

8 January 2020

The Minister of Education  
All States

Respected Sir,

I'm writing to you on behalf of 15 doctors and nutritionists who've come together via People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India to urge your state to implement a policy to make midday meal offerings entirely plant-based. This request comes in light of health concerns over consuming meat, eggs, and dairy and their often hazardous effects on children. The enclosed brochure highlights these concerns, which include the following:

- Foodborne illnesses, antibiotic residue, and many ailments are linked to meat, egg, and dairy consumption.
- Eggs and milk rank among the most common allergy-causing foods for children.
- A taste for eggs can put children on a path to poor health in adulthood since diabetes and cardiovascular disease are linked to egg consumption.
- Similarly, dairy consumption is also linked to ailments such as heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, autoimmune diseases, and ovarian, breast, and prostate cancer.
- Most of the world's population, including many Indians, are lactose intolerant and cannot properly digest milk.
- Milk sold in India is often adulterated.

In contrast, children who are raised on plant-based foods have a reduced risk of suffering from cancer, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and other conditions later in life compared to those who consume meat, eggs, or dairy. Youngsters raised on plants are also better able to maintain a healthy weight and are less likely to suffer from acne, allergies, or gastrointestinal problems than their peers who consume animal-derived foods.

As the enclosed brochure explains, many affordable plant sources have protein and calcium content that's higher than that found in eggs and milk. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and pulses are packed with fibre, rich in vitamins and minerals, free of cholesterol, and low in saturated fat.

What's more, children are often offered only one egg per week in midday meals – an egg provides a child with only 6 g of protein and 23 mg of calcium. In contrast, 100 g of soya chunks contain 52 g of protein and 350 mg of calcium.

Chhattisgarh now provides 100 mL of soya milk to primary school students and 200 mL of soya milk to secondary school students twice a week, instead of dairy milk, as well as soya peanut chikki for breakfast

**Affiliates:**

- PETA Asia
- PETA Australia
- PETA Foundation (UK)
- PETA France
- PETA Germany
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA US

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on a pilot basis in two districts – all of which are excellent sources of protein.

Plant-based foods are also easier on the conscience, as they don't involve cruelty to animals. Many children and their families object to the manipulation, severe confinement, dangerous transport, and eventual slaughter involved in the production of animal-derived foods. Furthermore, because the meat, egg, and dairy industries release dangerous levels of greenhouse gases that cause climate change and are resource intensive, scientists have advised that avoiding animal-derived foods is the single best way for individuals to reduce their impact on the planet.

For all these reasons and more, our consortium of doctors and nutritionists urges your state to ensure your midday meals are entirely plant-based (i.e. vegan). Many regions' midday meals are already wholly plant-powered and nutritionally adequate, and we ask that you expand upon that by implementing a policy that ensures animal-derived foods are not served in the future.

Thank you for your consideration. We stand ready to assist you with a transition to plant-based foods. I kindly request to meet you at your earliest convenience to discuss this matter further.

I can be reached at [KiranA@petaindia.org](mailto:KiranA@petaindia.org) or on 7045556086.

May I please hear back from you?

Sincerely,



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PETA India

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