

Thesis:

Aga Khan Mzizima Secondary School's quality of canteen food and its effects.

Food is a basic need that contributes to the development and well being of people. Quality food is the kind of food that provides the correct amounts of nutrients that keep a human fit and fine. Good quality ingredients help to prepare healthy food. Different aspects of quality food can be outlined which include appearance, texture and flavour. When food is of good quality it reduces health ailments that promotes academic results of students and decreases ethical constraints.

A healthy school canteen is one that provides a choice of food for the students, promotes healthy food which is of good quality, tasty and affordable. Mzizima's canteen has a very poor quality of food that leads to many health problems. For example, the canteen provides French fries which are rich in carbohydrates. The fat content of the oil in which the potatoes are fried is too saturated and brings about obesity in students,. A lot of oil is deposited in their body which forms a layer around their hearts. Studies show that: "Most students, 95% of the men and 70% of women consume too much of Junk food provided in schools that causes hypertension"¹. This is one cause of heart attack in many youngsters. Students have hypertension narrowing of blood vessels due to deposition of fatty materials in coronary arteries, strokes and suffer from many other diseases that bring severe effects on their body and brain functioning.

The consumption of a good standard of comestibles provided in school canteen leads to better results of scholars in their class tests and examinations, the intake of quality food makes a student participate actively in all classroom activities. Mzizima's canteen tries to provide this to the students by selling fresh juices. Although it is not to the extent required for a healthy and normal student. A World Bank report states "only the better nourished adolescents are likely to benefit from resources devoted to secondary and high schools."² This clearly shows that learning situation deteriorates them thus; these children are increasingly likely to drop out of school or keep failing in their exams. Hence, it is essential for students to have good quality of food from Mzizima's canteen to uplift their academic performances.

Quality food has to be one that does not interfere with other people's beliefs. Ethical issues arise due to the items sold in Mzizima's canteen. One problem faced by almost all Muslim students of Mzizima is that they cannot eat everything available in the school canteen, for example, meat pizzas, nachos, tacos, pita, roly polly etc., because it is not always halal. Halal is an act where by the process of sacrificing (making pure) of animals (cows, goats) is done very religiously. This forces them to buy food stuffs like cheese and potato items, milkshakes, and juices. "Slaughtering according to sharia is allowed as long as there is no blood present in the meat, if there is any sign of blood; it is same as committing a sin"³. This shows that it is very unethical to provide food that is not halal to students. Hence, quality food must be free of ethical restrictions for all students to be able to eat.

The benefits of quality food in school canteens are too numerous and are very important that they cannot be ignored. The intake of quality food at Mzizima's canteen extremely vital as it ensures that students are always healthy; this in turn leads to a bright academic performance of the student. This too will lead to better standards of the school's reputation. Thus, it would be beneficial to all scholar to have access healthy and quality food at Mzizima's canteen.

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