



Janapriya Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies (Jjis)

[A Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal; Indexed in NepJOL]

ISSN: 2362-1516 (Print), ISSN: 2773-8000 (Online)

Published by Janapriya Research and Consultancy Center (JRCC)

Janapriya Multiple Campus, Pokhara

Journal Homepage: www.janapriya.edu.np

Mid-Day Meals Programs in the School of Pokhara through Child Friendly School Manual

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Article History : Received 18 Apr. 2023 Revised 27 Sep. 2023 Accepted 19 Nov. 2023

DOI : 10.3126/jjis.v12i1.62243

ABSTRACT

This study, titled “Assessing School Mid-Day Meals Programs in the Schools of Pokhara through Child-Friendly School Manual,” aimed to identify modalities and assess school facilities related to mid-day meals in both institutional and public schools. The research design employed was explanatory sequential. The population comprised schools, headmasters, and class five students, and a multistage sampling technique was utilized. Five diverse schools each from institutional (preprimary, primary, upper primary, secondary, and higher secondary) and public schools were randomly selected for comparison. During data collection, students were assured that their responses would be confidential, and teachers were not present in the classrooms to encourage free expression of opinions. The findings revealed that more than half of the students in institutional schools carried homemade lunches, while public schools provided meals in canteens. Observations indicated that insufficient seating in canteens resulted in students having to eat meals on the ground or in classrooms. Moreover, many schools lacked soap in wash bins, potentially impacting students’ hygiene, and health. It is recommended to improve school facilities related to mid-day meals in accordance with child-friendly school guidelines.

Keywords: Institutional school, public school, school health nutrition, school health practice, school mid-day meal

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Janapriya Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies (Jjis), Vol. XII, 2023 [pp. 80 - 94]

INTRODUCTION

School serves as the primary catalyst for the transformation of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, enabling individuals to address life's challenges. As an educational institution offering formal learning, it becomes the second home for children, who typically spend six to seven hours there. In fact, students devote one-third of their day to school, another third to their home and community, and the final third to sleep. Hence, it is imperative for schools to not only provide quality education but also ensure the well-being of students, prioritizing their health.

Schools admit students as young as three years old for Early Child Education (ECE). During their time in school, students often experience hunger, making it essential for schools to arrange for midday meals to satisfy their appetite. Addressing their hunger is crucial because it directly impacts their motivation to learn. Incorporating nutritious foods within the school environment becomes an important motivational factor, and as such, schools should take measures to manage this aspect effectively. In a study conducted by Shrestha in 2020, it was revealed that six lakh school children attending basic schools greatly benefited from the implementation of a midday meal program. This initiative was a strategic move by the government aimed at improving the academic performance and nutritional well-being of the students. Budathoki and Wagle (2015) defined the provision of snacks or meals within the school premises as the School Nutrition Program (SNP), which forms an integral part of the broader School Health Program (SHP). This program is also commonly referred to as the school midday meal.

In his renowned book, "School Health Program," published in 1972, Anderson highlighted the significant role which schools play in promoting health and fostering healthy habits among students through the implementation of a school health program (p. 1). This program is essentially a well-structured plan of activities tailored to cater to the health interests and needs of all students and staff in the school. It encompasses various components, such as health services, health instruction, and creating a healthful school environment (Budathoki & Wagle, 2015, p. 2). Anderson emphasized these three main aspects of the School Health Program, but he also delved into numerous subtopics related to each of them. Notably, the provision of food service falls under the umbrella of promoting a healthy school environment.

The history of school nutrition program was come from Europe. Bavaria provided free school lunches for the low children from 1790. The first school lunch program was started in France in 1885. Since then, UK (1945), US and Switzerland (1946), Japan (1947), Indonesia

(1967), Thailand (1970), Korea (1973), Singapore (1975) started the school nutrition program (Giri, 2015).

The Midday Meal Program (MDMP) is a crucial initiative implemented in many countries to address hunger, malnutrition, and improve educational outcomes among school-going children. This program aims to provide nutritious and balanced meals to students during their school hours. The success of the Midday Meal Program (MDMP) relies on several key practices. Firstly, menu planning and nutritional guidelines are essential to ensure well-balanced meals that meet the nutritional needs of growing children. This involves incorporating a variety of food items, such as fruits, vegetables, grains, and proteins, while considering regional and cultural preferences (FAO, 2021). Secondly, food safety and quality control are crucial to protect children from food-borne illnesses. Regular inspections and monitoring of the food supply chain are necessary to maintain hygiene standards, and using locally sourced and fresh produce can enhance the nutritional content of the meals (WHO, 2022).

