

Effect of Mid-day Meal on Attendance of Primary Student of Maynaguri Block

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Abstract: Objective: The present research has been conducted with the objectives of the effect of mid-day meal (MDM) on attendance and the motivation of the students towards school and its activities after the launching of Mid-day-Meal Programme and also the reactions of the guardians of the primary students regarding Mid-day-Meal in schools of Maynaguri block of Jalpaiguri District.

Methods: Descriptive survey method will be adopted for the present study.

Results: The results of the study revealed that Mid-day-Meal has brought a positive attendance in the primary schools in this block and students are positively motivated towards teaching learning throughout the day if Mid-day-Meal is supplied regularly and also this programme will reduce dropout rate of the student at an early age.

Conclusion: Results from his research findings concluded that the hungry students get a nutritious meal during the school tiffin period and concentrate the rest of the periods of the day. Thus making education system progressive, the MDM programme has brought a great social change.

Keywords: Mid-day-Meal, Sarva Shiksha Mission, Malnutrition.

INTRODUCTION: School age is active growing phase of childhood. Primary school age is a dynamic period of physical growth as well as of mental development of the child. Research indicates that health problems due to miserable nutrition status in Primary school age children are among the most common causes of low school enrolment, high absenteeism, early dropout and unsatisfactory classroom performance. The present scenario of health and nutritional status of the school-age children in India is very unsatisfactory. The National Family Health Survey-3 (NFHS-3) data show that 53% of children in rural areas are underweight children in the country was 53.4 in 1992; it decreased to 45.8% in 1998 and rose again to 47% in 2006.

Under nutrition in childhood was and is one of the reasons behind the high child mortality rates, observed in developing countries. Chronic under nutrition in childhood is linked to slower cognitive development and serious health impairments later in life that reduce the equality of life of individuals. Nutritional status of children has far reaching implementations for the better development of future generations.

Using the National Family and Survey – 3 data, the UNICEF reported that, 48% children below five years old are under – weight ;38% of children are short for age and 20% are wasted children. According to this report the babies born every year in India are 20% of the whole population and almost 7.4 million of babies are born low – weight per year. In this situation Mid-day-Meal scheme play a pivotal role in the way of the implementation of the universalization of the primary education.

Our country India is the largest developing country. Almost 125 core people live here. More than 70% of them are villagers. The poor villagers and slum dwellers cannot provide proper Nutritious foods to their children. Most of the children suffer from Malnutrition and anemia. Absenteeism, dropout, never enrolment were noticed here. Those who attend the school, tried to run away from the school after the Tiffin break. To check this situation, the govt. of India launched the school Meal programme in 1995 which is called the Mid – day – Meal Programme. The Programme supplies free lunches on working days for children in primary and upper Primary classes in govt. and govt. aided, body, education Guarantee scheme and alternative innovation education centre, Madrasa and Maqtabas supported under Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and National Child Labour Project Schools run by the ministry of labour. This MDM programme serving 12,00000000 children in over 12, 6500 schools and Education Guarantee scheme canters in this country. It is the largest such programme in the world.

In the post independence India Tamil Nadu is the pioneer to launch programme. It is introduced in Tamil Nadu in 1962. This programme, undertook by the Tamil govt. aimed to increase the number of kids coming to school. Chief Minister, Trina k. kamaraj first started it in Chennai.

Later in 1984 the MDM programme was launched in Gujarat but it was discontinued due to various reasons. The Kerala govt. introduced the programme in 1984 and it continued successfully. In 1990 the central govt. provided fund among 12 states to start the Mid – day – Meal scheme. These states are – Goa, West Bengal, Madhyapradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalay, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Karnataka, Tripura, up and Orissa. International aid also supplied to Andhra Pradesh, and Rajasthan entirely to run the Mid – day – Meal Programme in the same year.

But the Mid – day – Meal Programme had been given a complete shape by the Central Government in 1995. The Central Govt. initiated the National Programme of Nutritional support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) on 15th August in 1995 and it was implemented throughout the country in the Academic session – 1997 – 98. In this programme 300calories and 12grams of Protein were supplied for each student. Formerly dry foods like 3kgs of wheat or rice were supplied to the students through rations per month. The Supreme Court ordered on 28th Nov. in 2001 to supply cooked Mid – day – Meal to all govt. and govt. aided primary schools. So, the self – help – groups were given the responsibilities to provide cooked Mid – day – Meal among the children during the Tiffin period. The objective of the programme stated by the honorable court, are

1. Enhancing enrolment of children in schools (specially backwards)
2. Retention and increased attendance.

3. Improving nutritional levels among children.

The following guideline was supplied to the school and the self –help-group to utilize the **Mid-day-Meal** programme for proper Nutrition for each student-

| Food item | Qty for each student (class I-IV) | Qty for each student (class V-VIII) |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Rice /Wheat | 100gram | 150gram |
| Dal | 20gram | 30gram |
| Vegetable | 50gram | 75gram |
| Oil and Fat | 05gram | 7.5gram |
| Total | 175gram | 262.5gram |

