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BACKGROUND AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF MID DAY MEAL SCHEME IN INDIA



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ABSTRACT:

The Mid Day Meal Scheme is the largest food and nutrition assistance programme feeding millions of children every day. This paper provides a review of the background information on the scheme in India earlier known as National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) including historical trends, achievements and components of the scheme. It also addresses steps being taken to meet challenges being faced by the administrators of the programme in monitoring and evaluation of the programme. The foundations of the project can be followed back to the Pre-Independence period, when a late morning feast system was presented in 1925 in Madras Enterprise. Activities by state governments to youngsters started with their dispatch of an early afternoon dinner program in elementary schools in the year 1962–63. The legislature of India started the National

System of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) on 15 August 1995. The target of the plan is to enhance the adequacy of essential instruction by enhancing the healthful status of grade school kids. At first, the plan was actualized in 2,408 pieces of the nation to give sustenance to understudies in classes one through five of government, government-helped and nearby body run schools. By 1997–98, the plan had been executed the nation over. The plan came into power with the Supreme Court request dated 28 November 2001, which requires all government and government-helped grade schools to give cooked early afternoon dinners and extended to upper primary school children. This scheme benefitted 140 million children in government assisted schools across India in 2008, strengthening child nutrition and literacy. The key objectives of the scheme are: protecting children from classroom hunger, increasing school enrolment and attendance, improved socialization among children. The Cooked Mid Day Meal Program has been fruitful in tending to "classroom hunger" in the recipient schools, school interest and brought a sharp increment in school enrolment and participation rates over every one of the states and all the more essentially narrowing the sexual orientation holes in school participation rates.

KEY WORDS : Mid Day Meal, Malnutrition, Education, Nutritional status

INTRODUCTION:

India is now largely recognized as a fast-developing economy. However problems of poverty and inequality still remain a daily reality. The projected official poverty figures of the Government of India for 2007 place 19.3 percent of its population below the poverty line (Planning Commission, 2002)6. Asian Development Bank, however, estimates that 30.7 percent of the population has income of less than US\$ 1/day (ADB 2007)1. Government intervention in India in the food sector has been mainly targeted at promoting food security. The Department of Food and Public Distribution under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution is in charge of managing the food economy of the country. A public distribution system (PDS) managed by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) operates alongside a free market. In spite of all its financial thriving in specific regions, India lingers behind on numerous social parameters. One of them is kid sustenance and food. 42% of the Indian kids less than five years old are underweight. Most kids fitting in with the financially in reverse foundation are prior educating to supplement their family's salary. The surest approach to break out of the push of destitution is through instruction. Instruction can altogether enhance the personal satisfaction of a family for eras to come. At the point when the essential needs of a kid, for example, nourishment are not met, instruction regularly turns into the last need.

Reason of implementation of Mid Day Meal Scheme in India:

Children are the future of mankind. Education and Health are the two basic requirements of children. Extreme poverty and social discrimination are the major cause of illiteracy; several programmes have been launched to attract children to schools. The mid-day meals is a major programme launched all over the country, not only to attract the children into the embrace of primary schooling but also to provide nutritional support for generating necessary interest both physical and psychological among the children to ensure their presence in the school . These primary needs are found to be more basic and urgent for school going children as we go down to the level of primary school. The nation is committed to achieving universalization of Elementary Education Covering Children in the age group of 6 to 14 years.

Background of Mid day Meal Scheme: The report of the Committee on Mid-Day Meals (1995) states that the principal endeavor in late morning suppers was in 1925. Around then, a MDM project was presented for offspring of poor financial status in the Madras Corporation zone in the condition of Tamil Nadu. In this manner, in 1928, Keshav Academy of Calcutta presented an obligatory 'Noontime Tiffin' for school young men at the rate of four annas for each kid every month. In 1941, Kerala began the School Lunch Program. Bombay began actualizing a free noontime dinner plan in 1942 with UNICEF help disseminated skimmed milk powder to youngsters matured between 6-13 years. Bangalore city in 1946 gave cooked rice and yogurt. The Uttar Pradesh Government presented an intentional plan in 1953. By the 1950s, numerous states had presented MDM programs with the help of various worldwide organizations like the the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). International voluntary and charity organizations (e.g. Catholic Relief Service (CRS), Church World Service (CWS), CARE and USA's Meals for Million) also came forward to assist. During 1958-59, an Expanded Nutrition Programme (ENP) was introduced, funded jointly by FAO, WHO, UNICEF and the Government of India. This was subsequently expanded into the Applied Nutrition Programme (Committee on Mid-day Meals, 1995)³.

