Prevalence of Overweight and Obesity among Private and Government School Children

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Abstract
This paper presents a detailed study on overweight and obesity. The main aim of the paper is to find out the prevalence of overweight and obesity among private and government school children. Obesity is a chronic disease, prevalent in both developed and developing countries. Childhood obesity is associated with several risk factors for later heart disease and other chronic diseases including dyslipidemia, hyperinsulinemia and hypertension. The ideal definition based on percentage body fat is impracticable for epidemiological use. The contributing factors have been charted out and comparison of the prevalence of overweight and obesity among government and private school children has been done.
Keywords: overweight, obesity, private, government, school children.

1.INTRODUCTION

Today as standards of living continue to rise, weight gain and obesity are posing a growing threat to health of the world. Obesity is a chronic disease, prevalent in both developed and developing countries [1]. In many developing countries including India it co-exists with nutrition. This constitutes a double burden for those countries [2]. The problem of obesity is confined not only to adults but also among the children and adolescents [3,4].Data from National Health And Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) showed that 17% of children in the age group of 12 to 19 years are overweight or obese[5] In India, the data which is available from urban school children in cities like New Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad etc. where prevalence of obesity was found to be between 6 to 8 % and overweight between 9 to 12%.Over the last few decades, children worldwide have become significantly heavier [6]. There has been an increase in the percentage of overweight and obese children in affluent urban families of India in the past decade [7]. evaluationof obesity in children is important as it provides an opportunity to identify the problem and prevent disease progression into adulthood. In developed societies, several studies have shown increasing number of overweight children. Approximately 14-15% of all 15 years olds in USA can be classified as obese [8]. Childhood obesity is associated with several risk factors for later heart disease and other chronic diseases including dyslipidemia, hyperinsulinemia and hypertension. The ideal definition based on percentage body fat is impracticable for epidemiological use. BMI is widely used in adult population to define obesity and a cut off point of 30 kg/m2 is recognized internationally as a definition of adult obesity and 25 kg/m2 as a cut off for overweight. BMI in childhood changes substantially with age. Hence, cutoff points related to age would better define child obesity. To have an absolute and internationally relevant definition of child over weight and obesity ,Cole, et al. developed age and sex specific cutoff lines from data derived from six countries (India not included) across several continents using BMI. These charts extrapolate risks from adult experience to children. These cut off pointsarerecommended for use in international comparisons of prevalence of overweight and obesity [9].There has been a trend towards increasing prevalence of overweight and obesity among developing countries. The data on prevalence of childhood obesity from India, which is also undergoing an epidemiological transmission, is scant. In view of this, the study was planned to assess the growth parameters and prevalence of overweight and obesity in school children. Here our study is also to establish the importance of school based intervention in children to avoid obesity and stress.

2.REVIEW OF LITERATURE
2.1OBESITY:

 Obesity is a health problem that has reached epidemic proportions [10]. In many developing countries including India, it coexists with nutrition [2]. Secondly in addition to being a disease inits own sight, obesity substantially increases the risk of several fatal & nonfatal, but highly debilitating, non-communicable diseases particularly cardiovascular diseases, non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus, endocrine & metabolic disturbances [11].

2.2OBESITY WORLD WIDE AND INDIAN STATUS:

Obesity has become a global threat. Recently WHO acknowledged an urgent need to examine child obesity across countries, using a standardized international standard. The prevalence of obesity and overweight was 11.1% and 14.3% respectively in US, and 10.0 % in Russia ,3.6% and 3.4% China [12]. Data from NFHS(National Family Health Survey) allowed for examining the trends at national level. It shows overweight

of 12.6% in women and 1.5% in children in 2005-2006 [13].

2.3 RISK FACTORS OF OBESITY
The following factors in early life are associated with an increased risk obesity in childhood. parentral obesity, more than eight hours spent in watching tv at age 3years, weight gain in first year, shoetsleep duration at age 3years [14].

2.4 CO-MORBIDITIES
Psychological impairment is the most significant condition[15], visceral adiposity is associated with morbidity and mortality through endocrine and mechanical process, clinical manifestations due to effects of obesity on cardiovascular diseases, respiratory , gastrointestinal, musculoskeletal, immune and integumentary system have been described [16].

3. OBJECTIVES
To findout the prevalence of overweight and obesity among school children
To chart the contributing factors
To compare the prevalence of overweight and obesity among govt and private school children.

3.1 MATERIALS AND METHODS
This cross sectional observational study is carried out by department of anatomy over a two month period of june and july 2014. The study has been approved by institutional ethics committee and informed consent was obtained from the school administration and parent of each student.

School children from both the sexes in the age of 16 belonging to government and private schools were studied. The children attending government school were considered to represent LSES while those attending private school were considered to represent HSES. Of the above 1000 students 500 belonged to LSES and 500 to HSES.

The entire cohort of 1000 adolescents underwent assessment of height and weight and calculation of BMI. Height was measured to the nearest of 0.1 cm using a stadiometer with the subject standing with head held in Frankfurt horizontal plane. Subject's weight, without shoes and with light clothes on was measured to the nearest 0.1kg, using an electronic scale. The height and weight measurements were taken to calculate BMI which was defined as the ratio of body weight to body height squared, expresses in kg/m2.

The cut off values of BMI, is obtained from Cole, et al [9] were used to classify children as normal, overweight and obese. Prevalence of overweight and obesity was assessed for LSES and HSES for both the sexes. Finally, a comparison of the prevalence of overweight and obesity in LSES and HSES was done for both sexes.

Subjects fulfilling the inclusion and exclusion criteria were interviewed with a questionnaire assessing the food habits, physical activity and stress among the subjects.

