36.6 kg	33.5 kg	37.8 kg	33.6 kg	37.2 kg



**Fig 2:** Health status of the study subjects (N=100)

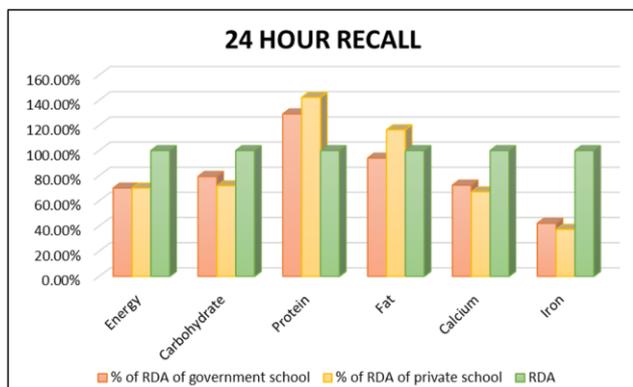
Eating habits of the students were assessed. All students (99%) except one student of government school were non-

vegetarians, indicating that they all ate fish and flesh foods. Most of the students ate mainly three meals per day (74%). Only a handful of students ate once or twice a day (14%); 12% of the students ate 4 times a day. Similar percentages were seen in both schools.

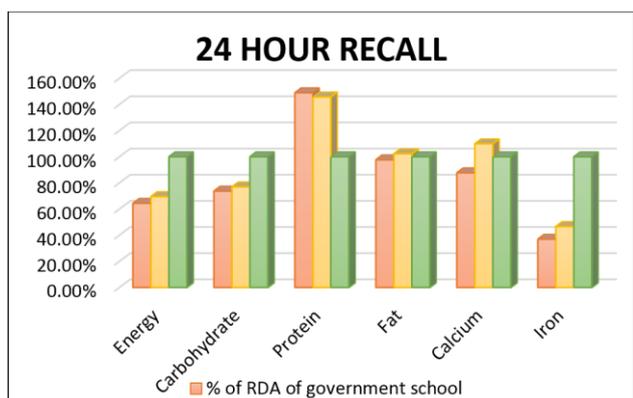


**Fig 3:** Number of daily meals consumed by the study subjects (N=100)

An in-depth study was done among a sub sample from government and private school regarding daily nutrient intake of students using the 24-hour recall method. The energy and nutrients intake of girls from both schools were less than the RDA 2020. Only the protein and fat intake were more than the RDA. Thus we find a deficit in the intake of energy, carbohydrate, calcium and iron in girls of both schools. The energy and nutrients intake of boys from both schools was also less than the RDA 2020. Only the protein intake was more than the RDA 2020. Thus we find a deficit in the intake of energy, carbohydrate, fat, calcium and iron in boys of both schools.



**Fig 4:** Data on the adequacy of diet of the girl subjects using the 24-hour recall (N=50)



**Fig 5:** Data on the adequacy of diet of the boys subjects using the 24-hour recall (N=50)

Nutritional knowledge, attitude towards food and eating practices of the students were assessed before and after nutrition awareness lectures and activities. These test scores were statistically analysed using the paired t test. All the pre-test mean scores were less than the post- test mean scores. Since the p values were less than the t critical value, the tests were significant. This implies that there was a significant increase in nutritional knowledge, attitude towards food and eating practices of students in both schools after the nutrition lecture classes and activities. It is encouraging to note that the intervention by the investigator had a positive impact on the nutritional knowledge, attitude towards food and eating habits of these school students and parents.

**Table 2:** Paired two sample t-tests for means

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
<b>Assessment of government school student's nutritional knowledge</b>		
	<b>Pre-test score</b>	<b>Post-test score</b>
Mean	4.78	8.84
Pearson Correlation	0.624243	
t Stat	-35.0784	
P(T<=t) one-tail	1.12E-36	
t Critical one-tail	1.676551	
<b>Assessment of private school student's nutritional knowledge</b>		
	<b>Pre-test score</b>	<b>Post-test score</b>
Mean	5.06	9.3
Pearson Correlation	0.698286	
t Stat	-38.8914	
P(T<=t) one-tail	8.47E-39	
t Critical one-tail	1.676551	
<b>Assessment of government school student's attitude towards food</b>		
	<b>Pre-test score</b>	<b>Post-test score</b>
Mean	8.68	17.24
Pearson Correlation	#N/A	
t Stat	-36.2892	
P(T<=t) one-tail	2.26E-37	
t Critical one-tail	1.676551	
<b>Assessment of private school student's attitude towards food</b>		
	<b>Pre-test score</b>	<b>Post-test score</b>
Mean	10.24	18.56
Pearson Correlation	#N/A	
t Stat	-33.9801	
P(T<=t) one-tail	5.01E-36	
t Critical one-tail	1.676551	
<b>Assessment of government school student's eating practices</b>		
	<b>Pre-test score</b>	<b>Post-test score</b>
Mean	5.86	9.06
Pearson Correlation	#N/A	
t Stat	-29.933259	
P(T<=t) one-tail	1.89E-33	
t Critical one-tail	1.6765509	
<b>Assessment of private school student's eating practices</b>		
	<b>Pre-test score</b>	<b>Post-test score</b>
Mean	6.24	9.2
Pearson Correlation	#N/A	
t Stat	-26.78514234	
P(T<=t) one-tail	3.21661E-31	
t Critical one-tail	1.676550893	

**5. Conclusion**

This study was conducted to integrate 'Eat Right Movement' into the school environment. It was aimed to improve nutritional knowledge, attitude towards food and to inculcate good eating practices amongst school going adolescents so as to enhance their quality of life. The results of the study

showed that by incorporating age appropriate fun activities, the students were able to imbibe knowledge with regard to nutrition and make positive changes in attitudes and practices. This study was able to create positive nutritional awareness amongst the adolescents and their parents. Thus, this study proved that Eat Right Movement can be successfully integrated across the schools of the State and Nation.

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