

DIETARY HABITS AND HEALTH STATUS OF SCHOOL GOING CHILDRENS IN AURANGABAD CITY

Dr. Vandana Namdeo Bankar

Head Dept. Of Home Science, Arts and Science College, ChincholiLi.,Tal- Kannad, Dist - Aurangabad.

Email- vandanabankar1980@gmail.com

Abstract :

School-going children's health status is a critical concern for parents, educators, and policymakers alike. The physical and mental health of children can have a significant impact on their academic performance, social interactions, and overall well-being. Therefore, the eating habits and health status of school-going children in Aurangabad city were studied. 30 children were selected for the study. Through this study it was observed that 63.66% children were underweight for age, 6.66% obese children and 30.01% normal weight children. When looking at their height, it was seen that according to ICDS manual, these children are short in height. According to dietary habits, only 20% of the children eat a healthy diet. 56.66% of the children eat marketed foods (such as chips, chocolates, candy bars, biscuits, lollipops, etc.) on a daily basis. Their school absenteeism rate is also higher. Therefore, there is less enthusiasm among them, these children are behind in sports and studies.

Key words - Dietary habits, underweight, school absenteeism.

Introduction-

School-going children's health status is a critical concern for parents, educators, and policymakers alike. The physical and mental health of children can have a significant impact on their academic performance, social interactions, and overall well-being.

Unfortunately, many school-age children face various health challenges that can hinder their ability to learn, grow, and thrive. These challenges include but are not limited to:

Chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and obesity, which can affect a child's physical health and lead to absences from school.

Mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, which can impact a child's ability to concentrate and learn in the classroom.

Infectious diseases such as the flu and COVID-19, which can spread quickly in school settings and cause widespread absences and disruptions to learning.

Poor nutrition and lack of physical activity, which can contribute to obesity, Malnutrition, chronic health conditions, and low academic achievement.

Addressing these and other health challenges facing school-age children requires a collaborative effort from parents, educators, healthcare providers, and policymakers. By prioritizing and investing in children's health other .Prevalence of health issues: Several studies have found that school-going children are at risk of various health issues, such as obesity, asthma, dental caries, mental health problems, and infectious diseases. For example, a study published in the Journal of Pediatrics found that 17% of school-age children in the United States were obese, and another study in the Journal of School Health reported that 20% of school children had mental health problems.

provides them with the necessary nutrients, vitamins, and minerals needed for their growth and development. Here are some reasons why children's diet is so important:

1)Growth and Development:

Children require a balanced and nutritious diet to support their growth and development. Nutrients like protein, calcium, iron, and vitamins A, C, and D are crucial for children's healthy growth, bone and muscle development, and immune system.

2). Cognitive Development:

A healthy diet is crucial for a child's cognitive development. Studies have shown that children who eat a nutritious diet, particularly one high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, perform better in school and have better mental and cognitive health.

3)Disease Prevention:

A balanced and healthy diet is key to preventing childhood obesity and chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease, which are on the rise in children. A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins can help reduce the risk of these diseases.

4) Establishing Healthy Habits:

Children's eating habits are often established at a young age, and establishing healthy habits early on can lead to a lifetime of good health. Teaching children the importance of healthy eating habits can help them make better food choices in the future.

Children's eating habits, their health, their participation in school sports shows how good their health is, that's why I decided to write this research paper. This article uses both primary and secondary sources.

Objectives-

- 1) To detect various health problems in school age children. (Such as health conditions,, infectious diseases.)
- 2) Examining factors that contribute to health problems (such as,food intake, school attendance.)
- 3) To assess the impact of these health problems on children's academic performance, attendance and overall health.

Hypothesis -

The health status of school-going children has a positive impact on their academic performance, attendance and overall health.

Sample selection-

30 children in the age group of 6 to 10 from New Beginning School in Aurangabad city were selected randomly.

Data Collection-

- 1)Anthropometric measurements were taken to check the health status of the children.
- 2) Information about children's eating habits, sleeping habits, type of play was collected through questionnaire.
- 3) Information regarding school attendance and fitness was taken by school teachers.

Table no- 01

Weight for Age

Weight	N	%
Under weight	19	63.33
Normal Weight	09	30.01
Over Weight	02	06.66
	30	100

According to the above table, 63.33% of underweight children, 30.01% of normal weight children and 6.66% of obese children were found to be overweight for age.