Thirdly, community participation and engagement play a vital role in the MDMP's effectiveness. Involving local communities, parents, and teachers in planning and implementation fosters ownership and accountability. Additionally, community engagement helps identify specific nutritional needs and cultural preferences, making the program more impactful (WFP, 2020). Fourthly, conducting regular impact evaluations and establishing feedback mechanisms involving students, parents, and school staff allow for continuous improvement and evidence-based decision-making, ensuring the program's efficacy and identifying areas for enhancement (IFPRI, 2023). Finally, capacity building and training are essential to maintain the nutritional value and hygiene of the meals. Proper training of cooks and staff involved in meal preparation, along with education on best practices and food safety, contribute to better child development outcomes (UNICEF, 2021).

The School Health and Nutrition Project (SHPN), launched in Nepal in 2008 with support from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), focused on two districts, aiming to promote positive health and nutrition behaviors among primary-level children. The project's objectives included cultivating healthier school environments, enhancing community support for effective policies, and fostering better health practices among students. To support the school nutrition program, various organizations, including the World Food Program (WFP), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the American Embassy, collaborated with the Nepalese government to provide midday meals to students in all 77 districts. A comprehensive guideline booklet was published in 2020 to ensure smooth

implementation of the midday meal program.

The midday meal program in Nepal serves multiple purposes, including increasing enrollment, retention, and attendance of children in schools, improving learning outcomes, and maintaining children's health. Additionally, the child-friendly school approach emphasizes the significance of both quality education and ensuring the health, nutrition, and safety of children. Active involvement of community members, institutions, and service providers is essential for the successful implementation of this approach, as schools are seen as valuable community assets and play a crucial role in promoting literacy and empowering community members for better lives.

The problem addressed in this study is the disparity in the amount of financial support provided by the government to public schools compared to institutional schools for the mid-day meal program in Pokhara. Public schools receive a lower amount per student for the mid-day meal (Nepali Rs 15/), while institutional schools charge four times more for the same service. Moreover, there are conflicting claims between public and institutional schools regarding additional fees for infrastructure, with public schools arguing that institutional schools charge higher fees and institutional schools contending that the government adequately supports public schools. This study aims to conduct a comparative assessment of the school mid-day meals program in institutional and public schools of Pokhara, utilizing the child-friendly school manual to address the issue and identify potential solutions.

DATA AND METHODS

The research was conducted in Pokhara, a growing city where such a study had not been previously undertaken. This choice was based on the need to explore the mid-day meal program in the context of Pokhara and its potential impact on different types of schools (ECE to 3, ECE to 5, ECE to 8, ECE to 10, and ECE to 12). By conducting the study in Pokhara, the researcher aimed to gain insights into the mid-day meal program's implementation and its effects in this specific setting.

The researcher adopted a mixed-method approach, specifically using the explanatory sequential method (QUAN plus qual). The research design was descriptive in nature, seeking to understand and describe the mid-day meal program in both institutional and public schools in Pokhara comprehensively.

The population of the study comprised all headmasters and students at selected schools in Pokhara. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to ensure a representative sample.

From three wards of Pokhara Metropolitan City, schools of different types were randomly selected as the sample. To achieve a balanced representation, five public and five institutional schools were chosen as the sample. Multi-stage sampling was used to select schools from different types in three wards of Pokhara. This approach ensured a diverse and comprehensive representation of schools in the area. Choosing an equal number of institutional and community schools allowed for a balanced comparison between the two types of schools. This approach enabled the researcher to explore any potential disparities or differences in the mid-day meal program.

For data collection, the researcher utilized interview schedules and participatory observation with a Likert scale, including items with three response options: “good,” “satisfactory,” and “poor.” The Likert scale was based on the child-friendly school manual from 2010, which provided a structured framework for assessment. Before data collection, the interview schedule and participant observation were pilot tested in similar schools. The researcher ensured that the instruments were appropriate, relevant, and reliable in capturing the required information accurately.

Data collection involved interviews with ten headmasters (five from public and five from institutional schools) and 240 class five students (120 from public and 120 from institutional schools) using the interview schedule. Additionally, participatory observation was conducted to assess 20 items with the Likert scale. Collected data were analyzed using statistical methods, specifically the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive analysis was employed to present the findings in tables and figures, offering a clear overview of the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher emphasizes five topics in this section of result and discussion, each of which is systematically addressed and elaborated upon. These areas have been thoroughly discussed and analyzed in a sequential manner.

