

THE IMPACT OF MID DAY MEAL IN ASSAM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO UDALGURI DISTRICT

Soma Saha

M.A (Education)

Department of Education

Gauhati University

Trivenee Bania

M.A (Education)

Department of Education

Gauhati University

ABSTRACT:

Education is an important part of life which make life better and primary education is the foundation stage of children but many students are not able to get this education for various reasons that's why government make one scheme which name is MID DAY MEAL which helps to increase the enrolment number of students in school. The research aims to study the implementation of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in Government primary schools of the Udalguri district of Assam. Methodology: For the purpose study descriptive and theoretical methodology is used. The researcher used self-structured questionnaire for collection of data. Tables are used to analyze the collected data and effectiveness of this scheme. Main Findings: Results showed that Mid-Day Meal Scheme is playing an important role in decrease classroom hunger of students. Main motto of the scheme is to increase the enrolment number in primary education. Applications of this study: This research can be used by policymakers, teachers, parents and also social welfare activities. Originality of this study: For the first time, implementation of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme has been studied in the Udalguri district of Assam

KEYWORDS:Primary education, Mid-day meal, Udalguri district

INTRODUCTION:

Mid-day meal scheme launched in 1995 is a scheme introduced by the government .The aim of this scheme is to promote elementary education. The scheme helps to provide better nutrients to the students by providing food. The main motto of this scheme is to increase attendance, and also improves nutritional level of the students .This scheme was launched mainly to include the students to join school and for them to continue with the basic education till at least class 8. Mid-day meal was given to the students to help the students to get a meal from the government and therefore parents are encouraged to send their children to school to get the meal.

Main Objective of Mid-Day Meal Scheme

1. To Boost Universalization of primary Education and increase the enrolment, and attendance and reduce the dropout rate.
2. To improve the nutritional status of the students.
3. To Encourage poor students to attend school regularly and help them to concentrate on classroom activities.

Historical Background of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme:

The National Programme on Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) known as Mid-Day Meal .This scheme was launched as a centrally sponsored Scheme on the 15th August 1995 by the government to providing dry ration @ 100 grams per child per day. In September 2004, the scheme was revised which provide cooked Mid-Day Meal with 300 calories and 8-12 grams of protein to all children studying in Class 1-V (Govt. and Aided Primary) which include Special Training centers. In addition to free supply of food grains, .The revised scheme also provides cooking cost @ 1/- per child per day. In the year 2007-08, the Mid Day Meal was extended to Upper Primary Schools all over the country.

Origin of Mid-Day Meal Scheme in India (Assam):

The Mid-Day Meal System was first launched in 1923 for students who are belonging to backward families. The cooked food provides the 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 type of meal scheme for school-going students 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 and Mid-Day Meal Scheme was started in the State of Assam during 2004-05 .Cooked Mid –Day Meal Programme has been started in Assam with effect from January/2005.

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) centers.

The scheme focus on to reduce the dropout rates, and increase the quality of learning of children. It was also formed to improve the enrollment of girls and reduce the gender bias as social divide.

OBJECTIVES

1. To Encourage primary and upper primary education.
2. To assess the impact of Mid-day meal scheme.
3. To analyze the effectiveness of Mid-day meal scheme.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

THE IMPACT OF MID DAY MEAL IN ASSAM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO UDALGURI DISTRICT

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Though the study of mid-day meal has been taken in various places but till date no such study have been taken in the district of Udalguri. For this reason the researcher choose this district so that it can helps in improving child development, and enhancing the quality of education, thereby fostering a brighter future for the district's youth and setting a precedent for similar initiatives worldwide.

The Mid-Day Meal Scheme contributes to the development of children's nutritional status. After having eaten the mid-day meal in the afternoon, students feel more energetic and involved and engage in the class room communication and activities. The problem of non-enrolment and absenteeism has been confined and reduced to some degree. The Mid Day Meal Scheme has been able to deliver good results in the state. 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 with a beneficial impact on the rate of enrolment.

METHODOLOGY:

Descriptive methodology has been used to the study of Mid-Day Meal Scheme in increase the enrollment and retention of elementary school students in Udalguri district of Assam. A sample of 15 Government schools both rural and urban schools has been selected from the district for the study. Both primary and secondary data's were used to study of the scheme. Primary data's were collected by the questionnaire which are totally self-structured through interview from the teachers, students and cooks of the selected sample schools. The interview has covered the information related to performance of the scheme in enhancing enrollment, attendance and reducing dropouts. Secondary data's were collected from the Department of Elementary Education, Government official websites, journals, books and census report.

