

ACTIVITY FOCUS

Supplementary Nutrition Program (SNP) :

Twenty years completed and Still Going Strong

GENESIS :

The eighties were a highly charged and exciting period when Vinimay volunteers conceived new activities at the child welfare institutions (CWI) in order to supplement the activities of the institution thereby optimizing benefits to the children. Monthly Volunteer's meetings (mostly Saturday afternoons) used to buzz with new proposals and in-depth discussions. In one such meeting during 1986-87 a major discussion topic was the aversion of children at CWIs to "Bulgur Upma". BULGUR was a type of broken wheat from USA, supposedly fortified with vitamins and nutrients. During our informal interactions with children, volunteers discovered that though bulgur was supposed to be nutritious, the children had no real liking for the same. When this issue was discussed with the children, they mentioned that they found it too bland & not tasty at all. Our volunteers too shared their view after tasting the upma.



SNP in earlier days

"Why dont we try and make it tastier?" someone suggested. After lengthy (incl some heated) discussions, a consensus was arrived at - that we initiate a program where Vinimay volunteers prepare tasty upma made from the same bulgur by adding some extra oil, vegetables and other spices. This was the starting point of the

supplementary nutrition program (SNP). Initially, Mrs Sugandhi Padmanaban and Mrs. Mukta Mahapatra volunteered to prepare what came to be known as Vinimay's "SPECIAL UPMA" (name coined by children of CCH) on Saturday evenings as part of the children's evening meals. It became an instant hit and soon the children eagerly waited for Saturdays to savour Vinimay's "special upma". Slowly the children also started voluntarily helping us in the cutting of vegetables and as could be expected this interaction led to discussions on various topics between the children & the volunteers. Naturally, this helped in developing a good rapport between the volunteers and the children and the bond between them grew even stronger.

GOALS AND METHODOLOGY :

Growing children need nutritious food, love and affection to concentrate on other things in life, such as studies, health & hygiene, physical activities for a healthy growth, etc. Naturally, institutionalized children are no different. Since the institution was in a position to adequately provide the basic rations (like rice, wheat, pulses, vegetables, etc) that were required, the aim of SNP was consciously restricted to merely adding additional quantity of vegetables, oil, spices, etc. to enhance the taste and nutritive value of the regular food prepared by the institution.. The food was prepared by caring Vinimay volunteers with a lot of love and affection for the children.