



EVALUATION OF THE MID-DAY MEAL PROGRAMME IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract:

The main aim of education is to prepare and develop the child physically, mentally and spiritually to lead a quality life. Education is a process through which a child is made capable to attain the necessary competencies and skills to face the challenges in life to survive, and to make struggle for existence. The National Program of Nutritional Support to Primary Education, commonly known as the Mid-Day Meal Program, was launched by the Indian government in August of 1995 to boost enrollment, retention, and attendance rates for children, while also improving nutrition and health outcomes (Government of India). Apart from the education, the nutritional aspects of MDMS have several dimensions including elimination of classroom hunger, the growth of school children's health. It is argued that if the children come every day to school they can eat nutritious meal regularly and therefore child starvation could be checked. The first programs were established in 2,408 particular blocks 8 of the country, but the government eventually extended its reach nationwide in 1997, to cover all primary-school aged children in government and local body public schools. The total cost per meal for primary is Rs.2.89. But it is shared by Rs.2.17 by Centre and Rs.0.72 by State in case of Non-NER States while it is Rs.2.60 by Centre and Rs.0.29 by State in case of NER states. Similarly the total cost per meal for upper primary is Rs.4.33. It is share by Rs.3.25 by Centre and Rs.1.08 by State by Non-NER states while it is shared by Rs.3.90 by Centre and Rs.0.43 by State in case of NER States. The Central assistance towards procurement of Kitchen Devices Rs. 5,000 per school was introduced in the year 2006-07. So far, Central assistance of Rs.574.44 Crores has already been released to States/UTs for procurement of Kitchen Devices in 11.49 lakhs schools. The present study is a modest attempt in this direction in the content of India.

Key Words: Nutritional, Primary Education, Classroom Hunger, Human Resource Development & Mid-Day Meal Scheme

Introduction:

Education plays a vital and important role in fulfilling the basic needs of a common man viz. food, shelter and clothing. The main aim of education is to prepare and develop the child physically, mentally and spiritually to lead a quality life. Education is a process through which a child is made capable to attain the necessary competencies and skills to face the challenges in life to survive, and to make struggle for existence. Four important factors are identified for achieving the goal of Education for All. These are Access to Education, Enrolment of children, and Retention of the enrolled children and Achievement. Mid-Day Meal Scheme is an effort to achieve and facilitate all the four above said objectives. Various schemes were implemented in the primary education sector by the Government to reach the disadvantaged population. Access to primary education was universalized through flagship Programmes of Govt. like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, however, despite this, a few children are still deprived of Primary Education due to inability of their parents to send them to schools because of their poor

economic status. For, these parents, sending their children to school means not only incurring extra financial burden but also depriving them of some money which their children would have earned otherwise by doing labour. That being the attitude of these economically backward parents, one may, perhaps, to motivate the parents and children was to bring their children to school by providing food and nutritional needs. Government of India, on Oct 2nd 1995, launched the scheme of National Programme of nutritional support to primary education also known as Mid-Day-Meal Scheme. Under this scheme, students of primary classes were to be provided wheat 3 kg per student per month (for 10 months in a year) subject to 80 Per cent attendance.

The National Program of Nutritional Support to Primary Education, commonly known as the Mid-Day Meal Program, was launched by the Indian government in August of 1995 to boost enrollment, retention, and attendance rates for children, while also improving nutrition and health outcomes (Government of India). The first programs were established in 2,408 particular blocks 8 of the country, but the government eventually extended its reach nationwide in 1997, to cover all primary-school aged children in government and local body public schools. The original program provided 100 grams of food grains per child per day, with the objectives of improving the nutritional status of public school children, encouraging poor children from disadvantaged areas to attend school more regularly, helping children concentrate on classroom activities, and providing nutritional support to children in drought affected areas during summer breaks (Government of India). In September of 2004, the program from raw grains to cooked meals, consisting of a minimum of 300 calories and 8-12 grams of protein per child. Finally, in July of 2006, the Program standards were increased, requiring 450 calories and 12 grams of protein per child per day, with special stipulations to provide iron, folic acid, and other essential stipends. The 2006 revision also provided subsidies to schools to cover cooking and preparation costs. Logistically, the central government provided free food grains, while state governments were responsible for converting these food grains into cooked meals. States that were unable to convert grain into meals due to resource shortages were initially allowed to distribute the raw free grain to children, conditional on attendance. However, in 2001, the Supreme Court mandated that all public schools provide cooked meals. To promote compliance, schools are required to publicly display information on the meals and to expect periodic visits by State Government officials, and it is estimated that approximately 25 per cent of schools have been inspected (Government of India). However, analysis suggests a high degree of non-compliance, as a large amount of children in public schools did not receive the meal.

