



Research Paper

Impact of Mid-Day Meal (MDM) Programme on Attendance of Primary School Children in Rani Area of Kamrup ® District, Assam

Karabi Deka

Research Scholar, MGU

ABSTRACT: The study attempts to assess the impact of Mid-day Meal scheme on attendance of primary school children in Rani Area of Kamrup® District, Assam. To gather information regarding the impact of the scheme, 20 schools were randomly selected, students' daily attendance register was checked before and after implementation of the Mid-day Meal scheme. After the calculation of the daily attendance, the results of the study show that, impact of Mid-day Meal scheme is impressive in terms of daily attendance of students.

KEYWORDS: Mid-day Meal Scheme, attendance, primary school children

Received 06 July, 2021; Revised: 18 July, 2021; Accepted 20 July, 2021 © The author(s) 2021.

Published with open access at www.questjournals.org

I. INTRODUCTION:

Every child including the world's most disadvantaged, has the right to education because it has the power to change lives. Education is a powerful tool for breaking the cycle of poverty; supporting child survival, growth, development and well-being as well as closing the gap in social inequality. On average, one additional year of education can increase an individual's earnings by 10 per cent. Knowledge in hygiene and disease prevention can greatly reduce the number of preventable deaths. Furthermore, girls' education is particularly impactful for future generations: children of educated mothers are much more likely to go to school than children of mothers with little or no education. (UNICEF Canada:1989)

However, there is still more to be done as 57 million primary school-age children currently do not have access to education.

Government of India introduced a National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education on August 15, 1995 to provide mid-day meal to the children studying at primary stage. The Supreme Court directed the Government in 2002 to provide cooked Mid-day Meals in all Government and Government aided primary schools. It was modified for two times, once in September 2004 and the other in September, 2006. Mid-Day Meal is the world's largest school meal programme and reaches an estimated 11 crore children across 12 lakh schools in India. The scheme is accomplished through the State/Union Territory Governments. The cost of the Mid-day Meal Scheme is shared by the central and state government i.e. the centre providing 75 percent and the states 25 percent. According to the constitution of India, every child has the right to get primary education. Although it is not hundred percent success, it has shown up a constant tremendous developing. Hence Government has put forward an amendment to enroll the maximum number of students from the age group of 6-14 years for free education. One of the major reasons for dropout is the socio economic status of the families of the children. Most of the children attending Government Schools belong to the rural families of Assam. They are invariably from Below Poverty Line (BPL) families. Both the parents go for work either on the farm or outside and comeback in the evening. The children are sent to school after light breakfast or empty stomach and comeback in the evening. Invariably they are compelled to skip their lunch or leave the school frequently and dropout after some time.

Food and education are the two most important areas of concern amidst the poor population of India. People living with limited means have limited access to food resources and seldom enroll for a formal education. Children, who are the future of India, belonging to the lower income class don't get these two basic necessities. Therefore, to promote education and to provide children with the basic nutrition, the Mid-day meal scheme was launched by the Government of India. The scheme was officially called the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education.

The scheme provides free meals to children studying in specific schools. The meals would be provided on all working days. This scheme is applicable for school-going children studying in Government schools, schools aided by the Government, Special Training Centres, Madarasas and Maktabs which are supported under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

Mid-Day Meal Programme has been started in the State of Assam with effect from January, 2005. The Programme is expected to boost and sustain the pace of achieving the objectives like universal enrolment, universal retention and quality improvement.

Objectives of the Mid-Day Meal programme :

- a) To improve the nutritional status of children enrolled in the classes I-VIII in Government, Local body, Government Aided Schools, EGS and AIE Centres including Madarasas/Maktabs run under SSA, NCLP Centres.
- b) To motivate children belonging to disadvantaged sections to attend Primary schools regularly and help them to concentrate on schools and classroom activities.
- c) To provide nutritional support to children of primary stage in drought affected areas in summer vacation, thereby ensuring their continued interest in schooling. (AXOM SARBA SIKSHA ABHIYAN MISSION).

