

MEAL CONSUMPTION PATTERNS AMONGST PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE NORTH ZONE OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOLS DIETARY SERVICES LTD

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2013

Background: The School Nutrition Programme (SNP), managed by the National Schools Dietary Services Limited, (NSDSL) is the nation's largest food and nutrition assistance programme. In 2009, the NSDSL provided over 27,000,000 meals in 854 pre, primary, secondary and technical/vocational schools in Trinidad at a cost of \$253,737,537.56M TTD.

Objectives: This study examined **(1)** the consumption patterns of school feeding meals amongst primary school students of the North Zone of National Schools Dietary Services Ltd (NSDSL) **(2)** Investigated the factors that contributed to plate waste within the North Zone of the North Zone of National Schools Dietary Services Ltd (NSDSL).

Design: Six hundred and fifty questionnaires were completed from twelve primary schools. Lunch consumption was assessed using visual estimation plate waste.

Results: Fried chicken breast and fried fish nuggets had an eighty two point five (82.5) and eighty two (82) percent consumption rate respectively. Seventy one point five percent (71.5%) of the participants accepted the taste of the lunches provided. The preferred food of choice was chicken and chips. Female students purchased more sweet items than male students, whilst male students purchased more sandwich type meals than female students. Five to seven years old had a poorer consumption rate than older students. Vegetable consumption was greater when combined with a carbohydrate.

Conclusion: Fried protein items have a better consumption rate. Vegetables are better consumed when combined with other items such as rice and mashed potatoes. National Schools Dietary Services Ltd lunches are generally accepted by students of the North Zone.