Nutrition and Health are pre-requisites for human resource development. Our planners have been aware of these vital inputs it in article of the constitution. "The State shall regard raising the level of nutrition and standard of living of its people and improvement in public health among its primary duties." Nutrition is directly linked to human resource development, productivity and ultimately to the nation's growth. Malnutrition on the other hand is a complex phenomenon. It is both the cause and effect of poverty and ill health: and follows a cyclical, inter-generational pattern. It is inextricably linked with illiteracy, especially female illiteracy, lack of safe drinking water, sanitation, ignorance, lack of awareness and ill health. It creates its own cycle within the large cycle of poverty. Malnutrition adversely affects Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE). Even if a malnourished child does attend school, he/she finds it difficult to concentrate on and participate in the learning activities in school. Unable to cope, the child would very often drop out of school. Many studies suggests

that absence of an adequate breakfast over extended period can affect both behavior and nutritional status such children exhibit irritability, decreased attentiveness and low concentration span, all of which affect their active learning capacity. Malnutrition is therefore not just an issue for the nutritionist; the planners and economists also need to recognize that the cost of malnutrition is much greater than the investments required to end hunger/malnutrition. The MDMS was started with two major objectives firstly to enhance the child's nutrition level secondly to provide the basic education. Thus the MDMS was introduced basically to improve the overall development of the primary school children's education. Therefore, it has varied objectives like. To increase the nutritional level of the school going children, to enhanced the educational attainment of the children, to retain the children in the school for a long period of time. To develop the process of socialization, etc. Apart from the education, the nutritional aspects of MDMS have several dimensions including elimination of classroom hunger, the growth of school children's health. It is argued that if the children come every-day to school they can eat nutritious meal regularly and therefore child starvation could be checked. This makes it possible not only to realize their intake of calories and proteins but also to provide nutritional supplements such as Iron and Iodine, which are required in many hilly regions. In this context, higher attendance in school provides opportunity to implement MDMS which enable children to have meals and to be physically and mentally fit. Thus, larger attendance in school is required to implement MDMS successfully because, if the children come to school, only then they are entitled for the meal. That's how higher percentage of attendance is vital for the successful implementation of MDMS.

Further, the respective governments at center and state level tried to improve the condition of children as a part of their developmental goals, through targeted policies with better institutional interventions. Under MDMS, it was decided to provide cooked meal within two years of judicial intervention and during intervening period, state governments were allowed to distribute dry rations to school children, instead of cooked meals.

The Supreme Court not only intervened but involved itself in monitoring the transition of these programmes that existed on paper merely as orders, into programmes that exist in schools. Thus the apex court's intervention was instrumental in implementing the MDMS and protecting the child rights from hunger. The Supreme Court directed all the state governments to implement MDMS and to provide every child a cooked meal with a minimum content of 300 calorie and 8-12 grams protein every day of school for a minimum of 200 days in every government and government aided primary schools. The respective states which were providing dry rations were directed to start providing cooked meals within three months to extend the provision of cooked meals to the remaining parts of the state.