3.2 Statistical analysis:
The statistical analysis were performed using the SPSS software

4. OBSERVATION AND RESULTS
In this study group, 500 (females- 230, males- 270) LSES and 500 (females- 230, males 270)HSES(Fig 1) , of which 46% were female and 54% were male(Fig 2). Both the groups belonged to rural set up. Out of them skipping regular mealsis highly prevalent among government school children(Fig.3), But the percentage of students eating fast foods is almost equals on both the sectors(Fig.4), the activity of having beverages many times is higher among private school children (Fig.5),And in case of eating fruits most of the government school children are eating sometimes and most private children are having fruits many times.(Fig.6), a significant amount of government school children were never taking milk(Fig.7), private children are taking non-veg in diet manytimes than the government children.(Fig.8), most of the government school children are eating on compulsion(Fig.9) there is no significant difference in eating sweets among private and government school children(Fig.10),almost 25% of the government school children were never taking eggs(Fig.11),the percentage of government children taking vegetables are more than the private children(Fig.12), snacks in between meals-here both never and manytimes are higher among private school children,(Fig.13) . And the physical activity of the government and private school children are compared in the TABLE 1, stress due to psychological and social causes are shown in the TABLE 2 and TABLE 3 respectively.

FIGURE 1: Analysing the collected data shows 500(50%) participants from government and 500(50%) fom private schools.
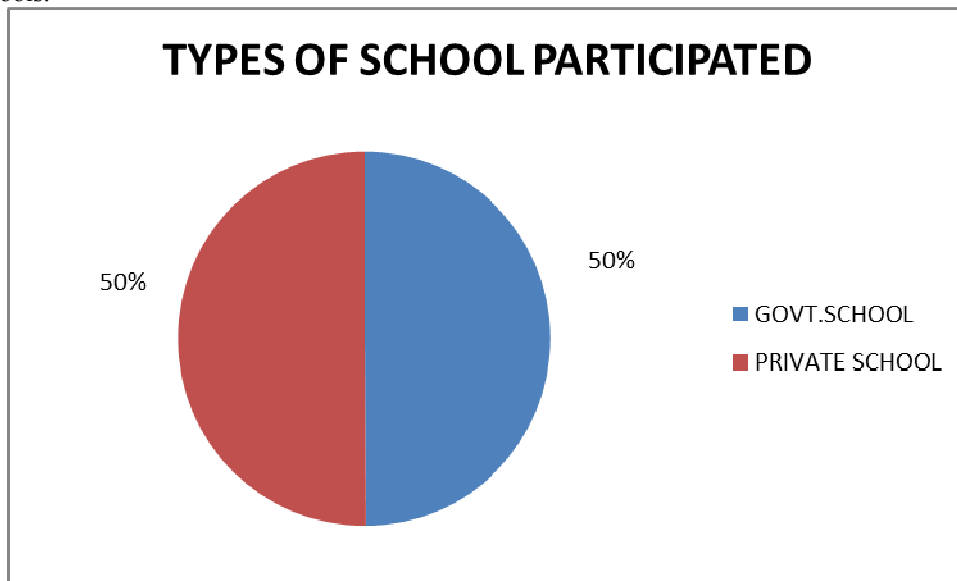

FIGURE 2: Among the total survey population 1000 46% were female and 54% were male participants.
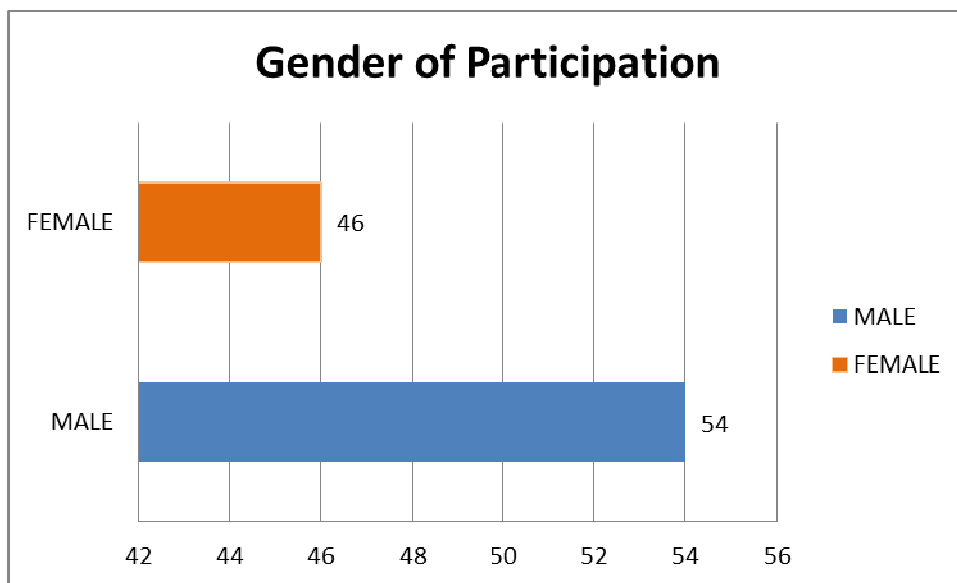
FIGURE3: Our survey shows 16% of the private school students are skipping regular meals frequently, 38.40% never skips and 45.80% private students were skipping meals sometimes.
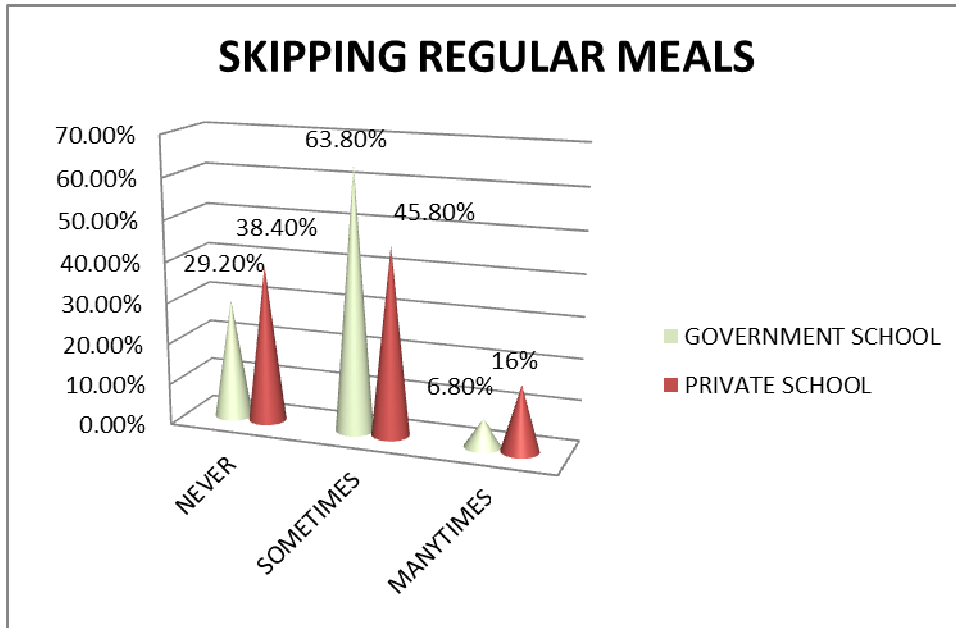

