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## Mid day meal programme a brief study

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### Abstract

India is undergoing a rapid demographic transition accompanied by an epidemiologic and nutritional transition. The Mid-day Meal Programme in India is the world's largest school feeding programme. The nutritional status of school-going children who form a major section of the population, can give an indication of the changing trends in the nutritional profile of the population. The National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NPNSPE). The Mid-Day Meal Programme (MDM) is guided by the principle that all children have right to life, food, education and development. The Mid-Day Meal programme is launched with the objective of improving attendance of children, social equity and simultaneously improving nutritional status of children. It is commonly known as the Mid Day Meal Scheme. Four important areas are identified for achieving the goal of Education for all. These are Access to Education, Enrolment of children, and Retention of the enrolled children as well as in academic achievement.

**Keywords:** mid day meals, children, student's attendant

### Introduction

The Mid-day Meal Programme in India is the world's largest school feeding programme, aimed at improving the nutritional status of school children and promoting the universalization of elementary education, reaching out to about 10.80 crore children in over 11.58 lakh schools/EGS centres across the country [1]. Under nutrition during any period of childhood, even for relatively short term episodes, can have negative effects on the cognitive development thus leads to poor school performance among children. Economic Survey, released on Friday, pointed out high dropout rates at various levels of schooling and lack of affordability in higher education as areas of concerned. The Survey emphasis that Samagra Shiksha 2018-19 was launched to envisage school education as a continuation from preschool to senior secondary level to provide access to education to all. Between 1950 and 1990, there was a steady but slow improvement in primary school enrolment and retention. In 1994, District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) was launched with the objective of revitalizing the primary education system and achieving universalization of primary education. Within a short time, DPEP covered 272 districts in 18 states; there was some improvement in the enrolment rates in better performing states and districts, but progress [2]. A Brief History of Mid-day Meals When the MDMA was launched in 1995, state governments (who were responsible for implementing the scheme) were given two years to put necessary systems in place so as to be able to provide cooked meals to primary school children. However, in the first six years after the scheme was launched (I e, until 2001), most states failed to put the required arrangements in place and instead provided students with monthly dry rations (wheat or rice) based on their attendance in school. Tamil Nadu had launched a cooked MDMS in the 1950s and expanded it significantly in 1982, and Gujarat introduced mid-day meals in the 1980s. Besides this, the entire state of Kerala, and some pockets of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, began providing cooked meals in 1995 [3].

**History of NP-NSPE(National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education):** National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE), 1995 With a view to enhancing enrolment, retention and attendance and simultaneously improving nutritional levels among children, the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE), commonly called as Mid-day Meal Programme (MDMP), was launched as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on 15th August 1995, initially in 2408

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blocks in the country. By the year 1997-98 the NP-NSPE was introduced in all blocks of the country. It was further extended in 2002 to cover not only children in primary classes (I-V) of government, government aided and local body schools, but also children studying in centres run under the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) Scheme.(1) A review of the primary education sector in the Ninth Five Year Plan confirmed the slow progress towards universal primary education. One of the oft-cited reasons given by low income group families for not sending their children to school was that the children have to work to earn money and support the family; girls have to work at home and look after younger siblings [2].

**Management of the MDMS:** The central guidelines allow state-government incentives for corruption. For example, problems in the provision of midday meals mints to manage the MDMS through an inadequate transport funds create a temp-in many urban areas, partly due to crowd-designated "nodal department", such a station to recover the costs by selling something, inadequate infrastructure and lack of school education, rural development, the cooks were appointed by the SDMC committee members. The menu is almost the same in all the schools. Calorific value of the food is about Rs 450 calories. In addition to the food, once a week additional items in the form of fruit are given to the children. Normally on this day of the week the school attendance is more. The menu of the food given to the children was displayed either on the notice-board of the school or it was permanently painted on the school wall near the entrance. The principal of all the schools under SDMC scheme kept meticulous records of the receipt of food-grain and funding, daily attendance and number of meals