Caste, and Modality of Mid-Day Meals

Nepal, as a nation, exhibits significant diversity in terms of castes and religions. King Prithvi Narayan Shah characterized Nepal as comprising four Jats and thirty-six Barnas. Consequently, the country encompasses a wide array of religions and castes, with prominent ones being Bramin, Chhetry, Janajati, and Dalit. The interplay of religion and caste also influences individuals’ personal lifestyles, contributing to the rich tapestry of cultural and

societal diversity within the nation.

Table 1

Caste and Modality of Mid-Day Meal

Castes	Institutional schools		Public Schools		Total
	Canteen	Home made	Canteen	Homemade	
Bramin and Chhetry	34 (59.6%)	43 (68.2%)	39 (32.5%)	1 (0.8%)	117
Janajati	14 (24.5%)	12 (19%)	52 (43.3%)	×	78
Dalit	8 (14%)	6 (9.5%)	26 (21.6%)	×	40
Others	1 (1.8%)	2 (3.1%)	2 (1.7%)	×	5
Total	57(100%)	63/ (100%)	119/(99.2%)	1(.8)	240

Table 1 presents data indicating that a majority of Bramin and Chhetry students (59.6%) attended institutional schools, with over two-thirds of them (68.2%) bringing homemade meals. In contrast, approximately two-thirds of Janajati and Dalit students were enrolled in public schools in Pokhara. Notably, nearly all students in public schools consumed meals provided by the school's canteen, eschewing homemade snacks. The exception was a single student in public schools who consumed homemade snacks due to health reasons. The study revealed that approximately two-thirds of students (63.6%) in institutional schools were identified as Bramin and Chhetri, while the remaining 34.4% belonged to other castes. In public schools, approximately two-thirds (66.6%) of the students belonged to Janajati and Dalit communities. It is worth mentioning that CFS schools (Government of Nepal 2010) demonstrated a commendable commitment to avoiding discrimination based on caste, race, religion, or any other criteria. Additionally, the research indicated that schoolchildren from all castes showed a preference for the school's midday meal and consumed whatever was provided by the institution. To promote inclusive and reduce caste-based discrimination, it is advisable to implement a school mid-day meal program within the same canteen facility.

Table 2
Mothers' Occupation and Modality of Mid-Day Meal

Work	Institutional schools		Public Schools		Total
	Canteen Snacks	Homemade Snacks	Canteen Snacks	Homemade Snacks	
Housewife	37 (30.8%)	41 (34.6%)	68 (56.7%)	1 (0.8%)	147 (61.2%)
Private Office	5 (4.1%)	10 (8.3%)	14 (11.6%)	×	29 (12%)
Foreign Worker	3 (2.5%)	0 0.0%	1 (0.8%)	×	4 (1.6%)
Daily Wages	1 (0.8%)	1 (0.8%)	19 (15.8%)	×	21 (8.7%)
Government Office	4 (3.3%)	5 (4.1%)	2 (1.7%)	×	11 (4.5%)
Others	7 (5.8%)	6 (5.0%)	15 (12.5%)	×	28 (11.6%)
Total	57 47.5%	63 52.5%	119 99.1	1 0.8	240

The data presented in the table two shows the relationship between mothers' occupations and the type of midday meals provided to their children in both institutional and public schools. Most mothers (61.2%) were housewives, and among them, a higher proportion sent their children to institutional schools (78) compared to public schools (69). For housewives, a significant number of students attending institutional schools (34.6%) ate homemade food, while (30.8%) ate in the school canteen. Only a small percentage of mothers (12%) worked in private organizations, and among them, most sent their children to institutional schools (15), with some eating homemade snacks (10) and others using the canteen (5). Mothers working in government offices were fewer (11), and almost all of them sent their children to institutional schools (9 out of 11) with midday meals brought from home (45.5%).

Interestingly, the table two highlights that more than half of the children whose mothers worked in private and government offices ate homemade snacks for their midday meals. It was observed that a significant number of schoolchildren (52.5%) studying in institutional schools consumed homemade foods like noodles, Dalmot, bitten rice, biscuits, and chocolates, which are fast and junk foods, in their tiffin boxes. The researcher suggests that students should be encouraged to bring healthier options such as boiled eggs, grains, curry and chapati, and fruits to promote better nutrition and well-being.

