

Impact of Mid-Day Meal Scheme on Academic Performance of Students

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Available online at: www.xournals.com

Received 19th September 2018 | Revised 11th October 2018 | Accepted 20th December 2018

Abstract:

This paper focuses on the analysis of the mid-day meal program and its impact on the academic performance of students. The correlation between the attainment of educational and economic growth, have the policies that effectively and efficiently decreases the barriers financially to the primary school education in the cases of developing countries which are of extreme interest to government and non-government organizations. The Government of India implemented a program of school feeding in 1995 to incentivize children to attend the primary school through the subsidized mid- day meal provision. The study of the mid-day meal scheme is done in this by predicting the impact of program on the enrollment of primary school.

Keywords: *Mid-day meal program,, Primary school,, Subsidized*

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Introduction

In 1960s, the Mid Day meal scheme is majorly for school meal program in India which includes the lunch provision that is free of cost to school children on all working days. As per the recent statistics, 42.5% of the children which are under 5 years of age are considered as underweight. The main reason for this is not using the iodized salt. According to some researchers that "India is the home to world's largest population, having more than 200 million people who are hungry these days".

The mid-day meal scheme is meal program in school of Indian Government that is designed to rise the nutritional status of school going children nationwide. This particular program supplies lunch free on working days for children in primary and upper primary class in Government, Government aided, local body, Guarantee scheme of education, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and National Child Labor Project (Ravi and Agnihotri, 2016).

As according to the India State Hunger Index (ISHI): that the poor performance of the country is driven by its high levels of child who are under-nutrition and have counts of poor calorie. The malnutrition of child in India is higher than most of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. As per the 2008 report, people of India suffers more hunger than any other countries in the world and also states that improving the nutrition of child is considered as of utmost urgency in most of the states of India. The major objectives of this program are protecting children from classroom hunger, increase in attendance and school enrolment, expansion of socialization among children who belongs to all castes, reports malnutrition and social empowerment through the employment provision to women. The scheme basically starts in Tamil Nadu state and then expanded by the same government in 1982. In India, several studies have been conducted about the scheme of mid-day meal schemes, student's enrolment and attendance of students in school that involves education and health outcomes of students (Paul and Mondal, 2012).

The major objectives of the Mid-Day Meal

To improve the children's nutritional status present in class I-VIII in Government, Local body and Government aided schools.

To encourage poor children who belongs to disadvantaged sections, to attend schools regularly

and helps them in concentrating on classroom activities.

To provide nutritional support to children in drought affected areas.

The Background of Mid-day meal program

Mid-day meal program also known as National Program of Nutritional Support to Primary Education which was launched by Indian Government in August 1995. This program is made to boost retention and the rate of attendance for children and also in improving the outcomes of health and nutrition. The original program provides food grains (100 g) per child per day having the objectives of improving the nutritional status of children studying in public schools, encourages the poor children from any disadvantaged areas and providing the support of nutrition to children in flood or drought affected regions. At last in July 2006, the standards of this program were increased that requires 450 calories and 12 grams of proteins are provided to each child per day. The revision of 2006 also provides subsidies to schools to cover the costs of cooking (Bonds 2012).

Implementation – The directives of Supreme Court are left to the executive branch of the relevant Government. The state Governments are considered as responsible for introducing the mid-day meals. For the purpose to examine the change in policy effects on schooling outcomes, researchers gathered the information on the implementation of policy in public schools from the state documents and the information is cross-checked by at least two independent sources (Jayaraman, Simroth and Vericourt, 1-10).

In India most of the population percentage is poor and the income source is cultivation. They mostly depends on forests for 8 months and on agriculture for 4 months. The condition on the basis of social and economic is not so good in comparison to other countries. As most of the persons are illiterate and their illiteracy values does not permits them to understand the educational values. As the values of education is not providing any immediate economic return, they prefer their children engagement in remunerative employment that adds into the family income and then strengthens the economy of family. Because of the worst conditions of school, people got hesitate in sending their children to schools and then their primary aim become is how to earn money.

They don't consider education as their primary aim, so to increase the enrolment and education, people need to understand the value of education. According to the various researchers, the parents and children are motivated towards the aspect of education. This kind of encouragement is only possible with by using different incentive schemes that is getting provided to the children. The children in our school characterizes the vital or important segment, valuable human resources and in future they will contribute to the workforce of our country.

In relation to meet the requirements of nutrition and to encourage the daily attendance, several types of schemes have been introduced in primary schools of rural area. The incentive schemes for the improvement such as mid-day meals, uniform- free of cost, scholarship in attendance, free facilities of hostel, free text books etc. are the aids for education and then acts as a catalyst to influence the parents decision who belongs from the weaker sections of the population to send their children to school. Incentive schemes act as to show the path and it is considered as a golden road to the leaning process.

This program is basically introduced in primary schools in order to attract students to school for increasing the enrolment and the completion of formal education. The main objective of this program is to attract children and then made them to retain in schools which is included in five year plans (Nath and Nath 2015).

Applied Methodology

According to various researchers the applied methodology includes the secondary data which has been collected from the newspapers, reports, and websites of governments. The change in average form is calculated before and after the scheme launch, then comparison has been made. All the data or findings is on the basis of time series technique.

The performance and the working of schemes can be analyzed using various parameters,

A significant source of employment has been provided to the women belonging from the rural region (backward classes). This process does not require any specialize training but only a woman who knows how to cook food can get enrolled in this scheme. But these cooks are paid very low amount of cost.