Thus the judicial intervention not only hasten the process of implementation but it also responsible for bringing the required pressure on the central government to brought many reforms in MDMS in 2004 which includes. The cost of cooked at Rs. 1 per one child per day. Transport subsidy raised from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 per quintal for special category states, and Rs 75 per quintal for other states. Provision of MDM during summer vacation in drought affected areas. These reforms were actively undertaken and policy changes were made so as to strengthen the MDMS and to make it available to each and every school going child. The main intention was to feed more children through schools and making the state accountable and responsible for the children. Emphasis was given more on hilly regions of the country where the hunger and

starvation rate is much higher. Hence, the perspective towards the MDMS changed with the judicial intervention and is being perceived as an entitlement of the children leading to various campaigns against the state government inaction towards its implementation. The parents, teachers, and community members were mobilized to pressurize the respective governments to implement the scheme as a matter of children entitlement.

We direct the State Government/Union Territories to implement the Mid-Day-Meal Scheme by providing every child in every Government and Government Assisted primary schools with a prepared Mid-Day-Meal with minimum contents of 300 calories of energy and 8-12 grams of protein each day of school for a minimum of 200 days. Those Governments providing dry rations instead of cooked meals must within 3 months start providing cooked meals in all Government Aided primary schools in all half the districts of the state and must within a further period of 3 months extend the provisions of cooked meals to the remaining parts of the state. We direct the Union of India and the FCI to ensure provision of fair average quality grain for the scheme on time. The State/Union Territories and the FCI are directed to do joint inspection of food-grains. If the food-grains is found, on joint inspection, not to be of Annual Work Plan and Budget 2013-14 Mid-Day-Meal Scheme.

Objectives:

- ✓ To study the performance of Mid-Day Meal Programme in India
- ✓ To study the Evaluate of Mid-Day Meal Programme

Methodology:

The methodology adopted for the study was in consonance with doming expertise. Systemic steps were adopted for secondary literature review and secondary data collection encapsulated a specific focus on the key drivers for the secondary study.

Financial Components of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme:

Presently, Mid-Day Meal Scheme provides the following assistance to State Government /UT Administrations

- ✓ Supply of free food grains (wheat/rice) 100grams per child per school-day for primary 150gram per child pre-school-day for upper primary and NCLP children from the nearest FCI god own.
- ✓ Transportation Assistance (TA) effective from 2010 in the 11 Special Category States (viz. Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and Tripura) at wide spread in these States. In case of all other States/UTs, the TA is reimbursed on the basis of the actual cost incurred in transportation of food grains from nearest FCI god own to the school subject to the ceiling of Rs.75/-per quintal.
- ✓ Cooking cost has been revised from 2009 (excluding the labour and administrative charges) toRs.2.50for primary andRs.3.75for upper primary children and further enhanced by7.5 Per cent on 2010i.e. Rs.2.69 for primary and Rs.4.03 for upper primary and again revised 2011, 7.5 per cent. ThecookingcostisbeingsharedbetweentheCentreandtheNERStateson90:10bases andwithotherStates/UTson75:25bases.Accordingly,theshareoftheCentre and the minimum share of the State/UTs is currently as under

Table1: Center and Sharing in mid-day meals

Stage	Total Cost per meal	Centre-State Sharing	
		Non-NER States (75:25)	NER States (90:10)

		Centre	State	Centre	State
Primary	Rs. 2.89	Rs. 2.17	Rs. 0.72	Rs. 2.60	Rs. 0.29
Upper Primary	Rs. 4.33	Rs. 3.25	Rs. 1.08	Rs. 3.90	Rs. 0.43

Source: Annual Report, 2011-12, Department of School Education and Literacy Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India.

The table shows that the total cost per meal for primary is Rs.2.89. But it is shared by Rs.2.17 by Centre and Rs.0.72 by State in case of Non-NER States while it is Rs.2.60 by Centre and Rs.0.29 by State in case of NER states. Similarly the total cost per meal for upper primary is Rs.4.33. It is share by Rs.3.25 by Centre and Rs.1.08 by State by Non-NER states while it is shared by Rs.3.90 by Centre and Rs.0.43 by State in case of NER States.

Table 2: Cooking Cost proposed for the year 2012-13

Stage	Total Cost per meal	Centre-State Sharing			
		Non-NER States (75:25)		NER States (90:10)	
		Centre	State	Centre	State
Primary	Rs. 3.11	Rs. 2.33	Rs. 0.78	Rs. 2.80	Rs. 0.31
Upper Primary	Rs. 4.65	Rs. 3.49	Rs. 1.16	Rs. 4.19	Rs. 0.46

Source: Annual Report, 2011-12, Department of School Education and Literacy Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India.