The data indicates that there is a relationship between mothers' occupations and the choices of midday meals for their children. Encouraging healthier food choices among students could be beneficial for their overall health and academic performance. Efforts to educate both mothers and students about the importance of nutritious and balanced midday meals can contribute to better eating habits and overall well-being.

Practice of Home-Made Foods

Homemade foods are those prepared by students' parents for school snacks. Students carried those and ate them at the school at noon which is also known as the Tiffin system. Students carried those food items which their parents prepared as children's desire and choice. It is assumed that fresh food is made from local ingredients. Shrestha (2020) reported that home-grown school feeding is also an approach in which local communities are given greater control over the school meals program and improve meal quality. This modality emphasis on the local food chain.

Table 3

Practice of Home-Made Foods as School Mid-Day

Name of the Food	Institutional schools		Public Schools		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Egg and Loaf	14	(11.7%)	3	(2.5%)	17
Beaten rice and Gram	8	(6.7%)	5	(4.2%)	13
Fried rice and Curry	10	(8.3%)	3	(2.5%)	13
Fruits and Vegetables	19	(15.8%)	5	(4.2%)	24
Biscuits and Noodles	23	(19.2%)	8	(8.4%)	31
Others	23	(19.2%)	3	(2.5%)	26
Total	97	(80.9%)	27	(24.1%)	124

Multiple Responses

A total of 124 responses were collected regarding the consumption of homemade snacks during the midday meal at school. Among the respondents, only 64 students opted for homemade snacks. Conversely, Almost all of public-school students (119) preferred to consume the food provided by the school, occasionally supplementing it with additional items they brought from home, expressing their satisfaction with the offerings. On the other hand, more than half of the schoolchildren (63) attending institutional schools brought homemade food with them. The items carried by the students' included biscuits, noodles, fruits, vegetables, Chapati, Bread, Pizza, Potato chips, French fries, and other similar items.

Notably, the Government of Nepal (2020) issued recommendations for six menus suitable

for the middle hilly region, which includes Pokhara. These menus consisted of nutritious options such as Jaulo, Curry with millet porridge, Meat with beaten rice, Kwati (different varieties of lentils), curry with corn porridge, and Water bread. Parents were encouraged to adhere to these prescribed menus when preparing school meals. In the context of CFS schools, it was recommended to establish appropriate school canteens and utilize locally available grains and products to prepare nutritious midday meals, in line with the guidelines set forth by the Government of Nepal in 2010.

Children’s Perception on Facilities and Mid-Day Meals

To ensure the proper functioning of the school mid-day meal program, several facilities are essential. Students require easy access to water and soap near the wash bins, allowing them to wash their hands before and after eating. Access to pure drinking water at an appropriate height is also crucial for their hydration needs. Moreover, the food provided should be suitable, delicious, healthy, and nutritious for their respective age groups. When the food satisfies their hunger, it encourages regular attendance and reduces absenteeism. To evaluate their opinions on the facilities provided by schools, the researcher asked ten yes/no questions. Interestingly, differing views emerged from the students’ responses, with some students stating that the facilities were good while others expressed dissatisfaction with the same items. Understanding school children’s perspectives on these facilities is vital in ensuring their well-being and fostering a conducive learning environment.

Table 4

Status of Different Dimensions of Midday Meal Program

Yes/ No Responses	Institutional Schools		Public Schools	
	Yes	No	Yes	NO
Provide soap and water in wash bin	97 80.8	23 19.2	54 (45%)	66 (55%)
Clean and tidy canteen	91 (75.8%)	29 (24.2%)	75 (62.5%)	45 (37.5%)
Proper size seats in canteen	74 (61.7%)	46 (32.5%)	67 (55.8%)	53 (44.2%)
Get sufficient food in school	77 (64.8%)	43 (34.2%)	55 (45.8%)	65 (54.2%)
Drinking Facilities child friendly	91 (75.8%)	29 (24.2%)	81 (67.5%)	39 (32.5%)
Prefer school mid-day meal	70 (58.3%)	50 (41.7%)	82 (68.3%)	38 (31.7%)

