STUDYING SCHOOL NUTRITION IN THE FERGANA REGION

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Effective organization and modernization of school nutrition require studying the unique conditions of the region. The Fergana region, being one of the most densely populated areas in Uzbekistan and specializing in agriculture, offers specific opportunities and challenges for developing the school nutrition system. These aspects need to be studied in the context of demographic and socio-economic indicators, as well as the material-technical provision of schools.

Fergana is one of the most economically and demographically active regions of Uzbekistan. The population density, level of economic development, and agricultural-based economy of the region are significant factors in organizing school nutrition. These indicators are key in determining the nutritional needs of school-age children in the region, optimizing the system, and identifying opportunities for future development. The population of Fergana exceeds 4 million, making it one of the largest regions in terms of population. A significant portion of the population lives in rural areas, which requires a tailored approach to the infrastructure of educational institutions and the school nutrition system. The demographic composition shows that there is a high proportion of school-age children. This necessitates efficient distribution of resources in the education system and nutrition services. The high population density increases the load on school nutrition systems, particularly in rural areas where inadequate material and technical support exacerbates this load.

The region’s economy is primarily based on agriculture and food processing industries. This creates opportunities for food supply but also introduces significant challenges in organizing school nutrition. Issues related to the storage, processing, and delivery of products reduce compliance with hygienic standards. While the economically active population in the region is high, the average income is lower compared to other more economically developed regions of the country. This affects the funding of the school nutrition system. Children from low-income families face various problems regarding the quality of nutrition, which increases the importance of school kitchens. There are significant differences in the material and technical supply and infrastructure between urban and rural schools. While urban schools are equipped with modern kitchen facilities, rural schools lack these opportunities. In rural areas, difficulties in food supply and storage negatively impact the adherence to hygienic standards.

The demographic and socio-economic indicators of Fergana require special attention when organizing school nutrition. Population density, age composition, and the proportion of the population living in rural areas play a significant role in ensuring the quality of school kitchens and their compliance with hygienic requirements. At the same time, the development of the region's economic infrastructure expands opportunities for modernizing school nutrition. In organizing school nutrition, it is advisable to develop

solutions tailored to the demographic and economic conditions based on these indicators and optimize the system. This will contribute to ensuring healthy nutrition for students and supporting their physical and mental development.

The material-technical supply and infrastructure of educational institutions are crucial for effectively organizing school nutrition. This, in turn, plays a significant role in ensuring the quality and hygienic safety of food provided to students. The material-technical supply and nutrition system of schools in Fergana have been shaped according to the region's economic and social conditions. However, the differences and limitations within this system require deep analysis and improvement measures to address the challenges.

There are significant differences between the material-technical supply of urban and rural schools in Fergana. While urban schools are equipped with modern kitchen facilities, rural schools face limitations in this regard. Most rural schools have outdated or no kitchen equipment at all, which hinders compliance with hygienic standards in food provided to students. According to statistics, only 60-65% of schools in the region have fully operational kitchens. In urban schools, 85% are equipped with modern kitchen facilities, while this figure is only 40% in rural areas. This significantly limits the ability to adhere to sanitary and hygienic requirements in school kitchens.

Local producers and agricultural products are the primary suppliers for school kitchens. The region's food production potential facilitates the supply of products to schools, but ensuring their hygienic safety and quality remains an issue. Analyses show that the storage and transportation conditions for food products delivered to school kitchens are often not in compliance with standards. This is especially problematic in rural areas, where the hygiene safety of perishable products is compromised. The lack of refrigeration equipment and limited opportunities to store products properly increase the risk of violating hygienic norms.

Observations and analyses of food quality in school kitchens have identified significant issues. An imbalanced diet and insufficient amounts of protein and vitamins negatively affect students' nutrition. In some schools, weak control mechanisms over food quality and adherence to hygienic standards have been found. For example, studies show that over 20% of meals prepared in school kitchens do not meet the recommended nutritional content. This creates challenges in ensuring healthy nutrition for students.

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