

Impact of Mid-Day Meal on Nutritional Status of Primary School Children in Haryana, India

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Abstract : India is one among the many countries where child malnutrition is severe and also a major underlying cause of child mortality. The Mid Day Meal (MDM) program was launched to improve the nutritional status of children, attendance, and retention in schools. It was based on one meal provided to the children, who are attending elementary school (primary school). The objective of present study was to evaluate the impact of mid-day meal on the nutritional status of primary school children in Haryana, India. The present work was carried out on 1200 children between 6-11 years of age, studying in primary schools in Haryana, India. Out of these 960 students as, the experimental group was selected from schools where mid-day meal is supplied by the government, and 240 students as control group where mid-day meal is not supplied. The mean height, weight, and BMI of children of both the groups were found to be significantly low as compared to NCHS standards. Stunting was found in 56.40% MDMB (Mid-day meal beneficiaries) and 62.50 % NMDMC (non- mid-day meal children). The weight of almost all subjects was low according to age indicating thinness. Anemia was more prevalent in MDMB as compared to NMDMC may be because school meals did not include vegetables. The consumption of energy, proteins, fat, calcium, iron, vitamins was significantly low ($P \leq .01$) in both groups especially in girls of NMDM. The consumption of various food groups except vegetables was better in MDMB compared to NMDMC. It is concluded that with certain improvements, mid-meal can be beneficial in meeting everyday requirements of school going children.

Keywords : foods, meals, nutritional status, school going children

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