Happy to come daily	91 (75.8%)	29 (24.2%)	75 (62.5%)	45 (37.5%)
Bunk class due to hunger	17 (14.2%)	103 (85.8%)	2 (1.7%)	118 (98.3%)
Eat junk food in school premises	49 (40.8%)	71 (59.2%)	29 (24.2%)	91 (75.8%)
Decorates the canteen by students	59 (49.1%)	61 (50.9%)	10 (8.3%)	110 (91.7%)
Total (1200 responses)	555 (46.2%)	645 (53.7%)	450 (37.5%)	750 (62.5%)

Students were asked to choose yes or no compulsory so there were 120 students so all together there were 1200 responses from institutional and 1200 responses from public schools. More than one third (34.2%) of the institutional and (54.2%) of the students at public schools said they did not have sufficient food in their schools. Three quarter (75.8%) institutional and (67.5%) students in public schools reported that they had child-friendly drinking facilities. Similarly, (58.3%) of the institutional and (68.3%) public students prefer school midday meals. More than a third of the fourth (75.8%) institutional students and (62.5%) public-school students were excited to go to school daily. Only a few students (14.2%) from institutions and (1.7%) from public schools preferred to skip class due to hunger although they could not go.

More than one third (40.8%) of institutional and (24.2%) of public-school students said they could eat junk food inside their school premises. Nearly (80.9%) institutional students and (45%) of public-school students reported there is water and soap in their wash bin. More than two-thirds (74.8%) of the institutional students and (37.5%) of the public students said that the canteen premises were clean and tidy. Similarly, more than half of students (61.7%) of institutional and (55.8%) public students reported that there was adequate seating in the canteen.

Child Friendly Schools should have the provision of soap and water in their wash bins. A clean and tidy canteen with appropriate-sized seats is needed. Students need sufficient food, which they prefer to eat happily, to be ready to come to school. Students did not leave their classes due to hunger. Water taps should be child-friendly, from which children can easily get safe and pure drinking water. Junk foods are prohibited inside the school premises. The canteen should be decorated with the posters made by the school students, from which students get nutrition education (Government of Nepal, 2010).

Facilities on School Mid-Day Meal Program through CFS.

Child-friendly schools play a vital role in ensuring the well-being of children by implementing appropriate protective measures. A conducive and safe environment must be maintained, encompassing essential provisions such as access to safe drinking water, clean and hygienic toilets, proper drainage systems, and nutritious mid-day meals. Furthermore, the absence of physical confrontations, behavioral issues, and misbehavior is crucial in fostering a positive learning atmosphere. The child-friendly school approach also necessitates special precautions to protect children from potential accidents and injuries. Measures such as filling up pits and ditches, constructing protective walls or fences around the school premises, providing first aid facilities, and implementing fire control provisions are integral aspects of promoting a safe learning environment (Government of Nepal, 2010 p. 14). In this study, the researcher developed a checklist to observe the physical facilities related to the school mid-day meal program, conducted participatory observations, and identified the following key findings: [proceed to outline the specific observations]. The assessment of child-friendly school facilities with a particular focus on the school mid-day meal program holds significant importance in safeguarding the well-being and educational experiences of young learners.

Table 5

Assessment of Physical Facilities Related to Mid-Day Meal Through Participatory Observation

Particular	Institutional Schools			Public Schools		
	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Place of Kitchen	5	×	×	2	1	2
Kitchen rag/ Cupboard/Box	4	1	×	1	2	2
Kitchen Fuel (Electric, gas, firewood)	×	5	×	×	5	×
Kitchen knife, chopping board	4	1	×	3	2	×
Utensils for cooking and serving	4	1	×	4	1	×
Water Facility inside the kitchen	3	1	1	2	2	1
Ventilation and height in the kitchen.	3	2	×	2	2	1
Places for cooking items.	4	1	×	1	3	1
Serving area or table	4	1	×	2	1	2
Hand washing before and after cook	5	×	×	×	5	×
Using Apron	×	2	3	2	1	2
Towel and Tala for the cook	1	3	1	×	2	3
Safe and pure drinking water	3	2	×	×	5	×
Seats and space in the dining rooms	2	3	×	1	3	1
Hand washing facilities for students	3	2	×	1	2	2
Waste disposal and pits	4	1	×	2	3	×
Pots are washed with soap and water.	3	2	×	2	3	×
Sanitation of kitchen, store, and dinning.	2	3	×	1	3	1

The quantity of food and language.	2	3	×	1	3	1
Cooperation while serving	4	1	×	1	2	2
Total	60	35	5	28	51	21

The check list was made based Child Friendly School (CFS) Manual issued in 2010 which provided expected and minimum indicators related to health and security (Government of Nepal, 2010 p.16). The researcher evaluated five institutional and five public schools. If there was expected indicator, that was good, minimum indicator was satisfactory and under the minimum indicator was poor. Good signifies 3, satisfactory represents 2 and poor symbolizes 1.