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Review of Literature means the similar or related studies made by previous researchers in the same field. Indeed, all human knowledge can be found in libraries and books. The existence of present study always depends upon short comings of the past studies in the present situations. Hence, a summary of writings of previous research helps the researcher to know what is always known and what is still unknown and untouched. To carry out the research work it helps the researcher to avoid the duplication of the past and get insight, useful direction and suggestion. The Review of Literature of this study is:

SCERT Chhattisgarh (2014) has completed a study on, "Impact of Mid-Day Meal Programme on School Enrolment and Retention." In Chhattisgarh the Mid-Day Meal programme is having a positive impact on education through increasing retention and also reducing the gender gap and improving equity. The meal is particularly for those children who belong to the poor families. The enrolment of the students has not increased to a large extent but one of the important contributions of MDM, as visualized, is the reduction in drop outs. Parents and teachers reveal that attendance of children is much better and that the cooked meal has one of the major reasons. For improving the health of the younger generation of the country, the programme is important in terms of its potential for significantly.

Hamid Yawar and Hamid Asmat (2012) have worked on "Mid-Day Meal Scheme and Growth of Primary Education: A Case Study of District Anantnag in Jammu and Kaashmir." The attempt of the study is to assess the impact of Mid-Day Meal Scheme on attendance, enrolment, drop-out rates, of the children in primary schools of district Anantnag in Jammu and Kashmir. To collect the information regarding the impact of the scheme, 100 students, 50 parents, 20 teachers and 20 government officials were randomly interviewed through structured questionnaire schedule. In order to know the impact of the scheme the researcher has divided the data in to two period's pre-Mid-Day meals period (1999-00 to 2003-04) and post Mid-Day meals period (2005-06 to 2008-09) and growth rate of both periods has been calculated through Log-linear model. The results of the study indicate that impact of MDMs is impressive in terms of enrolment, attendance and drop-out rates, but the scheme suffers from a number of bottlenecks in the course of its implementation.

Sofi Ahmad Manzoor (2017) have worked on "A study to analyze the mid-day meal scheme and quality education at primary level". The attempt of this study is to analyze mid-day meal scheme in relation to quality education at primary level. To gather the information random sample of teachers and parents were taken from primary schools of Srinagar and Pulwama. For this study the data was collected from primary and secondary sources. The results of the study indicate that due to the implementation of the MDM scheme enrolment, attendance have increased, improved child nutrition and social equity. The dropouts might have reduced however quality in education and food has also decreased.

Singh Shailja and Gupta Nisha (2015) have worked on "Impact of Mid Day Meal on Enrollment, Attendance and Retention of Primary School Children." The attempt of this study is to evaluate the impact of Mid-day Meal on enrollment, attendance and retention of primary school children. The researcher has used cluster random sampling method to collect sample for this study. For collection of information for each parameter a predesigned and pretested proforma was used as a tool. Result of the study reveal that MDM scheme prove a major mean in improving enrollment and attendance comparatively.

Sahai Shekhar Chandra(2014), focused on “Mid-Day Meal Scheme: Achievements and Challenges”. The attempt of this study is to understand how the scheme actually works on the ground and to identify the achievements as well as the remaining challenges so far. The study concluded that after the introduction of mid-day meal enrollment and attendance of children in primary schools has increased and it has been successful in cultivating good habits like washing hand before and after meals and in educating them about the importance of clean water, good hygienic environment and other related matters. MDMs has been also successful by breaking the shackles of caste, creed and class among the children as well as fostered the felling of co-operation sharing, co-ordination and fraternity, thereby leading the development of children emotionally and society also. After the implementation of this scheme a major drawback is found that the teachers have to spend 2 or 3 hours for implementation of this scheme. Because of the involvement of the teachers in the scheme, the study time of students and quality education suffer. The study also reveals that in most of the schools, the basic infrastructure for preparing meals was not available as per requirements.

Yadav Poonam(2013), conducted a study entitled “Impact of mid-day meal program on nutritional status and school attendance of girls in Allahabad”. The objectives of this study are: i) To assess the nutritional status of girls in schools which serve mid-day meal and to compare the same with that of non-beneficiaries, ii) To find out the nutritional contribution of mid-day meal towards the recommended dietary allowances of the school girl, iii) To find out the school attendance of girls with and without mid-day meals, iv) To find out the knowledge and attitudes/opinion of beneficiaries, parents and school personnel about mid-day meals, v) To develop a set of nutrition communication material for nutrition counseling of mid-day meal beneficiaries, parents and school personnel. To gather the information the investigator has randomly selected 8 schools, out of these 8, 4 schools from MDM category and 4 schools from the NMDM category. The investigator has selected representative sample from the eight schools. The selection criteria were only girls, age group of 5 to 16 years, students of standard I to VIII. For the study the grand total of MDM and NMDM subjects were therefore 500. The results of this study reveal that mid-day meal has a positive impact on the nutritional status and school attendance of girls.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Specific problem of the present study is “ a study of the impact of Mid- day Meal programme on attendance of primary school children of Rani area of Kamrup® District.”