FIGURE 4: From the statistical analysis it is evident that 70.2%,74.4% 0f private and government school children were taking fastfoods sometimes respectively.
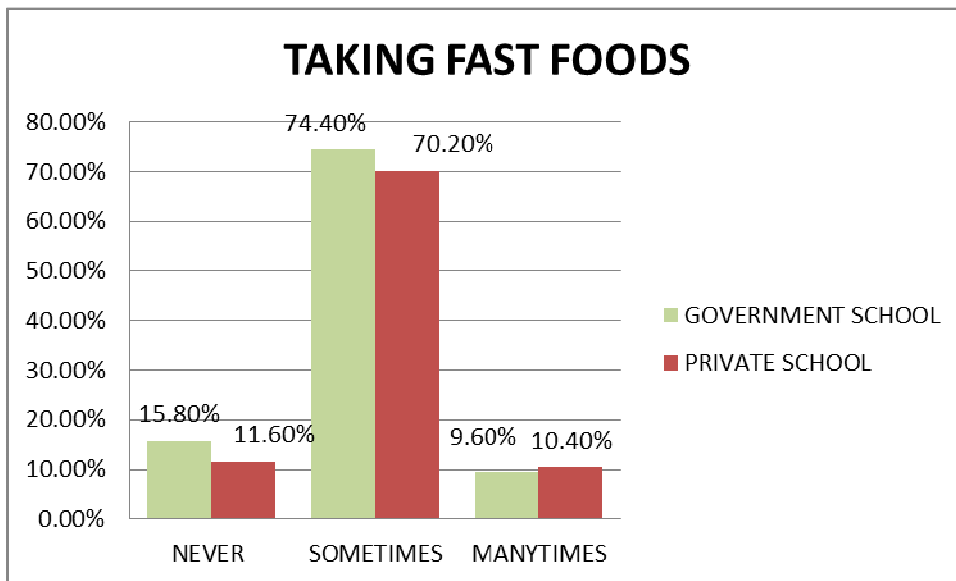
FIGURE5: Questionnaire survey reveals that 15% 0f students take beverages manytimes and 67.4% and 17.8% take sometimes and never respectively from the private schools .
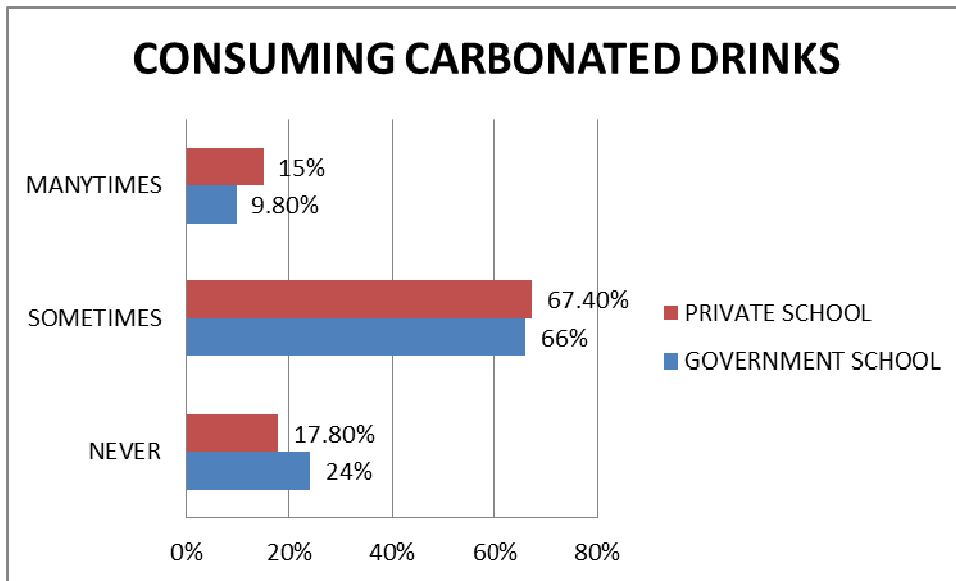
FIGURE6: The above chart indicates that 67.20% , 44.60%, 11% are eating fruits sometimes, manytimes and never respectively from the government school children.
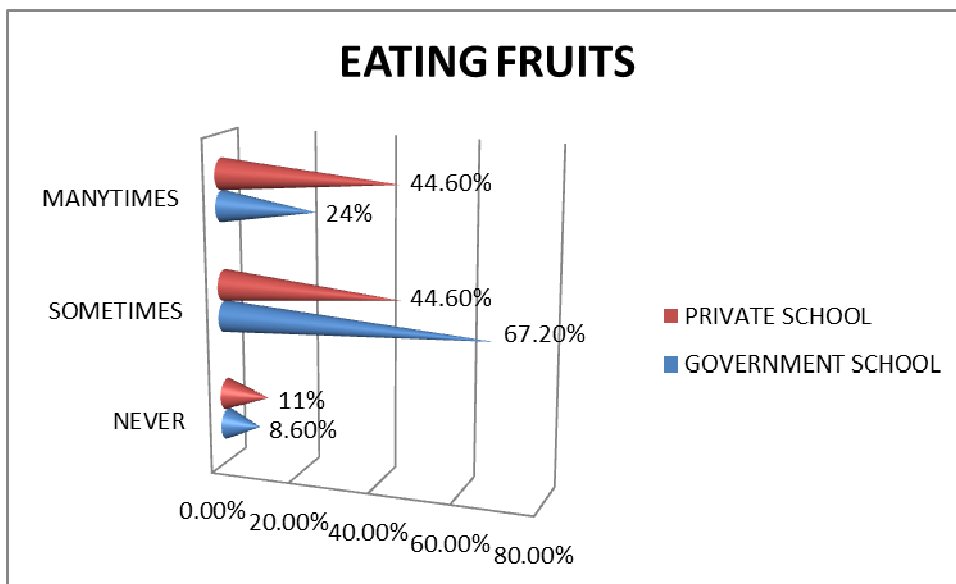
FIGURE7: It is clearly shown that the percentage of never drinking milk is higher in the government school children(21.4%) than the private children (14.6%).
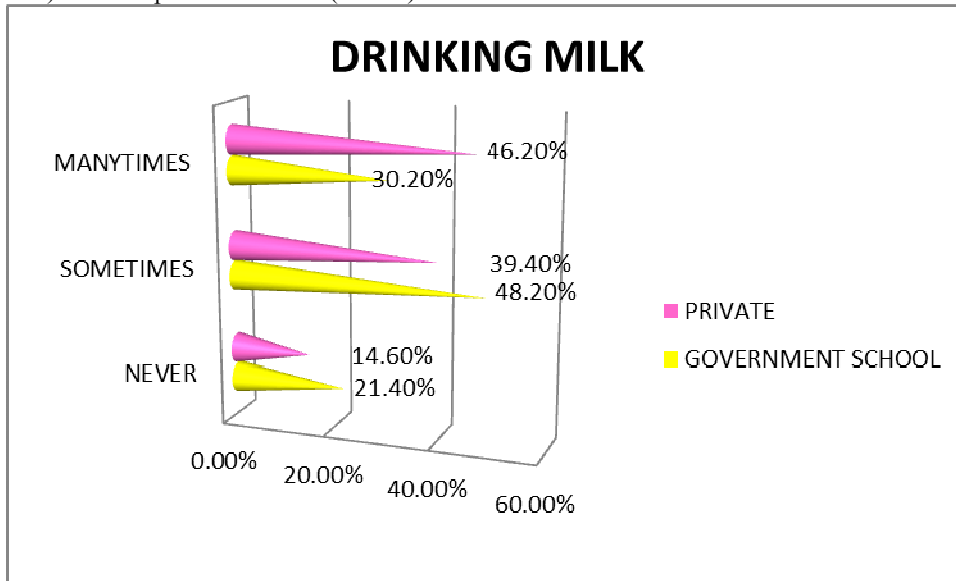
FIGURE8:58.6%, 23.2%,18.4% of students are taking non-veg diet sometimes, manytimes and never respectively from the private schools and 71.6%, 16.6%, 11.6% are taking non-veg diet sometimes, never and many times from the government schools.
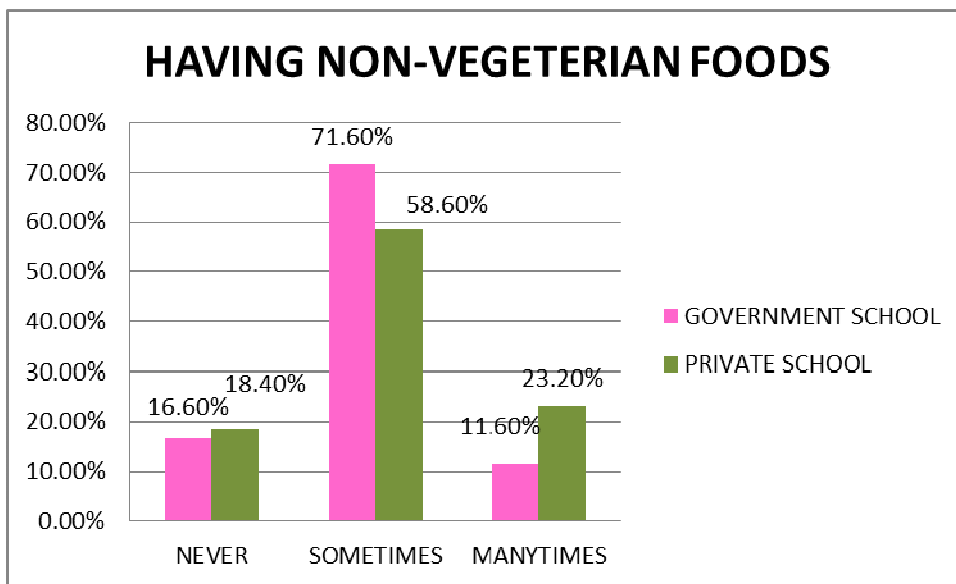
FIGURE9: The outcome of our survey implies that sometimes most of the children from government school are eating their foods under compulsion.