This study aimed to assess the implementation of the mid-day meal program in both institutional and public schools in Pokhara using the Child Friendly School (CFS) Manual as a reference. The research utilized a mixed-method approach, employing observations and interviews to evaluate the schools. A total of 20 items were observed, covering aspects such as kitchen facilities, water availability, sanitation, hygiene practices, and food preparation. Findings revealed that all institutional schools and two public schools had appropriate kitchen spaces, with most using gas for cooking. Institutional schools generally had better kitchen facilities than public schools. While hand-washing facilities were satisfactory in both types of schools, some institutions lacked aprons and satisfactory access to safe drinking water. Overall, institutional schools scored higher than public schools in terms of meeting the expected indicators of the CFS Manual.

The importance of proper water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programs was highlighted as essential for an effective mid-day meal program. Another study by Setopati (2018) supported the effectiveness of school midday meals in Nepal, indicating that it improves educational quality, health, and enrollment. However, the research also emphasized the need to improve physical facilities in CFS to enhance its success. Based on the CFS Manual and insights from other literature, the researcher identified expected indicators related to physical facilities, sanitation, and cooperation. These included separate and sanitary kitchen spaces, availability of kitchen rags and utensils, proper fuel for cooking, clean water facilities, adequate ventilation, appropriate dining spaces, and waste disposal systems. Institutional schools showed better compliance with these expected indicators compared to public schools.

The findings suggest that institutional schools generally performed better in meeting the expected indicators outlined in the CFS Manual. To enhance the program's effectiveness, there is a need to focus on improving physical facilities, water, and sanitation provisions, and promoting better cooperation among teachers, students, and staff during food preparation and

serving. The study contributes valuable insights to inform future improvements in the mid-day meal program in Pokhara schools, ultimately benefiting the health, nutrition, and educational outcomes of the students.

In this study, the researcher identified certain expected indicators that are crucial for evaluating the physical facilities in the mid-day meal program. These indicators include having a separate kitchen at the ground floor with proper sanitary facilities. Inside the kitchen, it is essential to have rags and cupboards. For cooking, electric stoves or cooking machines are recommended. Additionally, the kitchen should be equipped with sharp knives, clean chopping boards, and appropriate cooking and serving utensils. Access to running tap water in the kitchen is necessary for cooking and cleaning purposes.

Furthermore, adequate ventilation is vital, which can be achieved through two opposite windows and a minimum height of 9 feet. Adequate stands are needed to keep the cooking items organized. Proper facilities for hand-washing with soap and clean water before and after serving and eating should be provided. It is important for the cooks to use aprons and clean towels while preparing food. In the dining room, appropriate seating arrangements with desks and chairs suitable for the children's age are necessary. Ample space in the dining area is also important.

For waste management, separate bins for decay and non-decay solid waste are required. Proper cleaning of utensils and pots using suitable soap and clean water is a must. The quantity of food provided should be sufficient to satisfy hunger and fulfill essential nutritional needs. Lastly, successful implementation of the mid-day meal program requires cooperation from all the teachers, students, and staff involved in preparing and serving the meals (Tripathi, 2023).

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the study highlights that the school midday meal is a growing concern in both institutional and public schools. While all students in public schools consume the provided midday meal in the canteen, more than half of the students in institutional schools bring homemade snacks from home. The type of school and mode of midday meals are influenced by students' demographic background, with institutional schools having more male students and public schools having more female students. Brahmin and Chhetry parents often send their children to institutional schools, where homemade foods are commonly consumed.

The Child Friendly School (CFS) guidelines recommend having a canteen and providing a school midday meal to reduce socioeconomic discrimination. While most public

schools followed these guidelines, observations indicated the need for improvements in physical facilities such as the kitchen, store, dining hall, dress for cooks, water facilities, utensils, and sanitation. To address these issues and promote a child-friendly environment, the researcher suggested to enhance seating arrangements in the canteen to accommodate all students comfortably and ensuring the availability of soap in wash bins for proper hygiene maintenance. By taking these steps, schools can create a more supportive and inclusive setting for students during the midday meal, ultimately contributing to their overall well-being and enhancing their educational experience.

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