prepared. The Principal was also responsible for ensuring that the cook was supplied with a calculated amount of food grains as per the attendance of the children and that the food was cooked properly. The attendance of children along with the food-grain utilized was displayed in the register. The unutilized food-grain was also mentioned in the register. Teachers in all the schools felt that the meal programme had brought an overall improvement in their school. In all of the schools children were asked to clean their hands before and after having food. In all schools the head masters responded that they got the utensils for cooking the food through the funds provided to them by the government such as DPEP funding. The community members also sometimes donated money to the schools which were used for buying vessels. In all the schools there were kitchen sheds. However cooks did opt for cooking fully or partly outside the kitchens. Basically it was the convenience of the cook that mattered. Cooks reported that it took them about two hours to prepare the school meals. The cooks were satisfied with the salary. The cooks in the schools owned by the SDMC were appointed by the School Development Management Committee in which the parents, community members and the Headmasters are also members [4].

**Food Norms of MDM:** The calories and protein are provided by way of cooking MDM with food grains (rice/wheat), pulses, vegetables, oil & fat and with salt & condiments. The details are:

**Engagement of cook-cum-helper for this programme:** One cook-cum-helper may be engaged in a school under MDM programme having 25 students, twocook-cum-helpers for schools having 26 to 100 students and one additional cook-cum-helper for every additional of upto 100 students.

The Food norms would be as under :

Sl. No.	Items	Quantity Per Meal	
		Primary students	Upper Primary & NCLP students
1	Food-grains (Rice)	100gms	150gms
2	Pulse	20gms	30gms
3	Vegetables (leafy also)	50gms	75gms
4	Oil & Fat	5.0gms	07.5gms
5	Salt & Condiments	As per need	As per need

Cooking cost of MDM

Cooking cost			
Stage	Total cost per meal	Central state sharing 60:40	
		Central contribution	State contribution
Primary	Rs.4.35	Rs.2.61	Rs.1.74
Upper Primary & NCLP	Rs.6.51	Rs.3.91	Rs.2.60

**Advantages of the Mid-day meal scheme On the basis of the study it was found that there are certain advantages of the scheme, which are as follows:**

- Provision of Quality Meals
- Development of Good Food Habits and Social Equity among Children
- Employment Generation
- Transparency in MDM
- Development of Social Equity
- Community’s Participation in MDM
- High Attendance Rate

**Some suggestions for preparation of nutritious and economical Mid- Day Meal:**

The Mid-Day Meal programme does not merely aim to provide a cooked meal, but one satisfying prescribed nutritional norms. At the same time, this has to be done within certain cost norms. Following are some suggestions which would help in achieving the twin-objectives:-

- Food grains must be stored in a place away from moisture, in air tight containers/bins to avoid infestation.
- Rice should preferably be parboiled or unpolished.

- Cereal pulse combination is necessary to have good quality protein. The cereal pulse ratio could range from 3:1 to 5:1.
- Sprouted pulses have more nutrients and should be incorporated in single dish meals.
- Reduces cooking time. Wash the grains thoroughly and soak in just the sufficient amount of water required for cooking.
- Only “iodized salt” should be used for cooking mid-day meals.
- Over cooking should be avoided.

There persists a widely held belief that provision of cooked meals disrupts classroom processes: The teachers spend too much time in supervising the cooking operations to the detriment of academic timetables. Teachers should, however, be involved in ensuring that (a) good quality, wholesome food is served to children, and (b) the actual serving and eating is undertaken in a spirit of togetherness, under hygienic conditions, and in an orderly manner so that the entire process is completed in 30-40 minutes. It should however, be ensured that the food prepared is tasted by 2 – 3 adults including at least one teacher before it is served to children <sup>[4]</sup>.

### Conclusion

Thus the Mid-day Meal Scheme in India is the world's largest school-based feeding programme, aimed at improving the nutritional status of students and promoting the universalization of elementary education. The Mid-day Meal Programme has been quietly feeding more than 10 crore children every day for more than 10 years. The mid-day meal programme (MDM) has had a positive impact in some selective cases (e.g., enhancing enrolment, attendance and lowering retention and drop out of students) which are essential for achieving the higher level of academic performance of students particularly belongs to BPL level students residing in the rural areas of upper primary schools of in the state of West Bengal.

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