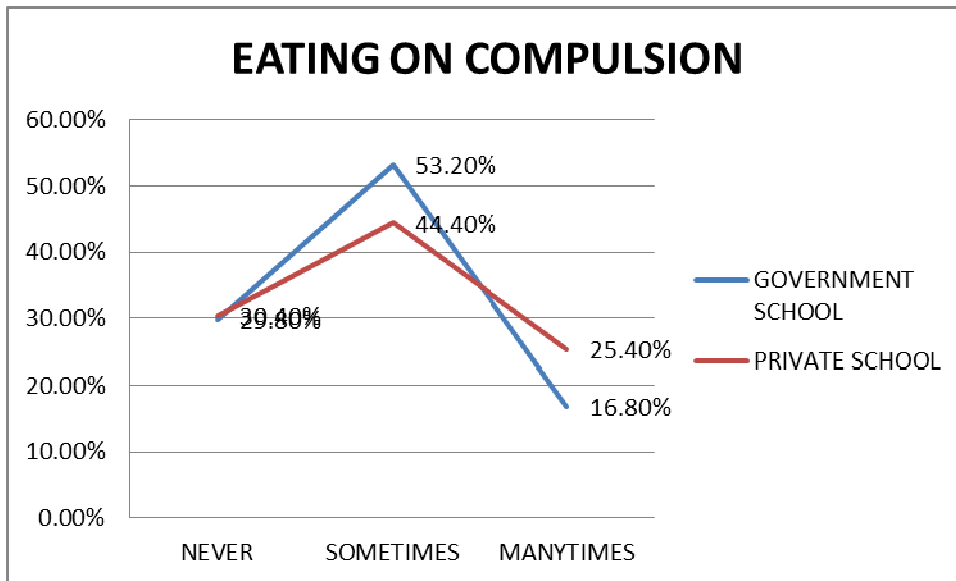
FIGURE10: Only 9% from the private schools were never taking sweets and 35% are taking sweets many times, which is seen on analysing the data.
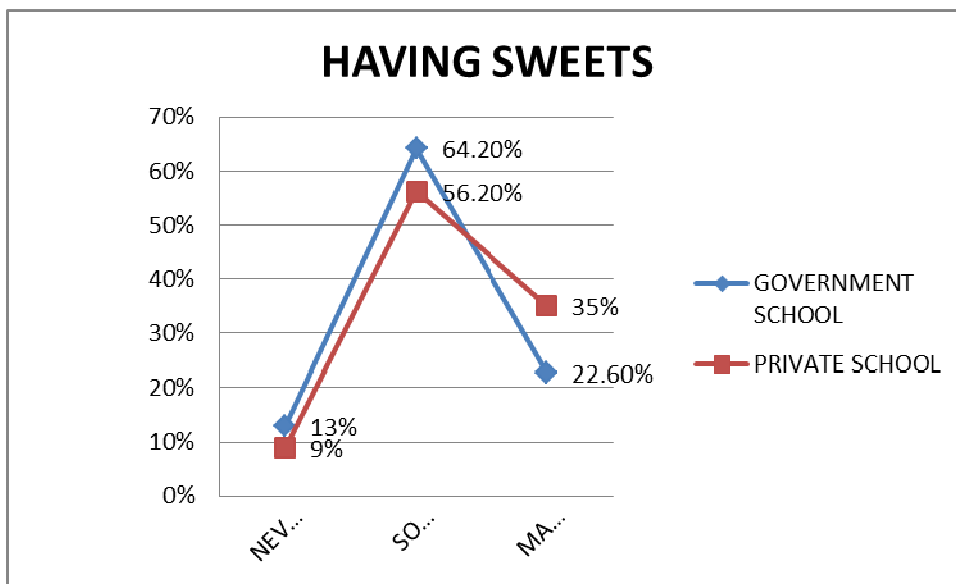
FIGURE11: The study shows that among the government school children 59%, 25%, 15.80% were taking eggs sometimes, never and many times respectively.
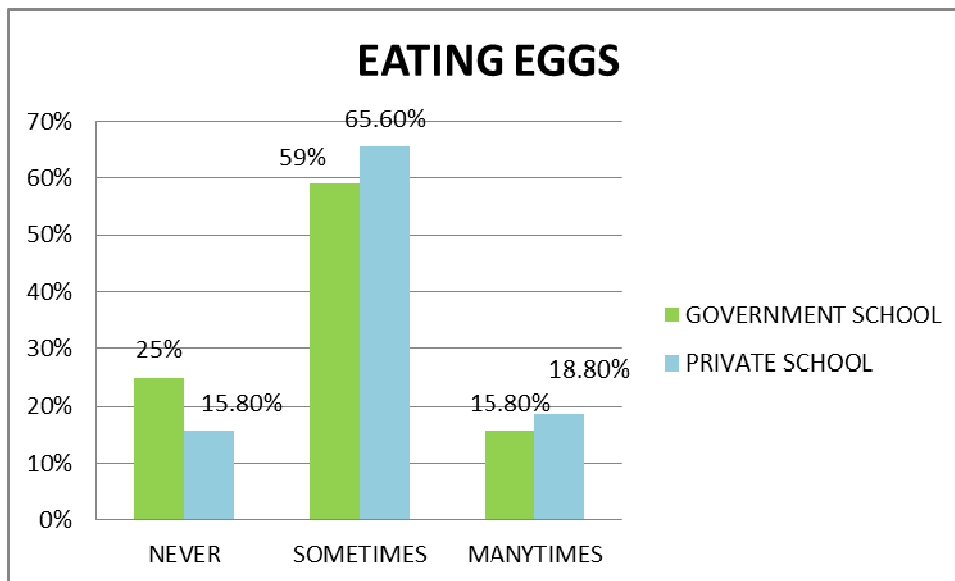
FIGURE 12: The result of our survey shows that 52.80% of government students were eating vegetables which is more than the private school children, 51%.
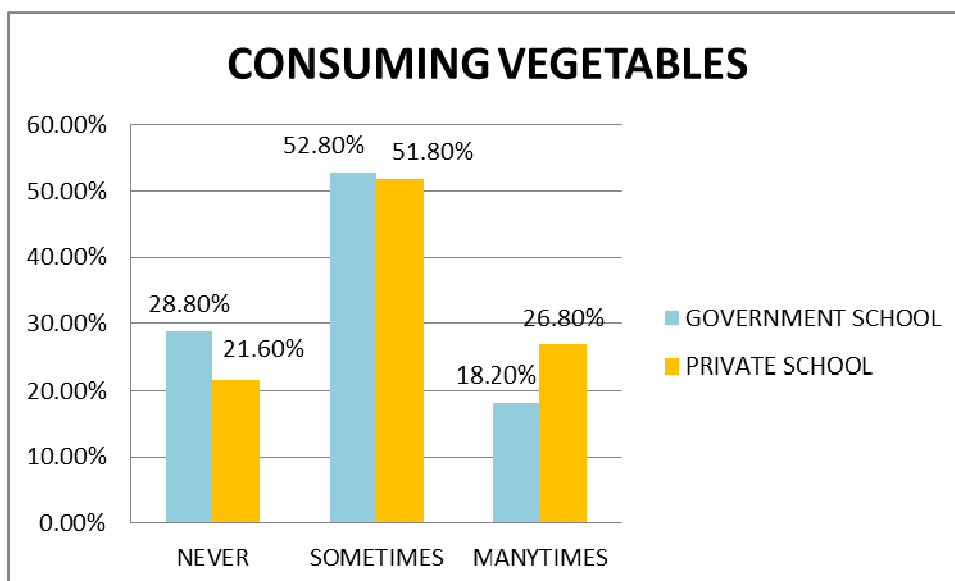
FIGURE 13: The bar chart compares the percentage of students having snacks in between meals between government and private schools, which shows more government school children(58.40%) are taking than the private students(45.20%).
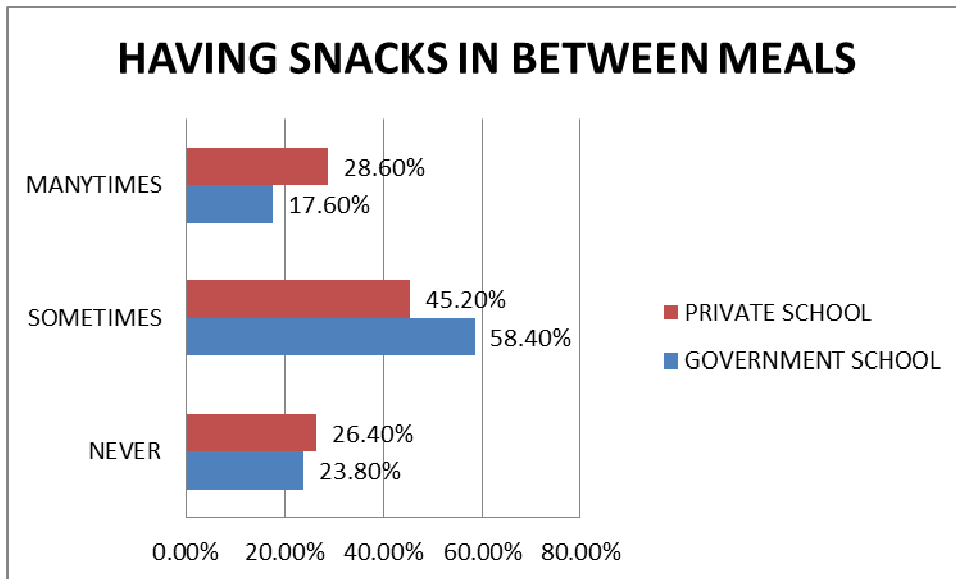
FIGURE 14: When analysed the obesity among government and private school children, it was foundout that overweight and obesity were more in private school and the diffence of overweight and obesity among govt school and private is more significant($p < 0.05$).