Table No -2Height for Age

Age of Children	Height in cm	Standard of Height (Manual of ICDS)
06 year	80.0 cm to 86.9	108.5 cm
07 year	95.8 cm to 100.2 cm	113.5 cm
08 year	105 cm to 112 cm	119.3 cm
09 year	117.6 cm to 121.5 cm	123.7 cm
10 year	120 cm to 128 cm	128.3 cm

As per the above table all the children are found to have low height for age, when compared with the Integrated Child Development Yojana manual, the height for age ratio is found to be low.

Table No 03 Food Habits of Children

Type of main meal	N	%
Milk, Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner	08	26.66
Tea-Biscut,Lunch, Dinner	05	16.66
Milk-Bread/Toast,Lunch,Dinner	07	23.33
Milk, Breakfast,Lunch, Breakfast, Dinner	06	20
Milk,Lunch ,Dinner	04	13.35
	30	100

Table No.03 - milk, breakfast, lunch and dinner as the main type of food take 26.66 %Children .. Tea, Biscuits, Lunch, Dinner are consumed by 16.66% children, Milk, Bread/Toast, Lunch, Dinner are consumed by 23.33% children and Milk, Breakfast, Lunch, Evening Snack and Dinner are ideal meals by only 20% children. take Also 15.35% children eat only milk, lunch and dinner. From this it can be seen that only 20% of children consume the ideal meal type which is ideal for all. So 16.66 and 15.35 % children do not eat breakfast at all. Serves lunch and dinner only. In the evening, after coming home from school, they eat crisps, biscuits, chips.

Table No.04 Habit of eating Packed food

Habit of eating Packed food	N	%
Daily	17	56.66
Twice a week	06	20
Thrice a week,	05	16.66
Once a week	02	06.68
	30	100

When asked about how many times a week they eat packaged foods, 56.66% of children eat packaged foods daily, 20% twice a week, 16.66% three times a week, while 6.66% children eat only once a week, including biscuits, crisps, Wafers, chips, etc. So Chanklets, Lollipop, Candbury are also eaten daily. That means they eat less nutritious food.

Table No 05 Number of school absences in the last four months

Day	N	%
3 to 5 Days	05	16.66
5 to 6 Days	06	20
6 to 8 Days	09	30
8 to 10 Days	07	23.33
10 to 12 Days	03	10
	30	100

Children's school attendance rate is a guarantee of their good health, so when children's school absence rates were checked, it was found that in the last four months, 3 to 5 days of absence (16.66 %), 5 to 6 days of absence (20 %), 6 to 8 days (30%), 8 to 10 days (23.33), and 10 to 12 days (10%) children were found to be absent, only 10% of the children were absent due to domestic reasons but the rest were absent due to health problems, they had cold, Diseases like cough, viral fever, toothache, bone pain are found.

Result and Discussion -

Weight ratio of school going children (age 6 to 10) revealed that 63.33% children are underweight for their age. And 6.66 % children were found obese and 30.01 % children were found normal weight, which means 63.33 % children were found underweight for age. This means that the children's nutrition has not been done properly. It was also found that the height of these children was lower when compared with ICDS manual. When the dietary habits of the children were taken, it was found that only 20% of the children were eating properly and the remaining 80% of the children were found to be eating very wrongly and less than required. Moreover, 56.66% of the children were consuming biscuits, crisps, chips, chonklets, lollies every day. They eat bread, toast, etc. That means their diet is not right. Absence rate from school was 3 to 5 days (16.66 %), 5 to 6 days (20 %), 6 to 8 days (30 %), 8 to 10 days (23.33 %), and 10 to 12 days (10 %) respectively. % is the rate of absentee in the last four months, out of which only 10% children were absent due to domestic reasons while the rest of the children were found to have some or the other persistent health complaints due to communicable diseases. Overall, the children selected for the research were found to be underweight for their age, their eating habits were also found to be wrong, and absenteeism from school and participation in other activities and sports were also perceived by their teachers as less. That is, the health status of these children was found to be low. Also, there is a relationship between health and school attendance and performance.

Recommendations -

Health problems such as low weight, short height, persistent infectious diseases due to malnutrition, low enthusiasm were found in the children selected for the research, so it is recommended that regular nutrition and growth assessment should be given attention in schools along with parents. Programs, lectures on proper nutrition for parents should be conducted by the school management. Initiatives like mid-day meal scheme of the government should also be implemented by private schools, it will not only nourish the children but also increase the number of children in the school. That means parents will also be aware. Also health checkup should be done in school every six months.

In conclusion, children's diet plays a vital role in their overall health and development. It is important for parents and caregivers to provide their children with a balanced and nutritious diet to help them grow, develop, and thrive.

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