**Food Safety Education and Campaign in Schools *(Right age to begin and Urgent need to De-toxify the Food Chain)***

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**INTRODUCTION**

The explosive growth of food marketplace has brought a variety of foods never before available to the ordinary consumer’s table. But this expanding marketplace also brings the possibility for unsafe food to reach much larger populations. Countries are now more dependent on each other’s safeguards to guarantee their citizens a wholesome food supply.

One approach to these complex problems is to exchange information and education to educate on food safety risks and how to manage them.

**WHAT IS FOOD SAFETY**

Food safety is an integral subject of daily life of any consumers. Our biggest consumers are children. Generally, this negligence of food safety will strive to create a very high risk society. WHO has been stated and warned India that until 2025, India will be the home of cancer and cancer like diseases in world?

**WHAT IS SIGNIFICANCE OF FOOD SAFETY AND HEALTH**

In the game of consumerism, market becomes very complex and flooded with many kinds of food products, which are not safe for human consumption. The risks are very high and cases of food poisoning and food borne diseases are widely spread.

Quality sometimes compromise leads to cheap prices with respect to earning of the masses. Less quality conscious consumers like Road side walkers prefer cheap consumable food items only to kill their hunger. They know one thing in common i.e. palate satisfaction.

The right age to begin with learning of food safety and nutrition in curriculum in the school. This is the right age to adapt the development of mindset by considering students from all ages.

FSSAI, a government regulatory also works on various amendments to make perfect implementation of laws of food adulteration and promote awareness campaign for safe food production and consumption.

**JUSTIFICQATION OF THE PROPOSAL**

1. **FALSE HEALTH CLAIMS**

There are tremendous misleading labels, which has message of false health claims. Do labels on packaged food help consumers make informed choices? Or do they help manufacturer’s trick gullible buyers? Packaged food entered in to kitchens by convincing women that cooking could be much faster and easier, we have shifted from homes to the market, which has led to an enormous development of the food business,”; their growth was proportional to the rise of obesity in children.

How do children get to know about such food? Through television, Internet channels (like YouTube) and banners placed at places where children would gather.Both the invisible twist on food labels and the luring of children through advertisement need stricter regulation.

A soup brand claims it is healthy, because it is low of fat. What it does not say is how high it is on sodium. Similarly, ‘health drinks’ brands claim that pediatricians recommend them for development of children. “What really happens is that children become hyper-active after drinking them as they are high on sugar. Once the effect wears off, they become a bit dull… This cyclical reaction gives the mothers an illusion that the product is effective,”

Pediatricians sadly prescribe pre-mix drinks like Pediasure, which claims to enhance growth in children. Such beverages are not required if children consume a balanced diet.

1. **SERIOUSNESS OF THE SUBJECT**

Over 65 percent of global food output consists of just nine crops; sugarcane, maize, rice, wheat, potatoes, soybeans, palm oil fruit, sugar, beet, and cassava.

This statistic tells several stories.

It tells us about the impact of agricultural subsidies and the focus of those subsidies. It also tells us about the large scale use of these crops as raw material by the food industry

It tells us that diets have changed, and the consumption of sugar and simple carbohydrates from grain, potatoes, and cassava has increased dramatically. (Is this partly because of food industry investments in marketing and advertising?)

It gives us an insight into degradation of top soil health worldwide, and the massive use of chemical fertilizer to compensate. For the health of people all over the world, and also the planet itself, this must change. Countries are spending more on health, but people are still paying too much out of their own pockets.

**HOW TO ACCOMPLISH THE CHALLENGES**

1. Food safety and nutrition education is already in curriculum of developed nations

According to the report from NZIFST [New Zealand Institute of Food science and Technology], the importance of teaching kids about food safety and good food practices has already been established by several studies. A study published in 1994 found that elementary school students' food safety knowledge scores improved after a food safety curriculum was introduced. Another study, this one published in 2004, found a disconnection between middle school students' food safety knowledge, perceptions and behaviors, and a 2008 study too found that a food safety curriculum successfully increased students' food safety knowledge. The 2008 study also found that the students retained a vast majority of the stuff they learned.

1. Understanding the Ethics of safe Food Production and consumption

Identify moral and social responsibilities related to food production e.g. Halal, food waste, packaging, ingredient selection – e.g. ethical products/sustainable products/fair trade and their implications to the wider community.