	Normal	Under Weight	Over Weight	Obesity
Government School	87.80%	1%	7%	4%
Private School	82.40%	0	12.40%	5.40%
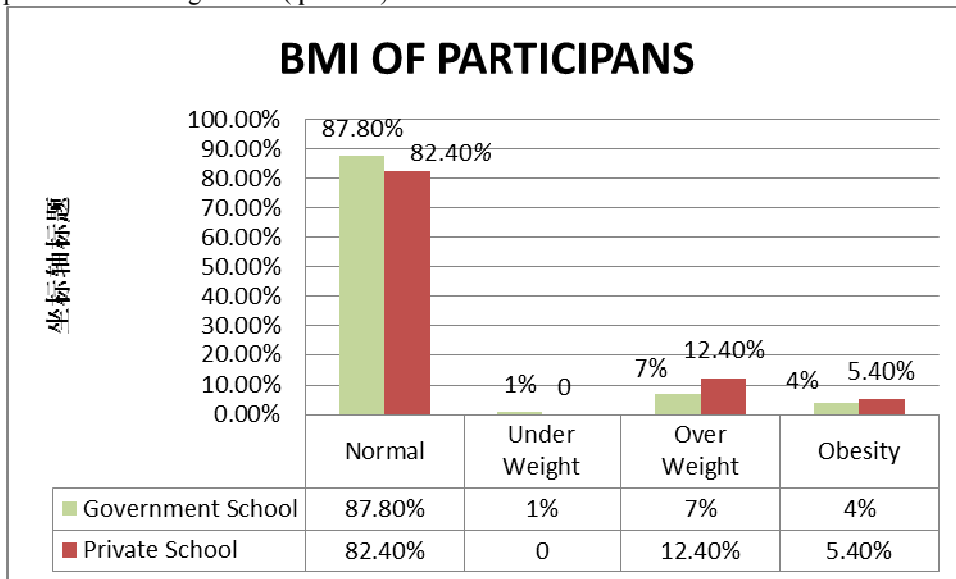
TABLE 1 : PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