IV. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

- To find out the impact of MDM programme on daily attendance of primary school children.

V. RESEARCH QUESTION:

- Whether the MDM programme help in increasing the attendance of primary school children.
- To what extend MDM programme facilitated the attendance of primary school children.

VI. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

Research Methodology is a way to solve the research problems systematically. It is considered that Research Methodology is a science of various tools and techniques to be followed for collecting information, material for the solution of problems and analyzing the data. Following ways have been accepted for the study:

6.(i) Sampling:

To study the whole population is impossible for investigation so far as research is concerned. So, for research findings economic and accurate, the sampling method has been introduced.

In the Rani area of Kamrup ® district, there are 64 schools. The researcher has selected 20 schools for the study of daily attendance of students. Stratified random sampling technique was used to draw sample for the study.

6(ii) Tools and Techniques:

Emphasizing the importance of tools, the research tools have been followed.

- Student’s attendance register:

Attendance register was studied for:

- Class wise variation of attendance before and after implementation of Mid day meal.
- Effect of Mid day meal on attendance.

VII. COLLECTION OF DATA:

Primary data were collected through survey research in the selected area. For the purpose of study, related primary data were collected from headmasters, teachers, students and guardians. The investigator has given clean instructions to the primary school Headmasters and doubts would be clarified. Each class Student's attendance register were collected. From the Student's attendance register daily attendance of the students was counted.

Secondary data were also collected from different books, journals, published research papers and articles.

VIII. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The researcher has collected month wise individual data from attendance register of the school in 2006 taken as before implementation of mid day meal (MDM) scheme because in these schools Mid-day meal was started in the year 2007 and 2018 taken as after implementation of MDM scheme. Generally, attendance of student in the school in Rani area of Kamrup® district classified into three categories, they are: a. Poor(0-29%), b. Average(30-59%), and c. Good(60% and above).

8.(a) Table: Class and category wise attendance of Students before the Introduction of MDM (2006)

Classes	Number of Students in Different categories of attendance			
	Poor	Average	Good	Total
Class-I	409	1,237	366	2,012
Class-II	1,237	1,450	370	3,057
Class-III	392	1,329	366	2,087
Class-IV	447	1,630	410	2,487
Class-V	156	532	176	864
Class-VI	162	551	142	855
Class-VII	137	509	146	792

