

‘Mid-day meal Scheme and its outcome in Central Delhi’

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Abstract-

In India, the school lunch programme is known as the "mid-day meal programme." On school working days, it entails providing free lunch/snacks/meals to students. The program's main goals are to protect children from hunger in the classroom, increase school enrollment and attendance, improve socialisation among children of all castes, combat childhood malnutrition, and social empowerment of women through job creation. In India, the concept of midday meals as a public welfare concept dates back to 1925, when a scheme for poor children in the Madras Corporation region was inaugurated. Madras Corporation was one of the first to provide prepared lunches to children in Corporation schools in Madras; the practise was later expanded in the 1960s. The mid day meal programme in Tamil Nadu is one of the most well-known in the country. The programme was first implemented at a national level by the Indian government in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and again as a centrally supported initiative in the 1980s. On August 15, 1995, the then-Prime Minister of India re-launched a National Nutritional Support to Primary Education programme known as the MID DAY MEAL PROGRAMME (MDMP). Its goal was to increase enrolment, attendance, and retention while also increasing the nutritional quality of elementary school kids. Because universal primary education is a national aim, MDMP was established with the following goals Increase enrolment, improve school attendance as well as retention, Promote social integration, Improve nutritional status of the primary school children and Inculcate good food habits in children.

Keywords: Nutritional Food, Enrolment, Retention, Dropout, Good Habits.

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I. Introduction-

The research indicates that the Midday Meal Scheme has resulted in favorable outcomes for student enrollment, attendance, and retention rates. A large proportion of students attending schools that offer this program consider it as a crucial factor that encourages them to attend school regularly. Moreover, the scheme has alleviated the burden on parents to provide their children with at least one meal, which is especially beneficial for families experiencing economic hardship. Considering that many students do not have access to breakfast in the morning, bring packed lunch to school, or have a meal at home after school, the Midday Meal Scheme has provided essential support to these families. It has also been found that the Mid Day Meals encourage children to engage in active learning, which leads to better academic achievement. The programme has played a role in achieving socioeconomic equity and has motivated young children to attend school. The Mid Day Meal Scheme is an important initiative that has proven to be beneficial for both students and families, contributing to the overall improvement of primary education in Delhi. The Nutrition Foundation of India evaluated the MDM in Delhi at the request of MCD. In the first year, 72 Food Service Providers (FSP) units were inspected and evaluated, with 59 percent receiving a ‘fair’ rating and 11 percent receiving a ‘poor’ rating. In overcrowded urban areas, one of the key issues was a shortage of physical infrastructure, water, and facilities for safe garbage disposal. Many schools were operating with inadequate drinking water and bathroom facilities due to a lack of proper structures. The amount of cereals supplied per child per day was determined to be 100 g, however pulses were found to be insufficient. The NFI suggested that:FSPs should be located in areas where there was good environmental hygiene, adequate of space, access to potable water and waste disposal. Mid Day Meal Coverage in Delhi

As far as the MDMP coverage in Delhi is concerned, all elementary schools have benefited from the programme. A total of 1554842 kids in Delhi have been covered by the MDMP, with 807324 girls and 747518 boys attending Delhi Government Schools. By the end of 2014, there were 13 FSPs providing meals in schools, and the total number of kids in class one in 2014 enrolment was 23588, with boys accounting for 10217 and girls accounting for 13317, as (Department of Education, 2014).

Research Objectives

The main purpose of this study is to access the overall impact of MDM programme and its implementation on primary school students of Delhi. The following objectives are formulated in order to achieve the goals of the present study:

- (i) To access the status and impact of MDM programme on enrolment of students in selected schools of Delhi.
- (ii) To examine the impact of MDM programme on retention and accomplishment level of the students.
- (iii) To analyse the opinion of the students, teachers and parents towards MDM programme
- (iv) To examine the school efficiency before and after implementation of midday meal scheme.

II. Review of Literature

Yawar and Hamid (2012) studied the influence of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme on children's attendance, enrolment, and drop-out rates in elementary schools in Jammu and Kashmir's district Anantnag. To gather data on the scheme's impact, 100 children, 50 parents, 20 teachers, and 20 government officials were interviewed at random using a predefined questionnaire schedule. The study's findings revealed that MDMs have a significant impact on enrolment, attendance, and drop-out rates, but that the plan faces a number of barriers during implementation.