The thought of a National Mid-Day Meal Program had been considered over and over for over 10 years. In 1982, the thought of 'Sustenance for Learning' with FAO item help was mooted. Booked Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) young ladies were to be secured under this project. In 1983, the Department of Education of the Central Government after bury ecclesiastical discussions, arranged a plan according to the rules of the World Food Program (WFP). As indicated by this plan 13.6 million SC youngsters and 10.09 million ST young ladies in classes I-V were to be secured in 15 states and 3 Union Regions, where the enrolment of SC/ST young ladies was under 79 percent. The proposal was circulated among states and Union Territories (UTs). While many states expressed their willingness to implement the programme, others reported that there were some practical difficulties in implementing a mid day meal programme meant exclusively for SC and ST children particularly continuing when WFP assistance was withdrawn. program with Central Government help for early afternoon dinner for the advantage of youngsters enlisted in grade schools all through the nation was considered amid 1984-85, the method of reasoning for the system were: The Mid Day Meal Program for grade schools could frame the premise of a hostile to destitution instructive project. Execution of this system for the children aged between 6-11 years may maximize enrolment and reduce school dropout rates, which were important from the viewpoint of universalisation of elementary education as well as achievement of higher literacy rates in the country

This programme would also help in providing nutrition to the under-fed and under nourished children in rural areas. The broad features of the programme were Supplying of food items providing 300 calories per day and 12-15 g protein per child with scope of grade school youngsters in a staged way. In December 1988, the Department of Education defined a proposition for covering 994 ICDS hinders with grouping of SC/ST youngsters @ Rs.1/ - per tyke every day. Oats and to the degree conceivable heartbeats, consumable oils and toppings ought to be supplied to the schools through approved state offices. In 1990-91, seventeen state governments were actualizing the system for essential school kids between the age gathering of 6-11 years with differing degrees of scope. Twelve states to be specific Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, and Uttar Pradesh were actualizing Mid Day Meal Program from their own assets. In three states to be specific Karnataka, Orissa and West Bengal, the system was actualized in part with assistance from CARE. As reported by Ministry of Human Resource and Development, thirteen

BACKGROUND AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF MID DAY MEAL SCHEME IN INDIA

States and five Union Territories administered mid day meal programme as of December 1994.

National Programme for Nutrition Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE)

National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education, popularly known as the Mid-Day Meal Scheme was started in 1995 initially in 2408 blocks in the country in an attempt to enhance enrolment, retention and attendance while simultaneously improving nutritional status among children in school. It was further extended in 2002 to cover children studying in Education Guarantee Plan (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) focuses. Focal Assistance under the plan comprised of free supply of nourishment grains @ 100 grams for each tyke per school day, and appropriation for transportation of sustenance grains up to a greatest of Rs 50 for each quintal.

In September 2004 the plan was amended to give cooked late morning dinner with 300 calories what's more, 8-12 grams of protein to all youngsters concentrating on in classes I – V in Government and helped schools and EGS/AIE focuses. Notwithstanding free supply of sustenance grains, the modified plan gave Central Help for Cooking cost @ Re 1 for every tyke for each school day, Transport sponsorship was raised from the prior greatest of Rs 50 for every quintal to Rs. 100 for each quintal for uncommon classification states, and Rs 75 for every quintal for different states, Management, observing and assessment costs @ 2% of the expense of sustenance grains, transport endowment and cooking help and Provision of late morning dinner amid summer get-away in dry season influenced territories.

In July 2006 the plan was further updated to give help to cooking cost at the rate of Rs 1.80 for every tyke/school day for States in the North Eastern Region, gave the NER States contribute Rs 0.20 for every tyke/school day and Rs 1.50 for each tyke/school day for different states and UTs, gave that these States and UTs contribute Rs 0.50 for every kid/school day.

In October 2007, the plan has been further overhauled to cover kids in upper essential (classes VI to VIII) at first in 3479 Educationally Backwards Blocks (EBBs). Around 1.7 crore upper essential youngsters were incorporated by this extension of the plan.