DISCUSSION:

To analyze the implementation of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in Government primary schools of Udalguri district of Assam various variables have been identified. During the field survey, it was observed that all the sample schools follow the weekly menu to prepare Mid-Day Meal. It was also observed that in a few schools, provide meat instead of egg curry. The head teacher of these schools said that a rise in the price of the egg is the main cause for adding meat on the menu. As per the revised guidelines provided by the Mid-Day Meal scheme cooked hot meal should be distributed to the students but during the field survey in Government primary school of Udalguri district it was observed that few schools do not provide a meal on Saturday. The teachers and cooks have been interviewed to assess the implementation of cooked meal regarding the following variables:

1. Supply of Mid-Day Meal grains.
2. Fund for cooking cost.
3. Construction of kitchen cum storage.
4. Utensils for cooking and serving mid-day meal.
5. Water facility and space used for distribution of Mid-day meal.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

1. Kalita Rahul (2022) conducted a study on effectiveness of Mid-Day-Meal Scheme in Primary Schools with special reference to Nalbari District, Assam. The researcher have found that the scheme is successful in achieving its objectives like the feeding of hunger children, increasing the attendance ratio, making the teaching and learning process effective, improving attention to learning, etc.

2. Deka Karabi (2021) conducted a study on impact of mid-day meal program on attendance of primary school children and this study of mid-day meal program attempts to study the regularity and daily basis attendance of students before and after the school meal program. The study found out that the MDM scheme has increased the number of attendance of students. Even after the excellence attendance found in the school, parents are more likely to send their children regularly in schools.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

Primary education: Primary education or elementary education is typically the first stage of formal education, coming after preschool/kindergarten and before secondary school.

Mid-day meal: The Mid-Day Meal Scheme is a school meal programme in India designed to better the nutritional standing of school-age children nationwide.

Udalguri district: Udalguri district, also known as Odalguri, is a district in the Bodoland Territorial Region of the state of Assam in Northeastern India.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

First objective: To Encourage primary and upper primary education.

Table 1: position of admission before and after implementing the scheme.

| Name of the Schools | Admission before the scheme(2001-2002) | Admission after the scheme(2005-2006) | Increase in admission of numbers |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Tangla Model High School | 150 | 200 | 50 |
| Paneri Higher Secondary School | 100 | 130 | 30 |
| Tangla Girls High School | 140 | 150 | 10 |
| Fulkuchi ME School | 130 | 150 | 20 |
| Harisinga Higher Secondary School | 150 | 180 | 30 |
| Udalguri Nalbari LP School | 180 | 200 | 20 |
| Udalguri Girls Higher Secondary School | 180 | 210 | 30 |
| Bhergaon Govt MV School | 170 | 180 | 10 |
| Chatgari Govt MV School | 120 | 150 | 30 |

Second objectives: To assess the impact of Mid-day meal scheme.

Table 2 Performance of the students.

| Name of the Schools | No. of students secured above 60% before the scheme | No. of students secured above 60% after the scheme | Increase in the numbers |
|--|---|--|-------------------------|
| Tangla Model High School | 40 | 50 | 10 |
| Paneri Higher Secondary School | 20 | 30 | 10 |
| Tangla Girls High School | 30 | 35 | 5 |
| Fulkuchi ME School | 25 | 30 | 5 |
| Harisinga Higher Secondary School | 20 | 25 | 5 |
| Udalguri Nalbari LP School | 30 | 40 | 10 |
| Udalguri Girls Higher Secondary School | 40 | 45 | 5 |
| Bhergaon Govt MV School | 15 | 20 | 5 |
| Chatgari Govt MV School | 20 | 22 | 2 |

Third objectives: To analyze the effectiveness of Mid-day meal scheme.