According to Kabedi et al. (2001) over 85% of all respondents stated that the programme intends to enhance attendance and enrolment. Only 28% of them were aware of the program's nutritional relevance. Functionaries (80%) had better knowledge than instructors (44%), while students (39.5%) had better knowledge. In comparison to rural respondents, mothers (43.5 percent) had more knowledge. The knowledge of children and their mothers, as well as that of instructors, was found to have a significant beneficial relationship with the operation of MDMP in the school.

In Madhya Pradesh, Jain and Shah (2005) conducted a survey on the Midday Meal Scheme in 70 of the state's most impoverished villages. The food is served on a regular basis, according to 90% of the teachers and cooks. 63 percent of parents believed that the lunch had a favourable impact on their children's learning ability, while 74 percent of teachers agreed that the programme had a positive impact on the pupils. Enrollment increased by 15% overall, with 43 percent of SC and ST children enrolling, and 38 percent of girls enrolling (out of this increase in enrolment of SC and ST girls was 41 percent).

In Rajasthan, Mathur (2005) examined the mid-day meal programme. The findings showed that introducing a menu-based mid-day meal had a favourable impact on children's daily attendance. Approximately 85% of teachers believe that the mid-day lunch has increased student attendance.

III. Research Methodology

A set of procedures or methods for conducting research is known as research methodology. It can also be defined as a research or a method description. A methodology can be thought of as including numerous methods, each of which is applied to different aspects of the methodology's overall scope. There are two sorts of research methodologies: qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative methodologies and quantitative methodologies are the two types of methodologies. During the analysis phase, both approaches will be applied. Interviews, direct observations, surveys, and document and material analysis are all examples of qualitative data used in qualitative research. The research method for this study is direct observation and experimental analysis.

Methods and Tools

The present study is of descriptive in nature considering the nature of study, the researcher has adopted sample survey method, as it is mainly concerned with the present aims of ascertain the stratus of the phenomena under investigating. This method is generally used in this type of research. It seeks to analyse the existent position and makes generalisation every important aspect of present time. The advantage associated with the method are minimum expenses both in money and effort, great speed, greater scope out accuracy which tempted the investigator to adopt sample survey method for the study.

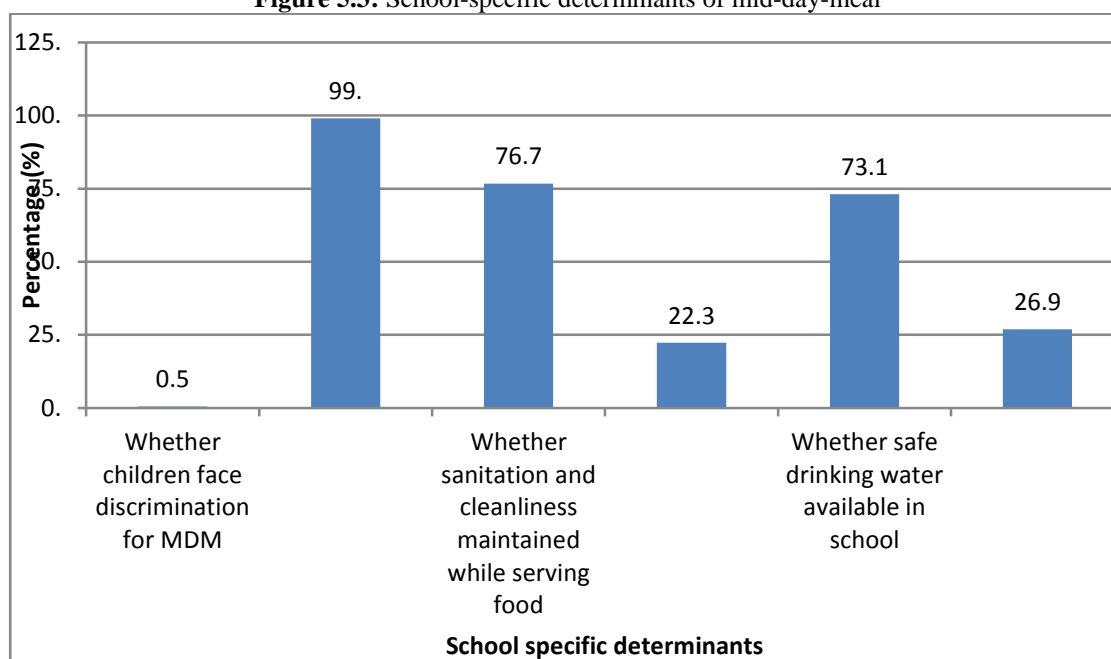
Tools: The tools play an important role in research. The present researcher uses: (a) teacher interview schedule (b) parent interview schedule (c) student interview schedule (d) opinion survey, and (e) school record for the present investigation.

