



Kashmiri Overseas Association, Inc.

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SHRIYA BHATT MISSION HOSPITAL AND RESEARCH CENTER

Mid-day Meal A Brief Report 24th May, 2008

'Mid-day Meal' a project initiated to improve the nutritional standards of Camp School children came to a successful conclusion in March 2008.

In 2006 when the findings of a nutritional survey conducted by DR K L Chowdhury and his team of SBMH&RC in the camp schools became public, the report generated a lot of concern in the community. There was evidence of rampant malnutrition and anemia in 'migrant' children which deserved immediate attention. **KOA Canada** took the first step and came forward with substantial financial support to enable us to translate intentions into action. The deficit was filled by the contribution from philanthropist **Pt. Moti Kaul**.

Needless to say that a massive project of supplying midday meal to 180 children every working day for one full year in remote **Bhattal Bahallian Camp, 100 Kms from Jammu**, involved manpower we woefully lack. But since the dye was cast after the Canadian offer there was no going back. A team of volunteers, who would run the project from Jammu supplemented by ground staff hired locally in Bhattal Bahallian, was put into action. The mid day meal was inaugurated by the whole team of SBMH&RC and social activists last year on a hot summer morning. Though the nutritional programme was meant for 'migrant' kids only, it would be despicable to exclude the non-migrant kids studying in the school along with them, many of whom were equally deserving of nutritional support. We are happy we included every one irrespective of the nutritional status or the family background.

Here are excerpts from what some of the students, their teachers and the workers had to say after the successful conclusion of yet another milestone in SBMH&RC's crusade against disease and disability.

- **Principal, SPRM School, Bhattal Bahallian camp** – The nutritional Project has proved a boon for the school children, especially for those suffering from anemia and deficiency disorders. God give you strength to further the noble cause you have taken upon yourself in serving the suffering community. I thank you all.
- **Romesh Raina (teacher)** - It was a noble idea to provide nutritional supplements to students conceived by SBMH under the inspiring guidance of Dr. K L Chowdhury. It should continue.
- **Sahil class 4th** – It was a pleasure to taste different dishes on each day. We enjoyed it so much.
- **Megha Bhat class 6th** - We all ate together and not in small groups as we would before the midday meal started. That gave us an idea of team spirit.
- **Priyanka class 6th**. Health is wealth. We got food rich in proteins and vitamins that improved our health. We thank SBMH team and our teachers and the sponsors.
- **Sumeet class 6th** – We enjoyed different menus. We learnt discipline and table manners.

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- **Akshay class 6th** – Mid day meal has helped us grow physically and mentally. I thank SBMH.
- **Rahul class 7th** - I thank Dr. K L Chowdhury and his team for making life colorful for us by providing community meal which we enjoyed every day.
- **Sanjay class 8th** – It was a unique experience I will always remember
- **Sharika Raina class 8th** – Midday meal project will attract more and more kids from poor families to schools
- **Shiveta class 8th** – A healthy body is necessary for a healthy mind. We thank Dr. K L Chowdhury and his team for extending this facility in this remote area.
- **Aadersh Ajit (Team member)** - Among the seven members of the Team nominated by Dr K L Chowdhury only four – Sudesh Dhar, Rajesh Dhar, Aadersh Ajit and Anil Chowdhury - kept the commitment and took the responsibility of the project till its culmination. Going to and fro one hundred and ninety kilometers every ten days, be it scorching heat, rainy season or winter chill, leaving personal duties unattended and returning on an empty stomach, is not as easy as it seems. Despite the trust of teachers, parents and the students themselves, the innuendoes from some that we were enjoying a picnic trip each time we went on this Herculean job, did add some distaste and there were attempts by others to demoralize us, but we stayed firm to our commitment and honest to the last paise, nor did the risky journey deter us. However, there was full cooperation from trust particularly from Sh.Vir ji Bhat. We felt like mothers feeding children from our own breasts. Mothers do not mind taunts and accusations.
- **The Team**

Director – K L Chowdhury

Overall Incharge of project (Mid day meal) – Vir ji Bhat

Visiting Team - Sudesh Dhar(Team Leader) , Aadersh Ajit, Rajesh Dhar, and Anil Chowdhury

Additional support – R.K.Pandita (Manager SBMH), O.N.Bhat, Romesh Raina.

Ground staff at Bhattal Bhallian – Shiban Ji Santoshi (Principal),T.K.Bhat,Nana Ji Kanth,Shiban Ji Bhat

(The children sent their impression comments by their colorful letters to Dr.K.L.Chowdhury.)

24-5-2008