

# Study on Mid-Day Meal Scheme

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**Abstract – A common school lunch or school meal program is the mid-day meal. The "noon-meal service" is often referred to as this method. As the name shows, the chief winners are the children attending elementary portions of kindergarten. On the basis of the philosophy that a starving child is unable to focus and concentrate on his / her studies, the MDM was created. The MDM is the Government of India's main initiative aimed at securing the right to education, the right of children to food, the right to life, and other facets of growth and development. The scheme tackles the underlying and fundamental determinants of child malnutrition, introduced specifically with a view to preserving the nutritional needs of rising children and the right to education of children provided by the Indian Constitution**

**Keywords – Elementary Portions of Kindergarten, MDM, Meal Program**

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme

Centered on the philosophy that a hungry child is unable to focus and work on his / her studies, the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) was implemented. The Mid-Day Meal Scheme was introduced specifically with a view to ensuring the nutritional needs of increasing children and the right to education of children provided by the Indian Constitution.

The Mid-Day Meal Scheme is the Government of India's main initiative aimed at securing the child's right to health, the right to education, the right to life, and other facets of growth and development. The Mid-Day Meal Scheme is introduced by the Ministry of Human Resource Growth, Government of India, Department of School Education and Literacy. The method tackles the underlying and essential determinants of malnutrition in infants.

On 15 August 1995, the Mid-Day Meal System was introduced as a nationally funded program. The National Nutritional Support System for Primary Education (NP-NSPE), widely referred to as the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, seeks to improve the Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) by the student registration, participation, retention, and concurrently enhancing student nutritional status.

### Origin of Mid-Day Meal Scheme in India

The Mid-Day Meal System was first launched in 1923 for children belonging to deprived families; one of the proponents of the system that began offering cooked food to impoverished children in the city of Madras (now Chennai) is the Madras Municipal Corporation. The Keshav Academy in Calcutta (Kolkata) launched tiffin in 1928, a kind of snack for boys on food charge, at around the same period as the demand for free school meal was launched in Madras. A similar form of meal program for school-going children was initiated by the state of Kerala in 1941, and a similar type of school meal program was launched in Bombay (Mumbai) in 1942. Bangalore City in 1943, Uttar Pradesh in 1953, Tamil Nadu in 1957, Orissa in 1953,

### Norms of Mid-Day Meal Scheme

In September 2004, the National Nutritional Support Policy for Primary Education (NP-NSPE) launched in 1995 was updated to include 300 calories and 8-12 grams of protein for cooked mid-day meals to all children enrolled in I-V classes in Country, Country-Aided and Local Body School and Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternate and Creative Education (AIE) centres.

The framework was supposed to decrease dropout rates, increase the quality of learning of children and self-esteem. It was also projected to improve

the enrollment of girls and reduce the gender and social divide.

### **Mid-Day Meal Scheme and Nutrition Related Aspects**

The cause of ruining the wellbeing of rising children is malnutrition / malnutrition; it also adversely impacts their degree of achievement in education. This is obvious that a malnourished infant rarely attends school much of the time that he / she is overweight and sickly. This adversely hampers the aim of Elementary Education Universalisation. The effect of children's wellbeing and nutritional status on schooling should not be ignored because it can affect learners by seriously hindering children's physical, auditory, cognitive, social and emotional growth. Therefore, in consideration of the comprehensive existence of increasing children's health, in conjunction with dieticians and nutrition experts who may prescribe sufficient Prescribed Dietary Intake (RDI), it is important to provide policies and programs that include adequate nutritious supplements required by rising children.

The Centre for Equity Studies (CES) survey found that among tribal groups, parental satisfaction of mid-day meals was strongest. It further notes that Mid-Day Meals have a significant socialization benefit besides encouraging school attendance and child nutrition, as children learn to sit together and eat a shared meal, there was some degradation of caste biases and class inequity (Dreze and Goyal). It further stated that there were no incidents of different seating arrangements or racist activities such as different eating or drinking arrangements, but implicit manifestations of caste bias and social inequality were visible as some parents of the upper caste requested their children to come home for lunch or send them with prepared food to school. Dreze and Goyal, (2003) observed that cases of Scheduled Caste cooks were mainly limited to schools with no upper-caste children in Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan. They observed that teachers usually had optimistic views of the effects of mid-day meals, as most teachers thought that mid-day meals improved the participation of pupils and raised the participation of children in studies. Dreze and Goyal (2003) observed that by establishing an environment of sitting together and enjoying food together in school, the Mid-Day Meal Scheme has managed to undermine caste stereotypes.