S.NO		GOVERNMENT SCHOOL	PRIVATE SCHOOL
WALKING TO SCHOOL			
	NEVER	48%	49.4%
	SOMETIMES	33.6%	65.4%
	HABITUAL	18.2%	37.2%
DOING SKIPPING/ JUMPING ROPE			
	NEVER	23.6%	41.4%
	SOMETIMES	67%	50.6%
	HABITUAL	9.2%	8.2%
PLAYING OUTDOOR GAMES			
	NEVER	23.6%	26%
	SOMETIMES	51.8%	48.2%
	HABITUAL	24.4%	26%
PLAYING INDOOR GAMES			
	NEVER	23.2%	16.8%
	SOMETIMES	52.8%	59%
	HABITUAL	23.8%	24.4%
STERNOUS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY			
	NEVER	33.4%	24.6%
	SOMETIMES	50.4%	50.6%
	HABITUAL	16%	24.4%
PARTICIPATING IN INTER SCHOOL COMPETITIONS			
	NEVER	23.6%	25.2%
	SOMETIMES	53.6%	51%
	HABITUAL	22.6%	46.4%
PLAYING / OUTDOOR ACTIVITES DURING WEEKENDS			
	NEVER	16%	19.4%
	SOMETIMES	43.6%	42.8%
	HABITUAL	40.2%	38.4%
WATCHING TV IN THE EVENING HOURS			
	NEVER	13%	12.8%
	SOMETIMES	51%	48.4%
	MANYTIMES	35.8%	39%
PLAYING MOBILE OR VIDEO GAMES			
	NEVER	23.6%	19.4%
	SOMETIMES	51%	49.2%
	HABITUAL	25.2%	31.6%
HAVING DEEP SLEEP IN THE NIGHT			
	NEVER	24.6%	16.6%
	SOMETIMES	50.6%	42.4%
	HABITUAL	24.8%	40.8%