Table 3: Attendance status (per year)

| Name of the Schools | Attendance of students (2001-2002) Per Year | Attendance of students (2005-2006) Per Year | Increase in number of Attendance |
|--|---|---|----------------------------------|
| Tangla Model High School | 90 | 130 | 40 |
| Paneri Higher Secondary School | 80 | 95 | 15 |
| Tangla Girls High School | 80 | 80 | 0 |
| Fulkuchi ME School | 50 | 85 | 35 |
| Harisinga Higher Secondary School | 60 | 110 | 50 |
| Udalguri Nalbari LP School | 85 | 105 | 20 |
| Udalguri Girls Higher Secondary School | 90 | 120 | 30 |
| Bhergaon Govt MV School | 40 | 100 | 60 |
| Chatgari Govt MV School | 47 | 130 | 83 |

FINDINGS:

Mid-Day meal was implemented by the Government of India to provide regularly cooked hot meals to children of government primary schools from class 1 to 8 (Kanchan. R. 2016). In the Government school of Udalguri was observed that a hot nutritious meal is served in every sample school according to the fixed menu and calories decided by the government. MDM Program has contributed to social inclusion as children of different castes sit together and share a common meal on the school premises. The main findings of this study are--

1. From Table 1: Position of admission are incredibly changed in primary and upper primary education system. Table 1 shows that before implementing the mid-day meal scheme the enrolment number is not good. The students as well as parents cannot provide educational facilities to the students that's why the enrolment number of students was very low. But after implementing this scheme the enrolment number of students increased in school of Udalguri district. They can take admission because of mid-day meal. so, table 1 shows that mid-day meal scheme encouraged the students take part in education system.

2. From Table 2: The researcher found that the performance of the students in Udalguri district are improved. Table 2 shows that the students of sample school shows good performance in academic field. Because many students come school from economically weaker sections they have scarcity of food and that's why they cannot get Education, they work for hunger in time of study. But when government provide mid-day meal scheme the students give attention on study and shows a good performance. From table 2 the researcher understand that this scheme help the students to get at least 1st division (above 60%) in academic field.

3. From Table 3: The researcher found that attendance of students in school under Udalguri district Assam are huge difference between before and after implementing the mid-day meal scheme. The researcher found after implementing the scheme the attendance of the students are increased. They always come school. Mid-day meal provide a good number of nutrition to students in daily basis. That's why they encouraged to come school to fulfilling their needs of hunger which increased the attendance incredibly.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The school which do not have any kitchen the government must provide the facility of the kitchen.
2. School should provide the proper water facility to the student's specially drinking water in school should be good for health.
3. Provide good quality of food to the students where they get all nutrition vitamin etc.
4. The school also add some fruits with meal where the students get proper nutrition.
5. Periodic monitoring is one of the important step the school must take where the students must get proper health checkup in a daily routine.

CONCLUSION:

From the above analysis it can clear understand that mid-day meal plays an important role in achieving universalization of primary education in a satisfactory quality. Mid-day mean scheme helps all school children below the age of 14 to take education by getting nutrition. This scheme enhancing enrollment, improving attendance and reducing dropouts and simultaneously improving the nutritional status of the Students in the school. The scheme has attracted young children to go school and take admission especially the one belonging to the weaker section of the society who were otherwise irregular to school. The outcome of this study establishes that the Mid-Day meal scheme is playing an important role in reducing classroom hunger of students in the surveyed government primary schools of Udalguri district. It has been observed that parents who can afford the expenses of private institutions are enrolling their children in these schools. In recent years it can be seen that the numbers of students are increasing day by day.

REFERENCES:

- (1) Awate, R.V., Ketkar, Y.A., Somaiya, P.A. (1997). Prevalence of nutritional deficiency disorders among rural primary school children (5-15 years). Journal of Indian Medical Association, July, 95(7): p. 410-415.
- (2) Banerji, Rukmini. (2000). Poverty and primary schooling - field studies from Mumbai and Delhi. Economic Political Weekly: pp. 795-802.
- (3) Belur, Rashmi. (2009). Mid-day meal may get some zing in Bangalore. Working paper (under review).

- (4) Berk, Laura. E. (2008). Child Development. 7th edition, Dorling Kindersley (India) Pvt. Ltd., pashupati printers, New Delhi.
- (5) Bhasin, S.K., Singh, S., Kapil, U., Sood, V.P., Gaur, D.R. (1990). Height and weight of well to do school children in Haryana. Indian Pediatrics, 27: pp. 1089-1094.
- (6) Bhave, S.Y., Chorgrade, A., Goel, P. (2001). Height and weight and mid arm circumference of school children between 2.5 and 17.5 from convent school of Bombay suburbs. School Health Project, Bombay Hospital. Institute of Medical Sciences, Mumbai, Bombay Hospital Journal: pp. 3901-3906.
- (7) Bjorklund, D. (1989). Children's thinking: Developmental function and individual differences. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks Cole.