- This scheme is working significantly on the objective of providing the food services to all children who get enrolled in this scheme and are coming to school. The main aims are to address the classroom hunger. Many loopholes were considered in various schools such as non-availability of eating plates. There are many cases like in many places, people fell ill after the consumption of food.
- As children are learning to be in a hygienic atmosphere like washing their hands before and after eating but the food itself is not found to be hygienic.
- The classroom processes are also getting hampered because most of the teachers are giving attention to scheme supervision and related activities.
- All the infrastructure facilities are very poor like non-availability of utensils, storage space and the fund allocation by Government which is an ultimate risk to the children's life.
- One of the positive aspect of this entire scheme is no discrimination on the basis of caste, gender or community. All are equally served.

Comparison

There are many other parameters that leads to increase in the children enrollment in schools or their caswes of dropouts from the school. To compare all the data, the data has been divided into two categories: Before cooked and after cooked. And after all this Gross enrollment ratio, dropout rate is calculated (Kaur 2016, <https://www.younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-PB8-Midday-Meal-Scheme-in-India.pdf>).

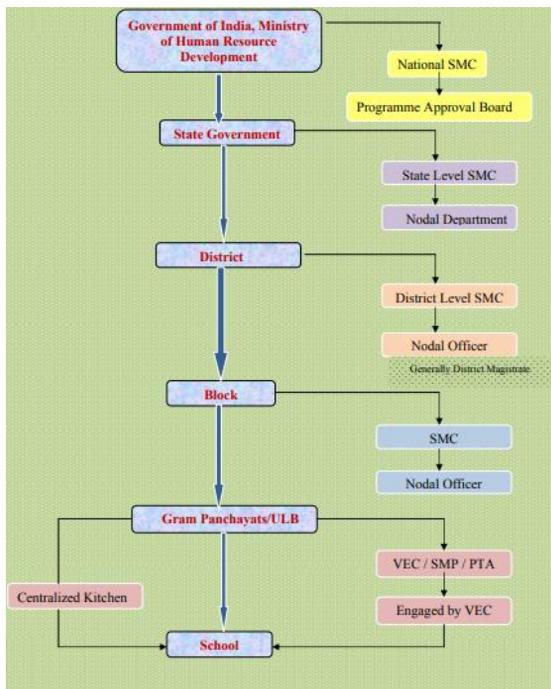


Figure 2 – Implementation and Mechanism of MDMS

Literature Review

As according to **Bonds 2012**, the impact of India’s mid-day meal program on Educational attainment is evaluated and also examines its effect on both public and private enrollment rates in school by using a propensity score matching estimation method. The effects is also seen on the least educated parents and the families having lowest socio-economic status. All these results are considered as positive and significant in India as the external validity should be tested through the examinations of other program in a wide region. In this paper, researcher has performed the follow up surveys to measure the long term gains for program recipients, adult levels of income and the educational attainment future children.

Paul and Mondal 2012 has studied the impact of mid-day meal on the academic performance of school going children and have concluded that mid-day meal found a positive impact in some cases such as enrollment , attendance has increased and lowers the retention and drop out students which are the important factors for achieving the high level of academic students’ performance. This includes those students who belongs to Below Poverty Line level students who resides in the rural regions. The results

on the basis of chi square and various regression models has indicated that a positive influence is seen on the academic achievement of students by taking these factors into consideration which are enrolment, attendance, dropout rate and retention. Some benefits are also discussed in this paper such as removal of classroom hunger, gender and social equality and students have adapted good habits such as washing their own hands before and after the consumption of any food items.

Singh and Gupta 2013 studied the impact of mid-day meal on enrollment, Attendance and retention of primary school children and this is concluded that the mid-day meal scheme shout continue in the state government and it has positive impact on enrollment and attendance of children.

Molla and Sheikh 2015 researched on the impact of mid-day meal program on educational level which is a case study based on the west Bengal District and then after proper study it has been concluded that the MDMS program helped the students in increasing their enrolment at primary level and it is mentioned that the quantity of the school attendance children in primary level increases but the students quality falling down due to the problem in the management program. Government should have to make proper rules for the improvement in these schemes that furthers the sustainable education development.

Agnihotri 2016 worked on the assessment of mid-day meal scheme in Himachal Pradesh and concluded all the findings in which most of the teachers are young in this arena that means they have young ideas, most of the teachers are male and they rate the mid-day meal food of good quality. The cook cooks the food at the time of mid-day meal. Students are eating food together and the scheme should continue in future. In this paper, both the positive and negative aspects are discussed of the mid-day meal.

Nath and Nath 2015 worked on the study of mid-day meal programs on enrolment and retention of primary school children and concludes that the introduction of mid-day meals, the degree of enrolments has increased and parents are more interested to send their children to school. The retention has been increased and these programs are helping in expressing their opinion at the primary level.

Kaur 2016 researched about the mid-day meal scheme and analysis before and after the

consumption of food items. This paper analyses the before and after situations of government's planning in the form of mid-day meal scheme. So for this purpose, the time series data on the enrollment, the GER i.e., gross enrollment rate has been taken from the government reports.

Conclusion

The Mid-day meal scheme is another name for the school meal program in India which was started in 1960s. It involves the lunch provision that is cost free for school going children on all the working days.

The major program objectives of this particular program are: children protection from classroom hunger, increase in the school attendance and enrolment, improvement in the socialization among the students. The effect of MDMS is affecting children's work performance so for suitable utilization of this program, Government should make appropriate rules and regulation and also all the parents are most importantly concerned about this whole program and teacher will have to maintain the above mentioned conditions properly for the purpose of sustainable education development.



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