Launch of the mid day meal scheme across states

Prior to the formal launch of the Cooked Mid Day Meal programme, the practice of providing meals in schools was present in several states and the details are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Launch of mid day meal in different states

| Sl. No. | Name of States | Year of launching of MDM | Glimpses |
|---------|-------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1 | Tamil Nadu | 1923 | Started in Madras City by Madras Municipal Corporation & extended to full State in 1982. |
| 2. | West Bengal | 1928 | Started in Calcutta city by Keshav Academy of Calcutta as compulsory Mid-day Tiffin on payment basis at the rate of four annas per child per month. |
| 3. | Maharashtra | 1942 | Started free mid day meal in Bombay. It was launched in 1995-96 as a centrally sponsored scheme. |
| 4. | Karnataka | 1946 | Started in Bangalore city to provide cooked rice and yoghurt. There was provision of giving 3 kg of rice/wheat per month /per child who had 80% or more attendance in 1995. Cooked meal was started in 7 north eastern districts during 2002-03. |
| 5. | Uttar Pradesh | 1953 | It introduced a scheme on voluntary basis to give boiled gram, ground-nut, puffed rice and seasonal fruits. |
| 6. | Kerala | 1960 | Scheme had been funded by CARE (Cooperate American Relief Everywhere) under US Assistance during the period 1960-1983 (in a pilot manner). |
| 7. | Bihar | 1995 | Started with dry ration of 3 kg/per student/per month and started providing cooked meal in 30 blocks of 10 districts in 2003-04 |
| 8. | Andhra Pradesh | 1995 | There was provision of giving 3 kg of rice/wheat per month per child with 80% or more attendance in school. |
| 9. | Madhya Pradesh | 1995 | Initially dry rations or Dalia was provided. |
| 10. | Rajasthan | 1995 | Students of Government Primary schools were provided wheat at the rate of 3 kg/ per student /per month |
| 11. | Arunachal Pradesh | 1995 | Initially only dry ration was provided in five districts of the state, extended to all schools since 2004. |
| 12. | Punjab | 1995 | Students of Government Primary schools were provided wheat at the rate of 3 kg per student/ per month and switched over to cooked meal in one block of every district in 2002-03. |
| 13. | Haryana | 1995 | Initially implemented in 17 blocks of 6 districts & extended to 44 blocks where female literacy rate was lower than the national level in 1996-97. |
| 14. | Himachal Pradesh | 1995 | Initially dry ration was provided |
| 15. | Jammu & Kashmir | 1995 | Initially dry ration was provided |
| 16. | Meghalaya | 1995 | Started with dry ration of 3 kg per student /per month. |
| 17. | Jharkhand | 2003 | It was taken up on a pilot basis in 3140 government primary schools in 19 districts initially. |

Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development. "National Program of Nutritional Support to Primary Education" Guidelines. New Delhi : GOI; 2006. p. 37-39.

Objectives of the mid day meal scheme (MDMS) are

- To improve nutritional status of children and protecting children from classroom hunger. Thus to address the problem of malnutrition
- To increase school enrolment and promote regular school attendance especially to encourage children belonging to disadvantaged sections to attend school regularly.
- To provide nutritional support to children of primary classes in drought affected areas during summer vacation.
- To improve socialization among children belonging to all castes thus helping to undermine caste prejudices by teaching children to sit together and share a common meal.
- To provide social empowerment through provision of employment to women and liberate working women from the task of having to feed children at home during the day.
- Act as a source of economic support for the poorer sections of society.
- To impart nutrition education to children.

Implementation of the scheme

The menu of the Mid Day Meal was developed keeping in mind the requirements of the children and local food habits as well as food availability. The meal included cereal (rice and chapattis), pulses, vegetables and sometimes fruit, depending on local state budgets. The lunch menu varied among states and regions of this vast country, adapting to the local cuisine and seasonal produce. In the northern parts of India, roti (flatbread of wheat or corn) are commonly served. In the south, rice is the staple of every free lunch. For effective implementation of the scheme a comprehensive and elaborate mechanism for monitoring and supervision of the Mid Day Meal Scheme had been prescribed by the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development. It included:

Table 2. Institutional Mechanism for MDMS

| Level of Responsibility | Agencies responsible |
|-------------------------|--|
| National Level | National Level Steering Cum Monitoring Committee (NSMC), and Programme Approval Board (PAB) |
| State Level | State Level Steering cum Monitoring Committee and Nodal Agency |
| District Level | District Collector/District Nodal Agency |
| Village Level | Gram Panchayat/Municipality |
| School Level | Village Education Committee, School Management and Development Committee, Parent Teacher Association, Mother Teacher Association |

Source: NP-NSPE, 2006.

Contributions and achievements of MDM scheme

Findings of the evaluation studies by independent organizations in various states indicate the taking after effects⁴

- TThe Cooked Mid Day Meal Program has been effective in tending to "classroom hunger" in the recipient schools. This plan succeeds "classroom hunger" the same number of youngsters come to class vacant stomach or, those originating from inaccessible spots, again feel hungry on achieving school, and in this way can't focus on studies.
- The commitment of noontime dinners to nourishment security and tyke sustenance is by all accounts especially significant

in tribal regions where hunger is endemic.