The table shows that the total cost per meal for primary is Rs.3.11.89. But it is proposed by Rs.2.33 by Centre and Rs.0.78 by State in case of Non-NER States while it is Rs.2.80 by Centre and Rs.0.31 by State in case of NER states. Similarly the total cost per meal for upper primary is Rs.4.65. It is proposed by Rs.3.49 by Centre and Rs.1.168 by State by Non-NER states while it is proposed by Rs.4.19 by Centre and Rs.0.46 by State in case of NER States. Cooking cost includes costs of pulses, vegetables, cooking oil and condiments, fuel etc.

- ✓ Instead of ignorant of Rs.60,000 for construction of kitchen-cum-store per school across the country effective from 2009 the construction cost is to be determined on the basis of plinth area norms and State Schedule of Rates prevalent in the State/UT. The cost of construction of Kitchen- cum- Stores is to be shared between the Centre and the NER States on 90:10 bases and with other States/UTon75:25bases.
- ✓ Honorarium of Rs.1,000 per month from2009 to cook- cum- helper and engagement of one cook- cum-helper for school's -25 students, two cooks- cum- helpers for schools with 26 to 100 students and one additional cook- cum- helper for every addition of up-to100 students. The expenditure towards the honorarium of cook- cum-helper is to be shared between the Centre and the NER States on 90:10 bases and with other States/UT son 75:25 bases. Assistance for management, Monitoring & Evaluation (MME) of the Scheme at the rate of 1.8 per cent of the total assistance for
 - Cost of food grains,
 - Transportation cost,
 - Cooking cost and

- Honorarium to cook-cum-helpers

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development has prescribed a comprehensive and elaborate mechanism for monitoring and supervision of the Mid- Day Meal Scheme. The monitoring mechanism includes the following.

Arrangements for Local Level Monitoring:

Representatives of Gram Panchayats/Gram Sabhas, members of South Delhi Municipal Corporations (SDMCs) as well as Mothers’ Committees are required to monitor.

- ✓ Regularity and whole so menses of the mid-day meal served to children,
- ✓ Clean lines in cooking and serving of the mid-day meal,
- ✓ Timelines in procurement of good quality in gradients, fuel etc.
- ✓ Implementation of varied menu and
- ✓ Social and gender equity. This is required to bed one on a daily basis.

Task of Cooking:

The Guidelines provide that, as far as possible, the responsibility of cooking/supply of cooked mid-day meal should be assigned to local women’s /mothers’ Self-Help Group or local Youth Club affiliated to the Nehru Yuva Kendraan voluntary organization or by personnel engaged directly by the SMDC/Gram Panchayat/Municipality-Involvement of Self Help Groups under the scheme is increasing gradually.

Cook-Helper from SC/ST/OBC Community are Engaged in the Task of Cooking Quality of Mid - Day Meal:

Quality of MDM largely depends on the quality of food grains. FCI is held responsible for issue of food grains of best available quality, which will in any case be at least of Fair Average Quality (FAQ). FCI appoints Nodal Officer for each State to take care of various problems in supply of food grains under the MDM Programme. The District Collector /Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Zilla Panchayat ensures that food grains of at least FA Airlifted after joint inspection by abeam consisting of FCI and the nominee of the Collector and /or Chief Executive Officer, District Panchayat, and confirmation by them that the grain conforms to at least FAQ norms. Quality, safety and hygiene specifications have been prescribed in the Guidelines. It is also provided that 2-3 adults’ members, of the stone being teacher, must taste the food before it is served to the children. Although the guidelines provide for in section of 25 per cent schools/ EGS / AIE center sever quarter by the supervisory officer but due to shortage of officers /staff and resources, intense and frequent inspection of the programme is not happening in the expected manner. The guidelines also provide for active community participation for the supervision and monitoring of the programme. For a programme of this magnitude, the key of success lies in the active and meaningful involvement of the community. The Central assistance of Rs.5962.17 Crores has been already released to States/UTs for construction of 8, 73,748 Kitchen Sheds as per details given below.

