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**23**

## Let's Play

### INTRODUCTION

This book is intended for all child care workers. If you are a balsevika, or anganwadi worker, or anyone working with children aged upto 6 years, this booklet is for you. It is intended not as a textbook, but as a guide, to give you ideas for play activities which can teach children something about cleanliness, nutrition and health.

Guided by this book, you can think of play activities and song-lessons best suited to the habits and needs of the community you serve. Perhaps the best way to use the book would be to begin with the given activities with the children, making changes to suit local conditions as you go along, and adding your own ideas as well. But you must remember that the basic information contained in the activities and songs is good and useful, and the children need to learn and understand and accept it, even if the present customs in your community are different. For example, many parents do not feed their children green vegetables or fruit. This is because they feel the children cannot digest such things. But actually children need this food, and the customary practice is a mistaken one.

By giving the children the right ideas, you can begin to help persuade their parents too.

### How to use the book

The pages have two columns of text - the left hand column gives instructions to you and the right side suggests what you might say to the children and what activities you might get them involved in.

The text is <sup>divided</sup> broken up into four easy lessons. Each lesson is broken up into different but connecting activities.

The book illustrates some of the activities we are talking about. The illustrations are on separate paper to the text so that they can be removed and used as visual aids during training programmes for balsevikas. Some of them will also be effective if used by you in the balwadi as well. You are the best one to judge when and where the illustrations can be used. By adding colour to the illustrations, you can make them more eye-catching.

Lesson Number 1 : Play Lessons about Leafy Vegetables

Instructions to the  
balsevika

What to say to the  
children

1st Day Tell the children.....

Let us collect leaves  
from the garden.

Let the children go and pick up  
any leaves they see in the area.  
Let them collect fresh leaves,  
tender ones or dry ones. Do not  
guide them.

Ask the children to.....

Put the leaves on the  
mat and arrange them.

Tell the children to.....

Arrange all the big  
leaves together then  
all the small leaves  
and then the tiny leaves.

With these activities you  
develop the idea of size,  
and the relationship of  
one size to another i.e.  
big, small, tiny and bigger,  
smaller

---

2nd day Tell the children .....

Yesterday we learnt about  
the different sizes of  
leaves; how there are many  
different sizes of leaves.

Say to the children.....

Take a mango leaf. Is it  
a big leaf or a little leaf?  
Is it bigger or smaller than  
a banana leaf? Is it bigger  
or smaller than an amaranthus  
leaf?

Point out to the children the  
colour of the leaves and let the  
children identify the colour with  
other objects of the same colour  
i.e. a green ribbon, colour of the  
parrot, writing with green chalk  
on the black-board, green sari,  
green skirt, green grass.

/...

So at the end of the end day  
you have

- a) Strengthened their idea of  
comparison of sizes and
- b) introduced the idea of colour  
and the association of  
different articles with the  
colour.

---

3rd Day Say to the children.....

What did we learn yesterday?

We learnt that leaves are  
green in colour. We also  
learnt that a lot of other  
things are also of the same  
colour as the leaves. Let  
us look around us again to-  
day and see if we can pick  
out some other things that  
are the same colour as  
leaves.

So at the end of the 3rd day  
you have strengthened the  
understanding of colour and  
the association of an object  
and its characteristics.

---

4th Day Tell the children.....

Some of the green leaves are  
good to eat. Birds and ani-  
mals eat them and become  
strong and have bright eyes.  
That is why birds and animals  
can see in the dark. They  
like leaves and leaves are  
good for them.

Tell the children to.....

Throw some leaves before the  
poultry bird and see how  
they peck at it. Give some  
grass to the lamb (goat or  
calf) and watch them eat.  
The birds and animals like  
leaves as their food.

At the end of the 4th day  
you've developed the concept  
of green leaves being good  
for animals and birds to eat.

/...

5th Day Tell the children .....

We do not eat every kind of leaf. Some are good food, some are not. Birds and animals also do not eat every leaf. They know too that some are good to eat, some are not. We choose and eat certain leaves for our food, just as birds and animals choose their leaves too. Let us choose our leaves.

Get an assorted collection of leaves - coriander, mango leaves, curry leaves and other common leafy vegetables according to what is available and cheap in the market. Mix up the leaves and ask the children to.....

Choose the ones you can eat.

Tell the children.....