* Basic Personal Hygiene and Food Handling practices reinforced

1. Standards/ Codes and Legislation

* Introduce food standards related to food product. Understand there is legislation for food products and labeling e.g. weight, list of ingredients in descending order

***IMPLEMENTATION IN SCHOOLS***

1. ***PEDOGOGY OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT***

There are some methodology or skill which create innovative learning among focused group

1. Teachers –students interaction on topic
2. Demonstration of food tool box
3. Packing box creation for fruits and vegetables
4. Environmental kit and chemicals kits for merit and demerit of air, water, pesticides or seeds or soil
5. Motivational programme by Posters , drawings, short cutting clips, video and use of social media tools for talking in meeting with teachers and parents
6. Flags and houses or huts creation by giving name of foodstuff
7. Organic and Food safety fair and fashion show
8. ***CAMPAIGNING PROCEDURES***
9. Popularizing the concept of ‘Family farmers’ on the pattern of family doctors among parents. Purchase farmer produce directly from farmers. Make a family tour to farming field and spend with the grower and familiar with the village life. This will lead a healthy environment among families.
10. There are numbers of farms available outskirts of Towns, where organic practices already happening. School tour of children and arrange weekly picnic in the farmers field
11. Parents –Teachers meetings, we need to introduce on lecture on Hydroponic techniques like lectures by expert or tissue culture farming, Families can be motivated to grow organic produce in their house by using soil or no soil. Language should be in Hindi and English.
12. School needs to promote for selecting some space in their compound to introduce Agriculture farming and inspire students to have one period in a week to learn farming.
13. Organic farming without any chemical, fertilizer or pesticides and many more contents of safe food production and consumption or food safety included in various demonstration classes. This could be materialized by training teachers. If it could be a separate course as an option of home economics, then the dissemination would be widely reachable.
14. A child is topmost consumer for selling corporate products like fast foods and packaged food items. They force their demand to their parents. We need to introduce campaign on consumer awareness on food items in order to select best choice or informed choice. Children need to know good from bad.
15. The knowledge of diversity of crops and traditional knowledge of food preparation has been disappearing from urban class and rich class. There should be proper campaign on this theme.
16. Access to healthy and pure nutritious food has become dream for Metro families. Doctors in their prescription advise pathology lab or medical store for patient but not suggesting consuming healthy and pure food. Doctors could be a game changer.
17. School lunch and eateries may have advisory or guidelines by proper campaigning by health chart and diets or meal composition of inclusion of safe food produce.
18. Make world food day or doctor day or consumer day and celebrate good food consumption.
19. Introduce home economic classes and motivate students about food as their part of life, where students learn homemade preparation. This will promote the practice of self-doing.
20. Class leader’s selection on food debate among students and prizes should be given to the students time to time.
21. Daily prayer there must be topic on agriculture, food and health.
22. Media intervention during campaigning
23. Teaching department shall be motivated to participate in annual or monthly meeting in school and talk on food within assembly by proper advocacy from school management.

**Expected outcomes**

1. Students will be a smart consumer
2. Students will be selective eater during wedding or various occasion
3. Students will know the value of quality over quantity
4. Students will be aware of dairy animal, milk or agriculture practice and feel nearer to the nature
5. Students will avoid street foods
6. Students will be good buyer in grocery or market place.
7. They should be agent for the family for safer food consumption

**Constraints of the Proposal**

* Our strategy or methodology to delivery in terms of demonstration, instruction and practice classes along with the campaigning , group discussion, field visits, workshop and interaction with the media and donors. We feel this project will consume one year or little more.
* As if we could handle 10000 students in 10 schools in a district then we need to distribute 1000 students per school. We divide each month for schools with full dissemination of the theme along with whole methodology. We could cover other elements of teaching learning in 9-10 month, so we keep 2 full month for Mass media, Experience sharing and workshop with the stakeholders and donors. We presume some extension for completion before handover to donor.
* According to delivery of subject, we need to identify all age group begin from age 8 to 16/17. It means we need to sort out the course structure and campaigning strategy with specific consideration of their standards of education. The composition of students may be classified according to their standard like Primary, Middle and secondary.
* Logistic and campaigning parts of the project require cohesiveness of bringing all stakeholders to reunite. The supportive staffs comprise project coordinator, three project associates and one farmer.

**FUNDING**

The mode of funding could be public- private partnership. The schools and NGOs should come forward to promote this concept.

**Reference**

1. Food Safety Buddy, a Publication of Ministry of Primary Industries, Food safety Division; Issue 1, July 2018
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