

**Economics  
Seminar  
Series  
2019**



**SOUTH ASIAN UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS**

***Seminar***

***Improving Children Health and Cognition:  
Evidence from School-Based Nutrition  
Intervention in India***

**Dr Santosh Kumar  
Sam Houston State University  
USA**

**Date:** October 24, 2019  
(Thursday)  
**Time:** 2:30 p.m.  
**Venue:** Multipurpose Hall, Mezzanine Floor  
Akbar Bhawan, Satya Marg,  
Chanakyapuri, New Delhi

**All are Welcome**

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**ABSTRACT**

We present experimental evidence on the impact of delivering double-fortified salt (DFS), salt fortified with iron and iodine, through the Indian school-feeding program called “mid-day meal” on anemia, cognition, and math and reading outcomes of primary school children. We conducted a field experiment that randomly provided a one-year supply of DFS at a subsidized price to public primary schools in one of the poorest regions of India. The DFS treatment had significantly positive impacts on hemoglobin levels and reduced the prevalence of any form of anemia by 20 percent but these health gains did not translate into statistically significant impacts on cognition and test scores. While exploring the heterogeneity in effects, we find that treatment had statistically significant gains in anemia and test scores among children with higher treatment compliance. We further estimate that the intervention was very cost effective and can potentially be scaled up rather easily.