Leafy vegetables are very tasty and they are good for our health. If we eat leafy vegetables our eyes become bright and they sparkle.

Get the children to look into each others eyes.

Ask the children.....

If we want bright eyes that can see everything around us, what food is good for our eyes?

Let a number of children answer.

Display known leafy vegetables and a picture of a child with bright eyes.

Ask the children to bring leafy vegetables to the play lesson tomorrow.

6th Day Repeat the activity, displaying a picture of a healthy child with bright eyes together with a display of green vegetables.

Get the children to sing a slogan something like this...

Leafy vegetables are good for my eyes.  
Amaranthus, spinach, drumstick leaves.  
These are my favourite vegetables.  
I eat them with my chapati (or, I eat them with my rice.)  
Why do I eat them?  
To have two lovely bright eyes.

Ask the children.....

Do green leafy vegetables make our bodies strong as well as our eyes?

Yes, because they give us good red blood which makes our whole body strong and healthy.

Ask the children.....

How do we tell that our blood is good and strong?

If our tongue and inside of our lips are not pale.

Ask the children to.....

Stick out your tongues and turn down your lower lip.

Get them to make funny faces.

You can use this activity to check if any child has a very pale tongue and inside of mouth, which could mean he suffers from anaemia. Anaemia must be treated by giving lots of green leafy vegetables with each meal and daily doses of iron and folic acid tablets. The tablets can be obtained from your ANM or PHC.

Teach the children a question and answer song.....

What do green leafy vegetables do?

They make us strong.

What becomes strong when we eat green leafy vegetables?

Let the children indicate the part of the body mentioned.

Our eyes, our blood, our arms, our legs, our hands, our feet, our muscles, our hair etc.

Tell the children to ask for a leafy vegetable curry at home. Train the children to say at least ten known leafy vegetables. (Perhaps a nursery rhyme will help.)

Suggestions for vegetables - methi, palak, band-gobi, amaranthus, spinach, drumstick leaves etc.

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7th Day

Get the children to add more verses onto the slogan they learnt yesterday about leafy vegetables being good for the eyes.

Leafy vegetables are good for my eyes.

Amaranthus, drumstick leaves and spinach. These are my favourite vegetables. I eat them with my chapati. (I eat them with my rice.)

Why do I eat them?

To have two lovely bright eyes.

What does my mother grow in the garden?

Amaranthus, spinach, cabbage,

And what else?

Coriander and mint.

Amaranthus, spinach and cabbage.

They are all good to eat.

And coriander and mint

They make our food taste better.

So what does my mother cook?

/...

Amaranthus, spinach,  
cabbage  
With coriander and mint.  
A tasty curry for us all.

I eat it with my roti  
I eat it with my rice  
That's why I have bright  
eyes.

Amaranthus, Spinach and  
Cabbage.  
I like my leafy vegetables  
And I can see everything.  
Can you see me ?

Here are some ideas for  
related activities you can get  
the children to do.

1. Tell the children.....

Some leaves are green, some  
are brown or yellow. Old  
leaves are not green. They  
are not fresh. Only fresh  
green leaves are good for  
our eyes.

2. Give the children some old  
newspapers you have  
collected and get the  
children to draw the outline  
of leaves and let the  
children colour them green.

Green leafy vegetables  
are good for our eyes.  
Where will we find them?  
Let us grow them.

3. Garden activity - cultivate  
amaranthus or coriander in  
a small pot and let the  
children watch them grow.

4. Add coriander, curry leaves,  
amaranthus to their mid-day  
meal. Watch them, encouraging  
them to eat them (if necessary)

5. Tell the children.....

So you see how many different  
sorts of leaves we can eat as  
food to make us healthy. But  
you remember earlier I told  
you that there are some  
leaves which are not for  
eating. What, then, do you  
think these other leaves can  
be used for, because all  
leaves are useful in some  
way.

/...



Let the children have time to think of the answers, giving them encouragement if necessary. For example, show them a banana leaf and show them how food is put on this leaf and used as a plate.

Show next, how a peepal leaf can be used to wrap food in for protection against flies and dirt. Then take the children outside and sit them under the shade of a tree and ask them what is making the shade to protect them from the sun

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Lesson Number 2: Free Play about Cereal  
(Maize/Rice/Wheat/or Ragi)

1st Day Tell the children.....