Fig. I
Attendance

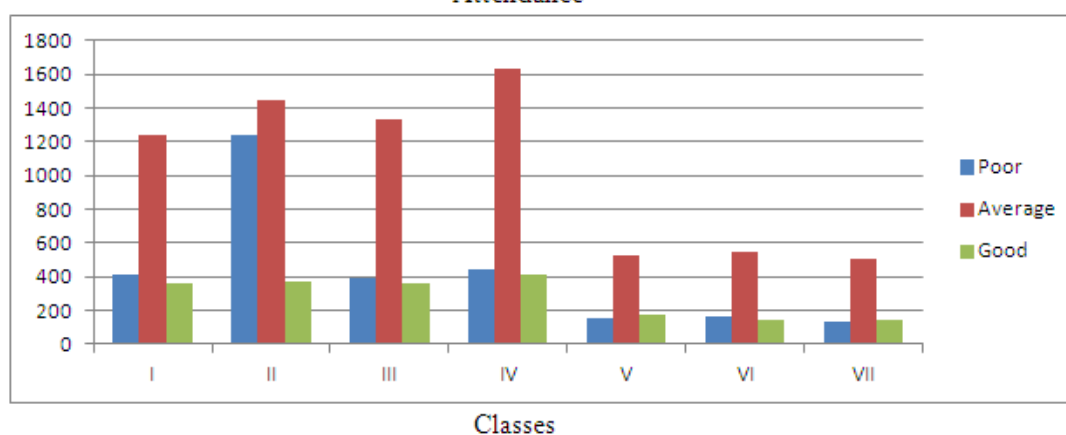


Table 8.(a) shows the attendance of primary school students in classes I,II,III,IV,V,VI and VII. Under poor categories, the number of primary school students in classes I,II,III,IV,V,VI and VII were 409 (20%), 1,237 (40%), 392 (19%), 447 (18%), 156 (18%), 162 (19%) and 137 (17%) respectively. Below average categories, the numbers of primary school students in classes I,II,III,IV,V,VI and VII were 1,237(61%), 1,450(47%), 1,329(64%), 1,630(66%), 532(62%), 551(64%) and 509(64%) respectively. Similarly, the numbers of good attendance of primary school students in classes I,II,III,IV,V,VI and VII were 366(18%), 370(12%), 366(18%), 410(16%), 176(20%), 142(17%) and 146(18%) respectively. From this data it is noticed that students' poor attendance was less in percentage but students' average attendance was more in the data collected. It means that good attendance was less. It is not a good sign for primary education. It also significantly shows that students were not very much regular in schools. Though, average attendance was good yet less good attendance shows irregularity in attendance.

8.(b) Class and category wise attendance of Students after the Introduction of MDM (2018)

Classes	Number of Students in different categories of attendance			
	Poor	Average	Good	Total
Class-I	36	98	877	1,011
Class-II	24	84	897	1,005
Class-III	22	85	906	1,013
Class-IV	23	85	935	1,043
Class-V	18	84	919	1,021
Class-VI	3	14	157	174
Class-VII	6	22	170	198
Class-VIII	6	35	199	240

Fig. 2



Table 8.(b) shows the attendance of primary school students in classes I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII and VIII. The students of primary schools under poor categories in classes I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, and VIII were 36(4%), 24(2%), 22(2%), 23(2%), 18(2%), 3(2%),6(3%) and 6(3%) respectively. The average attendance category students in the classes I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII and VIII were 98(10%), 84(8%), 85(8%), 85(8%), 84(8%), 14(8%),22(11%) and 35(15%) respectively. Similarly, the number of good attendance of primary school students in classes I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII and VIII were 877(87%), 897(89%), 906(89%), 935(87%), 919(90%), 157(90%), 170(86%) and 199(83%) respectively. From this data it is evident that poor attendance was less in percentage but good attendance (60% and above) was more in the data collected by the researcher. It means that good attendance was increased.

After analyzing the record of attendance of students before and after the introduction of MDM, it is found that the MDM scheme has increased the number of attendance of students.

IX. CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY:

The Mid-day Meal is a welfare scheme of the government of India, which provides free hot cooked meals to the students in lower primary and upper primary schools, aiming at improving nutritional status for daily attendance. Based on the school attendance records before and after implementation of MDM scheme, it was found that implementation of MDM scheme provided better performance than non-implementation of MDM scheme. Excellent attendance was found in the schools. Parents are more interested to send their children to schools.

REFERENCES:

- [1]. AXOM SARBA SIKSHA ABHIYAN MISSION, GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM, ELEMENTARY EDUCATION. Mid-Day-Meal Scheme. <https://ssa.assam.gov.in/portlets/mid-day-meal-0>
- [2]. Biswas Dipankar (2016), A Study of Educational Impact of Mid-Day Meal Scheme in Primary Schools of West Tripura District. Ph.D. Thesis, Department of Education, University of Calcutta.
- [3]. Sahai Shekhar Chandra (2014), Mid-Day Meal Scheme : Achievements and Challenges. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention, ISSN(online):2319-7722, ISSN(Print):2319-7714, Volume 3, Issue 10, PP.06-09, Lucknow.
- [4]. SCERT Chattisgarh (2014) "Impact of Mid Day Meal Programme on School Enrolment and Retention" Chattisgarh.

- [5]. Singh Shailja, Gupta Nisha(2015), Impact of Mid-Day Meal on Enrollment, Attendance and Retention of Primary School Children. International Journal of Science and Research, ISSN:2319-7064, Impact Factor(2013):4.438, Volume 4, Issue 2, Page No. Page No. 1203-1205, Lucknow.
- [6]. Sofi Ahmad Manzoor(2017), A study to analyze the mid-day meal scheme and quality education at primary level. International Journal,ISSN:2455-4197, Impact Factor:RJIF 5.22, Volume 2; Issue 4; Page No. 259-260,Jammu and Kashmir.
- [7]. UNICEF Canada (1989), Child Development and Education, Article 28, Convention on the Rights of the Child. <https://www.unicef.ca/discover/education>.
- [8]. Yadav Poonam (2013), Impact of mid-day meal program on nutritional status and school attendance of girls in Allahabad. Ph.D. Thesis, Department of Foods and Nutrition, Sam Higginbottom Institute of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences, Allahabad.