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the variables of physical activity in school children.

TABLE 2: PSHYCOLOGICAL CAUSES FOR STRESS

S.NO		GOVERNMENT SCHOOL	PRIVATE SCHOOL
STRESS DUE TO TESTS/ EXAMS			
	STRONGLY AGREE	38.6%	24%
	AGREE	39.8%	32.5%
	NO OPINION	7.6%	18%
	DIS AGREE	6%%	13%
	STRONGLY DIS AGREE	7.8%	12.4%
STRESS DUE TO DIFFICULTY IN UNDERSTANDING SUBJECTS			
	STRONGLY AGREE	19%	14.4%
	AGREE	29.2%	35%
	NO OPINION	12.2%	21%
	DIS AGREE	24.6%	17.2%
	STRONGLY DIS AGREE	14.8%	12.6%
STRESS DUE TO HOMEWORKS			
	STRONGLY AGREE	34%	18.8%
	AGREE	31.8%	28.4%
	NO OPINION	12.8%	20.8%
	DIS AGREE	9.2%	17.6%
	STRONGLY DIS AGREE	12%	14.6%
STRESS DUE TO TUTIONS			
	STRONGLY AGREE	24.8%	9.2%
	AGREE	22.2%	14%
	NO OPINION	35.4%	43.2%
	DIS AGREE	15.2%	14.4%
	STRONGLY DIS AGREE	22.2%	19.4%
STRESS DUE TO SELF EXPECTATION			
	STRONGLY AGREE	37%	30%
	AGREE	35.6%	30.2%
	NO OPINION	9.6%	17.2%
	DIS AGREE	7.2%	9.2%
	STRONGLY DIS AGREE	10.4%	13.6%
STRESS DUE TO HEAVY WORK LOAD			
	STRONGLY AGREE	24.6%	25.8%
	AGREE	29.6%	22.6%
	NO OPINION	18.4%	20.2%
	DIS AGREE	16%	16.8%
	STRONGLY DIS AGREE	11%	14.8%
STRESS DUE TO POOR MARKS			
	STRONGLY AGREE	26.8%	19.2%
	AGREE	22.6%	20%
	NO OPINION	15%	24.4%
	DIS AGREE	21.4%	21%
	STRONGLY DIS AGREE	14%	15.6%

Table 2 represents the Descriptive statistics for the variables of the psychological causes of stress in the subjects.

TABLE 3 : SOCIAL CAUSES FOR STRESS

S.NO		GOVERNMENT SCHOOL	PRIVATE SCOOL
PARTIALITY IN GRADING PROCESS			
	STRONGLY AGREE	27.2%	28.2%
	AGREE	10%	21.4%
	NO OPINION	12.4%	29.2%
	DIS AGREE	16%	12.2%
	STRONGLY DIS AGREE	34.2%	14.2%
POOR MOTIVATION TO LEARN			
	STRONGLY AGREE	16.2%	16%
	AGREE	22.2%	18.2%
	NO OPINION	14.8%	27.6%
	DIS AGREE	30%	20.6%
	STRONGLY DIS AGREE	16.6%	17.8%
LACK OF TIME FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY			
	STRONGLY AGREE	30.4%	31.2%
	AGREE	24.4%	24.2%
	NO OPINION	13.2%	15.8%
	DIS AGREE	17.8%	19.4%
	STRONGLY DIS AGREE	14.2%	9.6%
FREQUENT INTERUPTION OF WORK BY OTHERS			
	STRONGLY AGREE	30.4%	31.2%
	AGREE	24.2%	24.2%
	NO OPINION	13.2%	15.8%
	DIS AGREE	17.8%	19.4%
	STRONGLY DIS AGREE	14.2%	9.6%
COMPARING WITH OTHER STUDENTS BY PARENTS AND TEACHERS			
	STRONGLY AGREE	26.4%	28%
	AGREE	28.6%	20.4%
	NO OPINION	18%	20%
	DIS AGREE	11%	14%
	STRONGLY DIS AGREE	15.8%	17.8%

Table 3 represents the Descriptive statistics for the variables of the social causes of stress in the subjects.

5. DISCUSSION

There has been a trend toward increasing prevalence of obesity as well as its metabolic complications in developing countries. India is in the midst of an escalating 'epidemic' of type 2 diabetes and coronary heart disease There has been a trend toward increasing prevalence of obesity as well as its metabolic complications in developing countries. India is in the midst of an escalating 'epidemic' of Type 2 Diabetes and Coronary Heart Disease (CHD). It is now emerging convincingly that the genesis of these disorders begins in childhood, with childhood obesity serving as an important factor. In recent years, Type 2 diabetes is beginning to emerge even in children(16,17).