Let us collect stones.

Let the children go round and collect the stones and bring as many as they like in their hands.

Allow half an hour for this

Activity 1.

Tell the children .....

Let us sort the stones into big stones, middle-sized stones, small and tiny stones

This the children should know how to do from previous lessons about the size of the leaves.

Activity 2.

Give the children a few winnowers and let the small stones be put on this

Tell the children.....

See how the round stones are rolling around in the winnower.

/...

Let them tilt the winnower.

See how the stones roll down.

Repeat the activity (Tilting the winnower is a skill that can be obtained by repeated exercise).

Activity 3.

Let the children lift a stone or a marble, and slowly lift a brick. Explain the concepts of heavy and light. Bigger stones are heavier, smaller stones are lighter. This is developing their knowledge of weight.

Then get them to fetch a leaf and hold a small stone in one hand and a big leaf in the other.

Which is heavier?  
So you see, although a big stone is heavier than a small one, a small stone is heavier than a big leaf.

By this you begin to teach them the idea of weight and mass.

---

2nd Day Repeat the winnowing exercise again today.

Repeat the exercise of lifting of different weights.

Activity 4.

Ask the children to.....

Select stones of different sizes, and divide them into two groups - big stones and small stones.

Take some sand, then get 3 boxes with a lid (or even a plastic container). Put in one box, the big stones, in another box the little stones and in the third box, the sand. Now shake the

/...

boxes. Do they all make the same noise? No - you are right. The box with the big stones makes a different sound than the other two boxes. The box containing the small stones makes a different noise to the box with the large stones in it. Each box makes its own sound which is different from the sound of the other boxes.

This game should be repeated, until they can recognise the sound and guess the size of the stone inside.

Activity 5.

Take 4 different grains i.e. wheat, rice, maize, and bajra (or ragi)

Get the children to.....

Match boxes can be used for this.

Get the children to.....

Point out that: Maize, being a bigger grain, makes a lot of noise. Wheat makes a little less noise, rice has a softer sound than wheat, bajra makes even less sound than rice.

Put each different type of grain into a separate box with the lid.

Shake the boxes and listen to the noise they make.

/...

Repeat the game, getting the children to make the sound. Ask them for the name of the grain in each box.

This activity will not only develop their idea of comparison and of sound, but will also teach them the names of different grains.

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3rd Day Activity 6.

Ask the children.....

What do we do with the grain like ragi, rice and maize ?

This activity is to improve their conversation about known facts. Slowly bring the conversation to the following:

We eat ragi, jau, bajra, jowar, or local equivalent to keep us strong to run, to play. Ragi is good for our body. Ragi gives us good teeth. If we want good teeth we must eat Ragi.

Repeat.....

To have good eyes we eat greens  
To have good teeth we eat Ragi.

Activity 7.

Ask the children to.....

Bring handfuls of ragi (or local grain) and collect it in a vessel.

Show flour of grain. Prepare stuffed bread with leafy vegetables, in front of the children. When it has been prepared, give it to them to taste.

Allow the children to prepare some mock bread with their own cooking set. Let them play for a while. Let them bring a bread or cereal "laddu" ball from home and eat together.

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4th Day Activity 8.

Fetch the boxes full of the grains that you used in Activity 5. Get the children to open the boxes and notice the colour of the different grains.

Let them say.....

Maize is yellow in colour  
Rice is white

Ask: And Bajra? what colour is it ?.....  
(or ragi, what colour is it?)

Greyish  
Brown

Ask them.....

What is green?  
Yes, leaves are green.  
Maize is yellow in colour,  
So is a yellow ribbon, a  
Yellow skirt, a yellow  
shirt.

Ask them.....

What does your mother put  
in your food which makes  
it turn yellow?

Tumeric.

Let the children paint shapes on paper with tumeric solution and a brush or a stick.

Say.....

Rice is white  
Cotton is white  
A ribbon is white  
Bajra is grey  
A stone is grey  
And some clouds are  
grey (but some are  
white)

Tell them.....

A ribbon can be green too.  
A ribbon can be any colour.  
But rice is white  
Maize is yellow and  
Bajra is greyish.  
(or ragi is brown)

---

5th Day Activity 9.

Get out some grey and green crayons or chalks and some old paper and board or other surface on which the children can draw.

Tell them .....

