



P-ISSN: 2394-1685
E-ISSN: 2394-1693
Impact Factor (RJIF): 5.38
IJPESH 2023; 10(4): 344-346
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www.kheljournal.com
Received: 05-05-2023
Accepted: 09-06-2023

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A comparative study of nutrition status of rural and urban school children in West Bengal

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Abstract

Health and nutritional status are two crucial and interlinked aspects of human development, which in turn interact with demographic variables in important ways. Nutritional status is now recognized to be a prime indicator of the health of individuals or communities. The present study is an attempt to evaluate the nutritional status of schoolchildren studying in rural and urban areas. Therefore, the scholar carried out to determine a comparative study of the nutrition status of rural and urban school children in West Bengal. The present study was conducted on 60 schoolchildren in Murshidabad District in West Bengal. The boy students were 12 ± 1.25 years were randomly selected as a sample for this study. To measure the "nutritional status" of selected students scholars used paper and pencil tests (teacher-made questionnaires). The independent 't-test was used as a statistical tool to compare the nutrition status between the selected rural and urban students. The mean difference between 30 rural school children and 30 urban school children on nutritional awareness variables showed that the mean of 30 rural school children was 19.01 ± 2.29 whereas; the mean of urban school children was 18.70 ± 1.68 . The mean difference was 0.136. The calculated 't' value was 0.609, insignificant as the significant value was $p > 0.05$. (2.02).

Keywords: Rural, urban, school, and nutritional

Introduction

Everyone can benefit from long-term health benefits from physical activity! You can burn the calories you consume throughout the day by being active, and it can be as simple as walking the dog or as strenuous as running a marathon. Early opportunities for physical activity put kids on the road to better physical and mental health. The time to begin living a healthy lifestyle is never too late. (Kansal, Devinder K. 1996) [8].

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." - World Health Organization. Many people do not realize the importance of good health; even if they do, they may still disregard it. Whether we work at home or in an office, we need good health in order to perform our duties well. When people talk about health, they usually refer to the condition of the body (Singh, Ajmer, *et al.*, 2010) [13]. However, health does not merely mean being free from physical pain or disease symptoms. The mind is of crucial consideration in the overall assessment of well-being (Verma. J. Prakash, 2007) [15].

Good Health starts from the very infancy. It is here that protection and care are needed so that each organ functions well, each organ develops naturally, and there are no deformities, disabilities, or diseases but often the health of children remains neglected, with the result that they grow unhealthily and that affects their education as well (Anand K, Kant S, Kapoor SK 1999) [1]. A healthy child develops into a healthy adult. If the child does not grow properly and remains handicapped in some way, his ill health spoils his adult life. He cannot join any active service; he cannot be a successful professional, nor can he live his life happily (Bisai, Samiran and Mallick, Chhanda 2011) [3].

Health is real wealth. A healthy person is an asset to himself, to his family, and to his community. On the other hand, an ailing person is a burden on all. An ailing and aching body saps the enthusiasm for pursuit (Goel, A 2009) [6]. Unwholesome feelings and sensations retard the pace of functional activity, economic development, and spiritual uplift. Health cannot be achieved merely by taking one or two pills every day or by observing a few restrictions. It can

be achieved only by understanding what health is, and what it depends on and then applying this knowledge in everyday life (F. Opoola, S. Adebisi, and A. Ibegbu 2016)^[5].

However, because of increased leisure time, changes in lifestyles rendered this definition insufficient. These days, physical fitness is considered a measure of the body's ability to function efficiently and effectively in work and leisure activities, be healthy, resist hypo-kinetic diseases, and meet emergency situations (Goyal, Neha 2018)^[7].

A person's level of physical fitness indicates their overall health and well-being. Health-related physical fitness and skill-related physical fitness are the two categories that make up physical fitness. Cardio-respiratory function, composition (leanness/fatness), and abdominal strength are the three areas that health-related physical fitness aims to evaluate in a person. It consists of five main parts: flexibility, body composition, cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, and muscular endurance. (Kaushal *et al.* 2009)^[9].

The keys to good nutrition are balance, variety, and moderation. To stay healthy, our body needs the right balance of carbohydrates, fats, and protein the three main components of nutrition. we also need vitamins, minerals, and other substances from many different foods, and while some foods are better than others, no single food or food group has it all - so eating a variety of different foods is essential (Maiti *et al.* 2011)^[10].

Moderation means eating neither too much nor too little of any food or nutrient. Too much food can result in excess weight and even too much of certain nutrients while eating too little can lead to numerous nutrient deficiencies and low

body mass

In practice, good nutrition means putting dietary emphasis on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fish, poultry, lean meats, and low-fat dairy foods to ensure the body has a steady and adequate supply of the nutrients it needs. It also means managing calorie intake to maintain a healthy weight (Nasih, Simon, and Lachyan 2021)^[11].