School-specific determinants of Mid Day Meal

Mid day meal is influenced by various school-level factors such as discrimination based on social status, sanitation and hygiene, availability of safe drinking water, and management of mid-day meals. Although caste based discrimination and discrimination towards certain religion is persistent in Indian society, in the present study, only one respondent reported that children face discrimination for the mid-day meal. Sanitation and cleanliness are important determinants for taking a mid-day meal. Over three-quarters of parents (77%) reported that sanitation and cleanliness are maintained while serving food. Over one-fourth of respondents (27%) stated that safe drinking

water is not available in school. Improving hygiene and providing safe drinking water could increase uptake of mid-day meals of children and that would reduce childhood sickness due to unhygienic mid-day meals served in school.

Figure 5.3: School-specific determinants of mid-day-meal



Source: Field survey, 2017

IV. Conclusion

Since India's independence, both the central and state governments have recognized the importance of education and have taken various measures to ensure universal primary education. One of the most significant programmes aimed at promoting primary education is the National Program of Nutritional Support to Primary Education - The Mid Day Meal Scheme. The MDMs' primary goal is to boost enrolment and retention while also taking care of the nutritional health of elementary school students. In addition, other initiatives, such as Sarva Shiksha Abiyan, have contributed to increased parental awareness and improved enrolment and drop-out rates.

The idea of the Mid Day Meal program has been around in India for over a hundred years and has been implemented in most states. This initiative has been instrumental in enhancing the well-being of the country's youth and in making primary education accessible to all. It encourages children to attend school and addresses food consumption and quality concerns. However, the issue of overstated attendance reporting needs to be addressed, and data from a larger sample of schools must be collected to make statistically relevant analyses.

To unlock the potential of children's development, it is crucial to invest in their education, nutrition, and health. For effective implementation of the MDM program, all employees involved should have knowledge of nutrition, health hygiene, and food safety. Local youth, non-governmental organizations, and social workers can also contribute to the program. It is recommended that training and orienting headmasters/teachers should be prioritized to ensure their understanding and appreciation of the significance of the MDM program.

The Mid Day Meals program's effectiveness relies on ongoing engagement from the public, constant monitoring, and long-term political commitment to the initiative. If every child in the country receives education, regardless of their location, it can bridge the rural-urban divide and promote inclusive growth. Overall, the Mid Day Meals Program is a significant social welfare initiative that aims to bring children into the educational fold and provide them with adequate nutrition to become healthy and productive members of society and the nation.

V. Recommendations and Suggestions:

The MDM program has a noteworthy influence on a child's complete academic progress and attendance at school. Therefore, it is crucial to evaluate and examine the programme's loopholes for its efficacy and implementation. This could help increase enrolment and retention, ultimately achieving the goal of universalizing primary education. To enhance participation and the smooth functioning of the programme, several suggestions and recommendations have been proposed.

Firstly, parents should regularly inspect the Mid Day meal and provide feedback. Additionally, parents, students, instructors, and members of the public are encouraged to provide their comments and suggestions. The

effective utilization of MDM requires a collective effort from both educators and guardians, emphasizing the significance of active engagement from all parties involved. MDM could be incorporated into the curriculum to ensure appropriate hygiene practices are taught and implemented.

Moreover, in Delhi's urban environment, kids are frequently subjected to unhealthy fast food options when they are outside of school. Therefore, there is an urgent need to educate children about healthy and nutritious foods. The MDM action plan should be designed to not disrupt the students' regular routine. A demand-driven method should be used to handle cooking materials such as grain, rice, wheat, and fuel.

It is also recommended to keep suitable records to update the software with the latest information. A monthly SWOT analysis should be conducted to achieve Total Quality Management (TQM) for the entire programme. Schools should provide an estimate of the number of students present the next day that helps the Food Service Providers (FSPs) prepare food adequately and appropriately, and so that supplies do not run out. Individuals responsible for implementing the Mid-Day Meal Program ought to be answerable, open, and responsible to both the public and authorities. Furthermore, wages should be regularly reviewed to retain skilled workers for a long time.