Draw a big tree with leaves on. The tree has a strong brown trunk and branches with fresh green leaves. It is a healthy tree.

From this activity, the children will learn three new colours - yellow, white and brown. There is another activity which will help them learn about colours.

Activity 10.

Give the children some grains and leaves.  
Give them 3 different coloured pieces of paper ie white, yellow, and green.  
Let the children stide a few grains on each piece of paper,

Ask them to.....

Match the colour of the grains to the colour of the paper, so that yellow(maize) grains are stuck on yellow paper, white (rice) grains are on white paper, and green leaves on the green paper.

This is what you do if you haven't got coloured paper. For the yellow colour you colour white paper with tumeric powder and to get a green paper, you crush wet green leaves on to white paper.

This activity will not only teach them about colours but will also help them to relate different colours to certain objects. Particular emphasis should be placed on the colour of certain foods i.e. greens, rice, ragi, maize etc.

ticking grains on to paper will help to develop the small finger muscles of the children.

At the end of Lesson 2, the children will have learnt the following things:

1. Idea of big and small
2. Idea of heavy and light
3. Relationship of big and small stones and small stones and big leaves.
4. Concept of sound; loud sound, less sound, dull sound. Relationship of sound and size of the articles.
5. New colours:  
yellow, white, green. (and/or brown)
6. Makka is good for health  
Ragi is good for teeth  
To have good eyes eat greens  
To have good teeth eat jowar

---

Lesson Three: Outings to learn about fresh vegetables

1st Day Activity 1.

Let us go to the market to buy some vegetables.

Take the children to the market Before you go, plan your outings so that you guide the children to see vegetables, the vegetable seller, his balance etc.

/...

2nd Day Activity 2

Show the children how to prepare a weighing scale or balance out of a coconut shell (or big, strong leaves) and a rod and string. Get the children to make it themselves. Show how to weigh certain vegetables in this balance. Some children may become the vegetable vendor.

If you have real vegetables use them, if you do not, have them, the vendor can keep leaves and stones as their vegetables.

Cut some cardboard pieces and say these are their "Paisas". Say to one set of the children.....

Go and buy vegetables from the market vendors. Then bring and tell me what you have bought from the market.

Ask .....

Is this good for you?  
For which part of you is it good?

---

3rd & 4th Day As the children will take some time to organise themselves repeat the game for two or three days.

This game will help the following:

- a) improve their vocabulary and conversation skills.
- b) learning to buy articles and give money
- c) identify names with objects.
- d) social interaction within the group
- c) pin-pointing and remembering the food value.

Here are some other activities to do and conversations to have with the children.

/...



a) Tell the children .....

Green leafy vegetables make good food and other vegetables make good food too.

Ask the children .....

What other vegetables do we know about?

(collect vegetables available in the area-- like brinjal, okra, beans, onions, carrot).

Ask the children.....

What is this? This is a carrot, this is a brinjal, this is okra, this is an onion, etc.

Ask the children

What is this? And what is this,

b) Take 5 carrots and keep them before the children. Pick up one.

Show the carrot to the children and ask.....

What is this?

Tell the children ..... (Show one finger and one carrot)

Yes this is a carrot, it is one carrot.

Repeat it slowly and then go to "two carrots", showing two fingers.....

What are these ?  
Yes these are two carrots.

One carrot, two carrots.  
One -- and two.

Continue, with repetitions, till you show five carrots and 5 fingers)

(Watch the children carefully. Move at their pace, so that they understand the idea of number as well as that of name)

What are these? Carrots.  
How many carrots? One carrot, two carrots, 3 carrots, 4 carrots, 5 carrots,  
1,2,3,4 and 5 fingers and 5 carrots.

/...

c) Tell the children .....

We eat green leafy vegetables for strong eyes. We eat grain (ragi etc.) for strong teeth. And why do we eat other vegetables?

(Let them try out answers )  
Tell the children .....

We eat other vegetables because they make our bodies healthy -- and they taste nice. And they make us grow tall and strong with strong bones.

Ask the children .....

So why do we eat carrots, And onions? And Okra? etc.

Talk to the children about vegetables

Ask the children .....

What vegetables do you like? What vegetables do you eat at home?

d) Take the children to the school garden where vegetables are being grown -- or to a vegetable patch nearby. Let them sow some seeds and watch the plant grow. Let them water and tend their plants.