In today's society which is moving towards a more sedentary lifestyle, there is a greater need than ever to increase the daily activity level to maintain both cardiovascular fitness and body weight. And nutrition is so important for children because they simply don't know enough on their own to naturally choose to eat well. So, parents should know the requirements of nutrition and healthy life and ask their children to remain fit with the help of a healthy lifestyle and physical activity (Sharma *et al.* 2018)^[12].

Methodology

The present study was conducted on N=60 students from rural (n=30 male) and urban (n=30 male) schools in the Murshidabad district of West Bengal. The age of the boys was 12 ± 1.25 years old and was randomly selected as the sample for this study. To assess "nutrition status", a paper-and-pencil test (teacher-written questionnaire) was used. The study aimed to compare nutrition awareness among students from different schools in Murshidabad district, West Bengal (rural and urban). Therefore, an independent "t" was used as a statistical tool. The significance level was kept at the 0.05 level to test the hypothesis.

Analysis

Table 1: Significance means the difference between rural and urban schools children's nutrition Awareness

Group	Mean	Mean difference	Standard deviation	t value	Sig
Rural Children	19.01		2.29		
		0.136		0.609	2.02
Urban Children	18.70		1.68		

Significant at 0.05 level, tab 0.05 (58) =2.02

Table-01 of the significant mean difference between 30 rural children and 30 urban children on nutritional awareness variables shows that the mean of 30 rural children was 19.01 ± 2.29 whereas; the mean of urban children was 18.70 ± 1.68 . The mean difference was 0.136. The calculated 't

value was 0.609 which was insignificant as the significant value was $p > 0.05$. (2.02)

Hence, concluded here there was no difference was found in the nutritional awareness between the selected 30 rural children and 30 urban children.

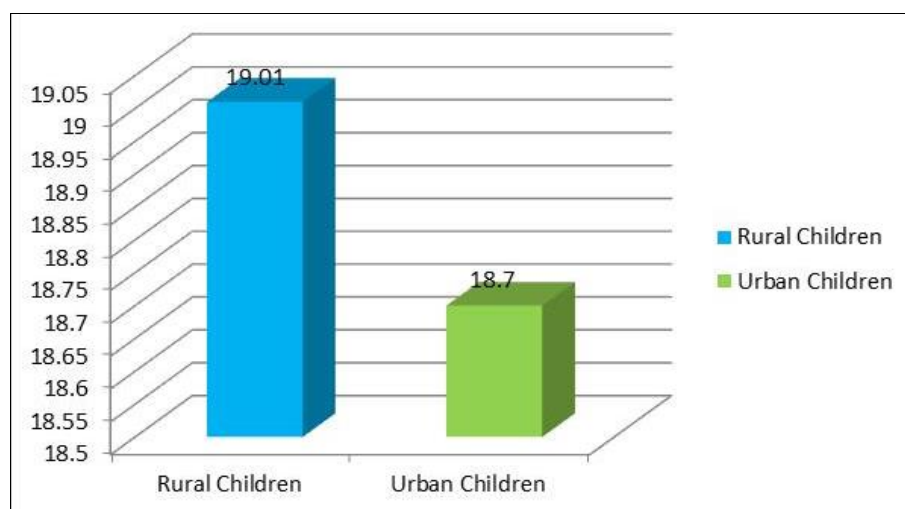


Fig 1: Mean difference between rural and urban children's nutrition awareness

Findings

A child's early growth and development largely depend on the child's nutritional and cognitive status. Therefore, schools emphasize educating children about physical education and food education to increase children's motivation. It is an arrogant idea that the development of a country does not consist in building it, but in raising its children. To apply this concept, postdoctoral researchers approach the topic as a research question. Experts choose two different from its various geographical regions: urban and rural. When the researchers collected more data on the variables and administered questionnaires to students in the two common districts, they found no differences in the nutritional status of students in urban and rural schools. In addition, rural students were slightly better in nutrition awareness than urban students. The reason for raising nutritional awareness among rural students is that this school is promoting nutritional awareness in schools in the current situation and probably that is why the government has developed a mid-day meal for all schools. Your school Therefore, a safe place is not important for the students, the continuous nutrition programs of the school are prescribed and regulated. Research on similar topics has shown that schools do not pay attention to nutrition education for children (Wu, Y *et al.*, 2022; Scalvedi, M, *et al.*, 2021; Bhawra, J., Kirkpatrick, SI, 2023) ^[16, 17, 18]. Public health policy and its implementation at all levels have improved the nutritional value of society.

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