

ASSESSMENT OF DIETARY PATTERNS AND NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF BENEFICIARIES MID DAY MEAL PROGRAMME.

Dissertation for the Degree of Master of Science

Foods and Nutrition

By

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Abstract: The present study was under taken to observe the dietary patterns and nutritional status of primary school children under mid day meal programme in Jornang Primary School Mahesana taluka of Mahesana District, North Gujarat. Three hundred primary school children between the age group of 5 to 12 years were included in the present investigation.

The findings of the study revealed that majority of the primary school children were Hindu and belong to other backward class, having nuclear family and small family size. The educational status of mother was low and they were engaged mostly agricultural labour cum housewife and having very less annual income below 50,000.

The weight and height of the primary school children were low and were undernourished and stunted. The height of the majority of respondents were between 100 to 140 cm and weight of the majority of respondents were between 15 to 30 kg. In addition to in most of the subjects were observed less than 15 BMI. The mid upper arm circumference of majority of the respondents were between 15 to 20 cm whereas chest circumference of majority of the respondents were between 50 to 70 cm and head circumference of majority of respondents were above 50 cm.

Clinical investigation showed few signs and deficiency symptoms of PEM, vitamin 'A,' vitamin 'B,' skin diseases and excess of fluorine. Dietary information of the study subjects shows that a majority of primary school children were vegetarian as their diet was also very simple.

However, none of the primary school children had taken any special food.

The food consumption pattern of the primary school children showed that the consumption of various foods except cereal was irregular and infrequent.

Bajra and wheat were the staple cereal consumed throughout the year by all the primary school children. The consumption pattern of pulses, roots and tubers, other vegetables, milk product were found to be very low among diet of primary school children while green leafy vegetables were not included in their daily diet as consumption of these vegetables was largely depends upon the availability during different seasons. Similarly, fruits were not included in their daily diet. They consumed mango, banana and guava as the main fruits, available in particular season at cheaper rate. The consumption of animal food like meat, egg, fish or poultry was noticed only in few primary school children.

The information regarding general awareness of parents regarding Mid Day Meal programme was collected. It was clearly indicated that majority 97 per cent of the parents heard about mid day meal programme and very few 3 per cent parents not heard about mid day meal programme. Again, it was observed that 68 per cent parents believe mid day meal was better than the other food available in market, 32 per cent parents believe that mid day meal was good than the other food available in market. The result of opinion of consumption of mid day meal regularly by children parents showed that, 64 per cent parents agree that mid day meal must be taken regularly. 32 per cent were somewhat agree that mid day meal must be eaten regularly and 4 per cent were disagree. It was also observed that 72 per cent parents agree that mid day meal improve children health and 28 per cent parents somewhat agree mid day meal improve health of the children.

A highly significant correlation of socio-economic variables between occupation of mother and nutritional level of primary school children.

Occupation of father and nutritional status of school children having significant correlation and family type and family size of the primary school children did not have any relationship with their nutritional status and significant relationship were observed between BMI and nutritional level of primary school children.

The results of the present finding suggest that primary school children of Mahesana taluka are still living in the poor nutritional status. There is a great need to make aware the mother of respondent children about significance of nutrition for child growth and development. They must also be aquatin the mid day meal programme and they must be motivated to make this programme successful by regularly sending their children and get full advantage of it.

Keywords: children, school, development, growth, nutrition