Tell the children .....

We need all sorts of food to make us strong and healthy. And a plant needs different sorts of food too, to make it strong.

(Help the children to answer if necessary).

What does it need? Soil and water and sunlight. That is a plant's food. And what does a bird need to eat? And what does a cow need to eat? And what do we need to eat?

/...

(here the children should be able to recall and repeat what they have learnt about green leafy vegetables, grain or cereals and other vegetables)

- e) As children like to play with water, show them how to wash the dirt and sand off vegetables before cooking or eating.

Tell the children.....

- f) Teach the children how to wash their hands. One pours water and the other scrubs with soap and washes well. Then the other child washes, while his partner pours the water.

Tell the children.....

Teach the children a catchy tune with words such as the following.....

Spinach, drumstick, leaves, methi saag, carrots, brinjal, bhindi (okra), onion, ragi, maize, wheat, rice.

If there is mud on the vegetable there will be mud in our tummies. And that will not be good for us. It might be good for a plant's tummy, but not for ours. We do not eat mud - so we wash it off the vegetable. We do not want mud inside our tummies.

If we wash our vegetables and we do not wash our hands too, then when we eat, the dirt and mud can still go inside our tummy and it might begin to pain, and make us ill. That is why we must wash our hands.

I wash my hands  
I wash my hands  
With soap and water  
I scrub my hands  
I scrub my hands to keep  
the dirt away  
I wash my hands  
I wash my hands  
And my hands are clean  
They look clean!  
Can you see my hands ?

/...

g) (Selection of vegetables for eating)

Bring some fresh and some stale/dry vegetables. Organise a 'market' game with the children as the sellers, and yourself as a customer. Ask them .....

Have you any fresh vegetables?  
What kind have you?  
Can you tell me which ones are good to eat ?  
I want my children to grow strong; can you sell me some vegetables that will make them strong ?  
What colour are they ?  
What are they called ?  
Can't I also eat the stale one ? Will they be cheaper ?  
Shall I save money and buy the stale one ?

The children should learn that this kind of saving is no good.

Next, let the children be the buyers and the sellers. Correct them if they go wrong.

This experience will teach the children names, colours, other characteristics, help them to recall food values, give them a 'live' role playing opportunity, teach them how to choose -- and why.

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Lesson Four : Strength-Food-Cleanliness

a) Make paper boats, and let the bigger children make some for themselves. Help the smaller ones. Each child should get a boat to play with. Tell the children.....

Now we have boats, so we can sail.  
Where does a boat sail?  
On the water -- on rivers and in the sea.

/...

Get a big tub or water vessel - or use a stream or pond. Let the children sail their boats. Name the boats.

- b) Place the boats on the ground. Let the children try to move them along. Ask the children .....

Does it move well ?  
(No, it can only move properly in the water)  
Then what should we use if we want to travel on the land ?

(Help them to point out bicycles, bullock carts, buses, trucks, horse-drawn carts, motor-cycles, and also animals like horses, mules, donkeys, (if locally used)  
Tell the children:

If we want to travel by land, we must use one of these. Which ones do we have in our village/locality?  
Which one would you like to use?

Show pictures as well as actual objects.

- c) Lead the children into singing .....

When we grow big,  
We will ride a bicycle  
Who will ride a bicycle ?  
I will ride a bicycle !

When we grow big,  
We will drive a bus  
Who will drive a bus ?  
I will drive a bus !

When we grow big,  
We may buy a motor-cycle  
Who may buy a motor-cycle?  
I may buy a motor-cycle !

/...

How will I drive it ?  
Rrrr .... rrrr ....rrrr .....!  
What will the bus say ?  
Pom...Pom...pom...!  
What will the cycle say ?  
Trring ...trrring...trrring !

But how will I drive it ?  
By being big and strong !  
How will I drive it ?  
By being big and strong !

How will I be big and strong?  
By eating good food now ,  
By staying healthy now.  
If I don't eat -- I won't  
grow big,  
If I get ill -- I won't grow  
strong,  
If I am healthy  
I will be able to go:  
Rrrr,rrr,rrr  
Pom,pom,pom  
Trring,trrring, trrring !

If I eat dirty food,  
I may get ill.  
If I eat with dirty hands,  
I may get ill.  
If I drink dirty water,  
I may get ill too.  
Then how will I go:  
Rrrr,rrr,rrr  
Pom,pom,pom  
Trring,trrring, trrring ?