In a study conducted in Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu by Thorat and Lee (2005), it was argued that the inclusion of Scheduled Caste children in the Mid-Day Meal Scheme allowed them to achieve higher levels in the education system and reduced the incidence of exclusion and thus caste discrimination.

Pathania and Pathania (2006) deals with the roots, development and success of MDMS in the nation in

their book "Primary Education and Mid-Day Meal Scheme: Outcomes, Difficulties and Suggestions," addressing the impression of students about the effects of MDMS on various aspects. The authors sought to illustrate the viewpoints of students, parents, community leaders, and educational administrators on the success, vulnerability, and repercussions of MDMS. The analysis was carried out in Himachal Pradesh province. It was observed that 17.6 percent of students in the caste group were scheduled, while 60 percent belonged to the upper caste group. 11.2 percent of ST students were studying in colleges, compared with the same number of students in the OBC division. It was noticed that one hundred percent of kids were marked as familiar and gained from the system's advantages. The research shows that all students were found to engage in the MDMS, regardless of their social, political, and economic context.

Along with Neha, Rao and Zacharia, they advocated in yet another study by Dreze and Goyal that the Mid-Day Meal Scheme encourages the abolition of classroom hunger and children shared the company of each other by sitting and eating along. In the course of dining together, they socialize. They also observed that the gender disparity in schooling was minimized by the Mid-Day Meal Program. The program has even managed to provide disadvantaged women with employment. The National Curriculum Structure (2005) highlighted the value of improving the Mid-Day Meal Scheme to ensure the empowerment of every child in schooling, through caste, faith, gender and disability barriers, in order to ensure wellbeing, education and an equitable school climate. Different research surveys undertaken by research organizations have indicated that in colleges, MDMS will practice racial and gender equality. It was essential to achieve universalization of elementary education and to abolish gender inequality in education by 2015.

### **Mid-Day Meal Scheme and Its Effects on Students' Enrolment, Attendance and Retention**

Elementary education has twin purposes which are: (i) to produce a literate and numerate population who can deal with problems at home and at work (one who can find solutions to the problems of a society) and (ii) to serve as the base upon which higher secondary and tertiary education can be built. With elementary education in India, we mean the education provided to all children in the age group 6-14 years or in classes I to VIII. Some of the most difficult hurdle to cross while achieving the goal of "Universalisation of Elementary Education", are non- enrolment, low attendance and low retention rate. Several attempts have been made to achieve the goal of UEE. One such effort made by the Government of India is the initiation

of centrally sponsored scheme of National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education, also commonly known as the Mid-Day Meal Scheme; many studies have revealed that MDMS exerts a positive influence on enrolment and attendance at school.

### **Relationship between Mid-Day Meal Scheme and Economic Aspects**

It is a well-known reality that the MDMS is a subsidized meal given by the Government of India to primary school children to provide nutritional support for children studying in University, Government-Aided and Local Body Colleges, AIE and EGS centers, Madrasas and Maktabas sponsored by Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) from Classes I-VIII (i.e. primary and upper primary phase) to improve 'Universalisa

[Explanation of the word 'Sarva Siksha Abhiyan' (SSA): SSA aims to provide all children in the age group of 6-14 years of age with usable and meaningful elementary education by 2010; SSA also aims to bridge educational, gender and geographic differences with the active involvement of the society in school management].

Therefore, in any specified conditions, the consistency of the meals delivered under the program cannot be affected. In order to develop a professional population, it is important to enhance the health status of children and raise their level of learning in order for a prosperous nation to have a prosperous economic and social existence, a prosperous education and a safe body and mind.

India's Mid-Day Meal Scheme was seen in a global report by the World Food Project (WFP), 2013, as a positive illustration of a 'Mixed Delivery Model' in the research, a major suggestion was made that MDMS should be related to the agriculture sector and should support the whole country and students attending elementary school.

This would not only strengthen the critical position of school-going kids, but also produce local farmers' profits. This form of connection would cause jobs in the agricultural sector to be created and the procurement of important food commodities such as vegetables, fruits, etc. at the grassroots level to be increased. Under the MDMS, along with other ingredients required for the preparation of the Mid-Day Meal, the vegetables for the curry should be bought at the local level. The mechanism follows two procurement procedures, i.e. (i) food grains (rice / wheat) are supplied through the nationally subsidized channel and through the Food Corporation of India (FCI) of the Government of India, and (ii) food goods such as fruits, vegetables and condiments are procured at the state and local level, benefiting local citizens through increasing their earning capacity.

### **Tragedy of Implementation of Mid-Day Meal Scheme and Non-Governmental Organization Interventions**

The free meal programme of the Karnataka Government called the Akshara Dasoha scheme experienced a big downside when more than 150 children fell ill in a school in Gadag District of Karnataka after ingestion of Mid-Day Meal.