Table 3: Achievement of MDMS during the period 2005-06to 2011-12aregiven below

Components	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Children Covered (in Crore)	11.94	10.68	11.37	11.19	11.36	10.46	10.35 up to 30.09.11

Food Grain Allocated (in lakh MTs)	22.51	21.60	24.79	29.30	27.71	29.40	29.09
Budget allocation (in Crore)	3345.26	5348.00	6678.00	8000.00	7359.15	9440.00	10380.00
Total Exp. (in Crore)	3186.33	5233.47	5835.44	6688.02	6937.79	9128.44	7697.24 up to 29.12.11

Source: Annual Report, 2011-12, Department of School Education and Literacy Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India.

Table 4: Year-wise kitchen sheds and amount released

S.No.	Year	Units	Amount (Crores)
1	2006-07	2,21,039	Rs. 1,326.00
2	2007-08	2,22,849	Rs. 1,337.00
3	2008-09	2,95,346	Rs. 1,771.64
4	2009-10	1,03,555	Rs. 1,044.29
5	2010-11	28,897	Rs. 437.714
6	2011-12	2,062	Rs. 45.20
Total		8,73,748	Rs.5962.17

Source: Annual Report, 2011-12, Department of School Education.

Out of 8,73,748 sanctioned Kitchen sheds, 6,30,923 Kitchen sheds have been constructed till 30.09.2011. 9800 Kitchen sheds have been approved by Programme Approved Board (PAB)-MDM for the year 2011-12.

Procurement of Kitchen Devices:

The Central assistance towards procurement of Kitchen Devices Rs.5,000 per school was introduced in the year 2006-07. So far, Central assistance of Rs.574.44 Crores has already been released to States /UTs for procurement of Kitchen Devices in 11.49 lakhs schools, the details of which areas under.

Table 5: State-wise physical progress towards procurement of Kitchen devices

S.No.	Year	Units	Amount (Crores)
1	2006-07	5,20,944	Rs. 260.47
2	2007-08	2,13,521	Rs. 106.78
3	2008-09	1,21,212	Rs. 60.61
4	2009-10	2,70,096	Rs. 135.05
5	2010-11	5,795	Rs. 2.90
6	2011-12	17,259	Rs. 8.63
Total		11,48,827	Rs. 574.44

Source: Annual Report, 2011-12, Department of School Education.

The twelfth Plan, MDMS will be expanded to cover pre-primary schooling in a progressive manner, private unaided schools, particularly in the SC/ST and minority-concentrated areas, and poor children admitted in neighborhood private schools against the 25 percent earmarked seats as per provisions of the RTE Act. Partnerships

with Panchayats and municipalities, as well as with other NGOs and government agencies may be developed to ensure good-quality, nutritious and regular supply of food to all children.

Conclusion

They are Education, Enrolment of children, and Retention of the enrolled children and Achievement. Mid-Day Meal scheme is an effort to achieve and facilitate all the four above said objectives. Various schemes were implemented in the primary education sector by the Government to reach the disadvantaged population. Access to primary education was universalized through flagship Programmes of Govt. like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, however, despite this, a few children are still deprived of Primary Education due to inability of their parents to send them to schools because of their poor economic status. Thus the judicial intervention not only hasten the process of implementation but it also responsible for bringing the required pressure on the central government to brought many reforms in MDMS in 2004 which includes. The cost of cooked at Rs. 1 per one child per day. Transport subsidy raise from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 per quintal for special category states, and Rs 75 per quintal for other states. Provision of MDM during summer vacation in drought affected areas. These reforms were actively undertaken and policy changes were made so as to strengthen the MDMS and to make it available to each and every school going child. The main intention was to feed more children through schools and making the state accountable and responsible for the children. Out of 8, 73,748 sanctioned Kitchen sheds, 6, 30,923 Kitchen sheds have been constructed till 30.09.2011. 9800 Kitchen sheds have been approved by Programme Approved Board (PAB)-MDM for the year 2011-12.

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