So what shall I do ?  
Eat good food,  
Eat clean food,  
Drink clean water  
Keep my dish clean,  
Keep myself clean  
Every day !

Explain how to be clean:  
Washing hands before and after  
eating, bathing every day,  
keeping hair clean and neat,  
washing feet and hands after  
play, and using clean water.

/...

Let the children sing  
as they wash:.....

I wash my hands  
I wash my hands  
With soap and clean water

Why ?  
Rrrr, rrr, rrr,  
Pom, pom, pom  
Trring, trring, trring !

Why else ?  
Because being dirty makes  
us ill.  
I scrub my hands/  
I scrub my hands

With soap and clean water  
To keep them clean

Why ?  
Because being dirty makes  
us ill  
And being clean makes us  
healthy  
And being healthy makes us  
strong

If animal drawn carts are  
common in the locality, make  
the song around them as well.  
You can even add an elephant, and  
let the children try to imitate  
movements and sounds.

And why else ?  
(repeat Rrr, rr. etc.)

I wash my feet  
And I wash my hands,  
And I wash my dish,  
And I wash my body,  
And I wash my clothes,

And so ?  
So, my hands are clean,  
And my dish is clean,  
And my body is clean,  
And my clothes are clean?

Let the children point and  
show what is clean/and point and  
ask what is clean

And my feet ?  
And my feet are clean !  
And are your hands clean? (etc)

/...

After some time, this action song can be a kind of informal 'drill' before the midday meal. Later on, the children should wash before eating, without being told to.

The lesson about what to eat should be reinforced by being repeated after this. (Both good diet and cleanliness contribute to good health)

Tell the children.....

Ask the children .....

Tell the children .....

Ask the children .....

Ask the children .....

If my face is not clean  
And my hair is untidy and dirty,  
What do I look like?

(Let the children clown about and make faces)

If my face is clean  
And my hair is tidy and clean  
What do I look like?

I am clean and neat all over.  
Are you clean? Is your face clean?

Your hair? Hands? Feet?  
Clothes? (show)

Did you spend all the day  
cleaning yourself  
And left your dish dirty?(show)  
(wash dishes)

Who likes to eat from a dirty  
plate? Nobody

Who likes to eat from a clean  
plate? We do !

If we eat food that is good for  
us, we can grow big and strong.

What should we eat ?

Ragi and vegetable curry are  
good to eat. Jowar, roti with  
dal is also good to eat.

Who likes to eat food covered  
with flies?

Nobody, because flies are dirty.  
Why are they dirty?

They sit on dirty things and  
their feet carry dirt on to  
our food.

Are sweets good to eat?

They taste good and we can  
eat them if they are clean.  
But if we eat sweets covered  
with flies or dust, they can  
make us sick. If we eat too  
many sweets, they spoil our  
teeth, and they can make our  
stomachs pain.

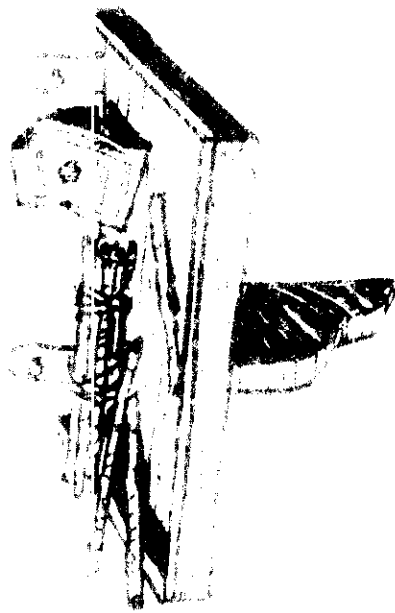


Arrange foodstuffs for the children to judge. Ask .....

What are these?  
Which ones are good?  
Which ones will you buy in the market ?

Help them select, and to give reasons. Ask the children what they eat at home. Do not show them items that aren't readily available (e.g. not even milk or eggs in case most homes can't afford them).

Get Mahila Mandal members to come and prepare a meal. Eat it with the children. Talk about good food and how to prepare it.







'You can draw on other surfaces instead of paper, like old matting, wood or sucking.'



What ~~the~~ vegetables is the man selling?