Children have become sick due to the ingestion of tainted products. In this event, several NGOs and social activists alleged that the meal was served and cooked in unhygienic conditions by untrained staff / cooks.

The involvement of the Non-Governmental Agency in the Mid-Day Meal Scheme is carried out through the Voluntary Agency Partnership in the hot-cooked Mid-Day Meal supply and resource support network through capacity development, testing and assessment and analysis. Under the Society Registry Act or the Public Trust Act, a private group interested in administering the Mid-Day Meal Scheme has been registered. The MDMS guidelines represent that the effective execution of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme is vital to community engagement. It guarantees successful local-level oversight and therefore provides a feeling of collective ownership of the project. The Mid-Day Meal is cooked locally on the school premises via the Self Help Group (SHG) or School Management Committee (SMC) formed under the Children's Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 or any similar committee responsible for operating the scheme. There are some requirements for metropolitan communities where the program may be enforced by an NGO. The NGO can introduce the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme. The Mid-Day Meal Scheme may be introduced by NGOs where there are room constraints for setting up school kitchens in classrooms. The developed areas are capable of

A research by Kalpana Parikh and Summiya Yasmeen (2004). 22"Groundswell of Support for Mid-Day Meal Scheme

Implement the framework via the Unified Kitchen Framework. The guidelines indicate that if schools where cooking can take place in automated kitchens and cooked hot meals can be delivered to separate schools under hygienic conditions with the aid of transport networks, a centralized kitchen may be built for a cluster. It is important to assess the success of NGOs at regular intervals.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The Mid-Day Meal Scheme contributes significantly in the enhancement of children's nutritional status. After having eaten the mid-day meal in the

afternoon, students are more involved and engage in the class room transaction. The issue of non-enrolment and absenteeism has been confined and reduced to some degree. The MDMS has been able to deliver good outcomes in the state, but there are so several places in the scheme that call for reform. For eg, the timely release of the fund, revised fee for the Cook-cum-Helpers, for most of the Headmasters / Headmistresses, the curry cost is an issue.

The school where there is sufficient cooking and serving space has been observed to decrease the time spent in the cooking, serving phase and in no way hamper the teaching-learning method of the classroom. The method has increased the degree of children's accomplishment and no kid is involved in the preparing or serving process. School children take advantage of the system's services and get access to healthy food at noon time and reduce their hunger in the classroom, which makes them focus on their studies. Many of the respondent headmasters / headmistresses also stated that with the introduction of the program, children became more involved in their research. The MDMS menu in the school contains variations such as meat, tomatoes, dal (pulses), chatni (ironba), etc. to minimize the monotony of the meal's taste. This holds the student's motivation in having the school meal alive, since it is not practical and kids do not want to consume the same thing every day. The study further found that schools provide school children with hot cooked mid-day meals, and the Reasonable Average Standard (FAQ) of the Food Corporation of India (FCI), Government of India, is the nature of the food grain supplied. In our state, rice is the main staple product, so product grain is supplied to the schools in the form of rice. Since the advent of MDMS, the overall wellbeing of children has increased thus exerting a beneficial impact on the rate of enrolment and retention. Cook-cum-Helpers have been named for the task of heating, sweeping and serving, so that children cannot engage in the cooking process. This encourage the student to dedicate his time to studies.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To evaluate the effect on the nutritional health of school children (6 to 14 years) of the Mid-Day Lunch.
2. To evaluate the effect of the Mid-Day Meal on school children's academic performance (6 to 14 years).

## CONCLUSION

In the present study, out of total 5 selected schools, 3 schools were providing good quality of rice, 2 schools were providing good quality of dalia and 1 school was providing good quality of dal (lentil and moong whole), rest of the school in each food items either providing fair or poor quality of food items. It

was astonishing to note that only 1 school out of five schools used soyabean in the preparation of mid-day meal which was of average quality. Yet another interesting point was noticed that tahiri was the most repeated food item of mid-day meal, which was given more than twice a week. In the present study, it was observed that only 280.33 Kcal and 9.12 gm of protein were provided to each child per day through the MDM program and the content of energy and protein showed a insignificant effect on the nutritional status of MDM school children. The results of above study were found reverse to Laxmaiah (1999) study, where the average energy and protein supplied to a child by the supplement was 303 Kcal and 7.2 gm, respectively. Synergistic initiatives and collaboration from the Department of Health can be conducted to ensure the program's progress. Wherever practicable, grain and other raw materials should be bought from local farmers and SHGs should be made available.

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