While trends of increasing obesity in children have clearly shown in the developed world, studies from India are emerging. The present study was planned to evaluate in detail, the complete spectrum of childhood obesity and compare the prevalence in two different socio-economic strata.

. Two earlier large nation wide surveys have been conducted in India to assess growth parameters: ICMR survey from 1956-1965(18); and Agarwal, *et al.* 1992(19). While the ICMR study largely recruited from LSES, the Agarwal charts represented children from USES.

Our study aims to give updated charts for LSES(government school children) and USES (private school children)children. Our data shows about 12.4% are overweight and 5.4% are obese among HSES, 7% are overweight and 4% are obese. These charts clearly show a secular trend when compared to ICMR charts and Agarwal charts for various percentiles. On comparing the ICMR charts (all India data) to our LSES group, we find that children today are heavier compared to their counterparts 50 years ago. Similarly, on comparing our data with the Delhi children reported in the Agarwal study, we found that USES children today are already heavier than their counterparts were 15 years ago. In contrast, a recent study of middle-income school children from North Kolkata, showed a declining trend for BMI compared with age matched affluent Indian school children, who were evaluated a decade earlier(20).

Our study also includes questionnaire survey on dietary pattern, physical activity, and stress among the government and private school children.which shows poor dietary pattern more among the private school children like eating fast foods , sweets , having carbonated drinks many times and government school children are skipping regular meals more than the private school children.physical activity is also reduced among private school children .

This study also brings out clearly the significant difference in percentiles of height, weight and BMI in children from different socioeconomic status in both genders. This significant disparity in anthro-pometric parameters between the two socio-economic strata highlights the difficulty in creating one set of national norms.

The other main aim of this study was to highlight the growing problem of childhood and adolescent obesity. The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) data in United States clearly shows the epidemic proportion of this problem(8). As per 1999-2000 NHANES data, 30.3% of children (ages 6 to 11) exceeded 85th percentile of weight for age charts (comparable to the overweight category in the current study). This included 15.3 % children who were more than the 95th percentile of these charts (comparable to the obese group in the current study). For adolescents (ages 12 to 19), 30.4% were overweight, of which 15.5 % were obese. The prevalence of obesity is significantly increased over these years..

The data from India on this important issue are meager. Our study found that the prevalence of overweight and obese among children from USES was significantly higher than those from the LSES. In a study from Chennai(17)3.6% boys and 2.7% girls. Prevalence of overweight in low, middle and high socioeconomic group was 4.2%, 13.9% and 23.5% respectively for boys and 5.0%, 17.6% and 21.5% respectively for girls. In children from the same age category in our study, the prevalence of overweight in LSES and USES is 2.7% and 17.9% for boys and is 2.7% and 19.1% for girls respectively, which is similar to data reported by Ramachandran *et al*.

The study by Subramanyam, *et al*.(21) evaluating the prevalence of overweight and obesity in affluent girls aged 10- 15 years in Chennai revealed a prevalence of 9.6% and 6.2% respectively in 1998 using 85th and 95th percentiles of BMI as cut off. In the present study, in a comparable age group, the prevalence of overweight and obesity in USES is 20.27 and 4.76% respectively. However, the use of different criteria to establish the diagnosis of overweight and obesity makes it difficult to compare these two studies.

Two other studies from India have evaluated prevalence of obesity among affluent school children using cut-offs proposed by Cole, *et al*. In a study from a single school from Delhi(22), the prevalence of obesity was 8% for boys and 6% for girls, compared to 4.6% and 4.9% for boys and girls from the same age group in the present study. The difference observed could be because Kapil, *et al*.(22) have evaluated a smaller sample size and that too from a single school. In the second study from Pune(23), the overweight and obesity prevalence in boys aged 10-15 years was 19.9% and 5.75% respectively which is comparable to our data. The above studies suggest that there is a significant problem of childhood overweight and obesity in India.

Another feature this study highlights is higher prevalence of overweight in girls compared to boys. Prevalence of overweight among USES schoolgirls was significantly higher at 19.01% compared to 16.75% for USES schoolboys. A higher prevalence of overweight among girls has also been reported by earlier studies from Chennai and Delhi (7, 22).

6. Conclusion

There is a significant disparity in anthropometric parameters of children belonging to the upper and lower socio-economic status, with USES children being significantly heavier. This precludes any attempt to create one set of national norms. There is a high prevalence of overweight and obesity in children from the upper socio-economic status, starting from as early as 5 years of age. These data indicate the urgent need to tackle the burgeoning prevalence of childhood obesity with a concerted national effort.

7. Summary

There are many factors that contribute to the poor performance of children in school, one among them being obesity, that too mostly among HSES. This cross sectional observational study was therefore carried out to compare the prevalence of overweight and obesity among HSES and LSES school children using anthropometric measurements for calculating BMI, and questionnaire survey to assess the food habits prevailing among school children, and to assess their physical activeness and also the stress experienced by them and various causes for their stress. A total of 1000 students (500 from each, HSES and LSES) were participated in our study. The analysis of the data received shows 12.4% and 5.4% of overweight and obesity among HSES respectively and 7% and 4% of overweight and obesity among LSES respectively. From the above study it is significant that the prevalence if overweight and obesity among HSES is more than the LSES children. It is also associated with poor food habits and lack of physical activity more among the HSES children. In the view of increasing prevalence of overweight and obesity among children, these have to be considered, evaluated and proper preventive measure should be taken to prevent the children from going into metabolic disorders in later life.

8. Suggestions

1. This study was conducted in a single zone that too among rural population and hence it is suggested that similar study may be carried out in multiple areas to be representative of the diverse Indian population.
2. It is also suggested to find out the role of school based intervention in nutrition, physical activity and parents teachers group discussion in disseminating knowledge of control of obesity by altering the attitude and behavior .
3. It is also suggested to establish media based awareness about the consequences of obesity .
4. School based and anganwadi based evaluation of BMI and providing nutrition charts to mothers on a regular basis may also be useful.

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