- Mid Day dinners effectively affect school cooperation, not simply regarding getting more youngsters selected in the registers additionally as far as consistent understudy participation every day. Late morning feast has gotten a sharp build school enrolment and participation rates over every one of the states and that's only the tip of the iceberg vitally narrowing the sexual orientation crevices in school participation rates.
- There is likewise confirmation to propose that late morning dinners have a vital social esteem and cultivate correspondence. Cooked Mid Day Meal is accounted for to have made a stage for offspring of all social and monetary foundations to take dinners together, in this way encouraging accomplishing the target of social value.
- School feast program additionally gives folks a solid motivation to send youngsters to class, subsequently empowering enrolment and lessening non-attendance and dropout rates. It underpins wellbeing, sustenance, and training objectives and subsequently will have a multi-pronged effect on a country's general social and monetary advancement.
- School nourishing system serve as an exceptionally powerful instrument for reinforcing the socialization process. It breaks the position and class obstructions.
- Mid day dinner has likewise helped the poor families that, overwhelmed in destitution, appetite and starvation endeavoring hard to have one square supper a day, can't consider sending their kids to schools. The poor family units, for example, those headed by dowagers or landless workers esteem that confirmation of a free lunch each day for their kids.
- This system has made an exceptionally harmonious environment for instruction, wellbeing development and in general prosperity of poor people and destitute youngsters.
- The sexual orientation hole in school interest tends to contract, as the Mid Day Meal Scheme disintegrates the obstructions that keep young ladies from going to class. Late morning Meal Scheme likewise give a helpful wellspring of business for ladies, and frees working ladies from the weight of cooking at home amid the day. In these and different ways, ladies and young lady kids have an uncommon stake in Mid Day Meal Plan.
- National Council of Educational Research and Training's most recent report expresses that Learning Achievement of Students toward the End of Class-V has construed that youngsters secured under late morning dinner have higher accomplishment level than the individuals who were not secured under it.
- The Scheme has made different great propensities in youngsters, for example, washing one's hands previously, then after the fact eating, utilization of clean water, great cleanliness and so forth. Dreze J.Goyal .A (2003) has directed study on 'Early afternoon Meal' program and brought up some of solid focuses for this system and chalked out the "Limit" for this project furthermore evaluated its potential for its "supportability" for long stretch. Numerous studies did on 'Noontime Meal' program and surveyed the advantages particularly for "Dalits" and down trodden segment of society. (Jain J.Shah M (2005), Dea. Samason M, Noronhac,2005).

Table 3. Achievements during the period 2005-06 to 2011-12

BACKGROUND AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF MID DAY MEAL SCHEME IN INDIA

| Components | 2005-06 | 2006-07 | 2007-08* | 2008-09* | 2009-10* | 2010-11* | 2011-12* |
|------------------------------------|---------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------------------------|
| Children covered (in Cr.) | 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 Cr.) | 3345.26 | 5348.00 | 6678.00 | 8000.00 | 7359.15 | 9440.00 | 10380.00 |
| Total Exp (in Cr.) | 3186.33 | 5233.47 | 5835.44 | 6688.02 | 6937.79 | 9128.44 | 7697.24 up to 29.12.11 |

Source: Annual Report 2011-12, MHRD, Government of India.

* Primary and Upper Primary Combined

CONCLUSION

The Scheme could be a platform for strengthening the school health programme in order to produce a real impact. It provides children with at least one nutritionally adequate meal a day. This program is known to lead to higher attention spans, better concentration, and improved class performance. Mid day Meal scheme also provides parents with a strong incentive to send children to school, thereby encouraging enrolment and reducing absenteeism and dropout rates. It supports health, nutrition, and education goals and consequently will have a multi-pronged impact on a nation's overall social and economic development. Since the Supreme Court says that the responsibility to monitor the implementation of the scheme essentially lies with the Central government, as it is the Central government that is providing assistance, it is important that leakages from the MDMS should be stopped at all cost.

Comprehensive, periodical and systematic orientation is mandatory to sensitize all stakeholders including the policy makers, implementers, teachers, centre level officials and community people to make them understand this scheme well. This would help them to become more efficient and be active partners in the programme that will certainly enhance its performance. Through a targeted intervention, the MDMS has a long term vision to be able to address the hidden issue of malnutrition in India.

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BACKGROUND AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF MID DAY MEAL SCHEME IN INDIA

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