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY: Maynaguri is a backward Block in Jalpaiguri district. It is located in the South East Corner of the Jalpaiguri district on the east bank of the river Tista. There are 16 gram panchayat in this block. No Municipality is there. Almost 97% people live in the villages and almost 3% inhabitants live in the Mafsal Town, Maynaguri. There is no big industry in this block. A few tea-gardens located here. Hence almost 95% villagers depend on cultivation. Almost 75% of the villagers are poor. They belong to the BPL and Antodhay classes. They lead their life either depend on cultivation or as day labourers in others house or Tea – garden tea – factories or pulling rickshaws. Some youths forced to migrate temporarily to Kerala, Mumbai or Delhi to earn money. Almost 60% of the inhabitants belongs S.C and S.T community. Less than 25% inhabitants in this block belong to solvent families. The learners are belonging to those poor backward families. Their parents cannot provide proper Nutritious food to them. The children come to the primary schools either half fed or unfed. These children are also forced to work in Tea-shop, Tea-Factories, in agricultural fields or in other's houses as day labourer to make themselves fed. So, a very poor attendance of students is noticed in the primary schools of his block. Being irregular in school classes, they are compelled to leave their studies at an early stage of life. Those who are very eager to continue their studies could not receive the study completely due to their irregular attendance in school. They cannot receive the education completely and hence could not apply their acquired knowledge properly in their practical life.

Being poor, the parents could not earn the required amount of money, need for the smooth running of the family. So, the parents have no other means but send their children to earn money as day – labourer to support their family. Sometimes, they forced to work as a household servant in other's house or in a tea – shop or in a hotel to meet their hunger. In this situation, the Mid – day – Meal programme, introduced by the govt. Plays a vital role to increase attendance in Primary schools in this block and thus reduces the dropout rate of the children. Though there are some problems, faced by the school authority to maintain the Mid – day – Meal programme, there is no debate that this programme has brought a great change in the daily attendance, dropout the (controlling) and in the process of motivation towards teaching – learning of the children of this block.

STATEMENT /DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM: Maynaguri is a backward block in Jalpaiguri. In this block primary schools, the Mid – day – Meal programme was started with the other part of W.B. in the same year. But the cooked Mid-day-Meal was started to supply among the children in 2004. Under this programme cooked Rice, Dal, Vegetables; Egg etc. are supplied among the students in their Tiffin period. So, the students get a chance to meet their hanger and become attentive to the rest of the period of the day Mid – day – Meal helps them to sustain their good health and makes them more interested towards the school activities than to keep themselves at home as they have to remain half fed or unfed at home. The poor parents also become interested to send their children to the schools. They have no bothering about the lunch of their sapling. They feel secure that their children will get proper nutritious foods at the school beside their studies. Thus the Mid – day – Meal programme has brought a positive impact on the society. It enhances the school attendance, check the dropout rates and increase enrolment in the govt. and govt. aided primary schools in this block.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE: There are 207 primary schools, run by the govt. of West Bengal 9Govt.and Govt. aided) in Maynaguri Block. Already surveys had been done by the DPEP and the SSM on the implementation of the Mid – day – Meal scheme in this Block. But no surveys had done by some individual pupil or by some agency. As reported by some primary teachers, the S.I of schools Maynaguri North, South, South – east and West circles and searching the Google, it is found that the Mid – day – Meal Programme has a positive impact on the rural society of this block. Some senior teachers reported that before launching cooked Mid – day – Meal programme in 2004. There noticed poor attendance of children in the govt. and govt-aided primary schools of this block. The average attendance of the students was below 50% during the academic sessions before 2004. Dropout rate was maximum and some wastages earner families show no interest to send their children to school. There found some students who were never enrolled. Instead they remained at home to look after their younger brothers of sisters. Sometimes, they were sent to another's house or shops or Tea – shops to work as day labourer. Few students carried Tiffin with them. A large number of students come to school without Tiffin or taking proper food at home. So, they tired escape from the school at the Tiffin break. Those who could not run away could not concentrate the rest of the periods of the day. After launching the cooked Mid – day – Meal Programme, the number of attendance gradually increased up. This attendance is increased to almost 89% in the Academic session 2015 – 2016. Considering these statements, it can undoubtedly said that the Mid – day – Meal Programme has a great effect on the attendance of the students in the primary schools of this block.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS: Research Questions are a vital part of this study. Here with the help of background of the study I am at answering few questions, which needed to be answered in this dissertation work. These questions are stated below –

- What is the effect of Mid – day – Meal Programme on Attendance of the Primary school students of Maynaguri Block?
- What are the motivations of the primary students towards the school activities after introducing Mid – day- Meal in the schools of this block?
- What are the reactions of the guardians of students regarding the Mid – day – Meal programme in primary schools of the block?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY: The following objectives are formulated for the proposed study –

- To study the effect of Mid – day – Meal on attendance of Primary students of Maynaguri Block.

- ii) To study the motivation of the students in the Primary schools of this block towards school and its activities after the launching of Mid – day – Meal Programme.
- iii) To study the reactions of the guardians of the primary students regarding Mid – day –Meal in schools of this block.

HYPOTHESES: The preposition of a hypothesis is derived from theoretical constructs, previous researches and logical analysis. After observing the problem of the study the following hypotheses are taken to conduct the study-

- i) There will be significant positive effect of Mid – day – Meal on attendance of the primary students in the schools of Maynaguri Block.
- ii) This Programme will reduce dropout rate of the students at an early age.
- iii) The students will be positively motivated by the Mid – day –Meal towards the school curriculum.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY: The study is delimited to the students from class I to class V in the Govt. and Govt. aided primary schools in Maynaguri block for the academic session 2015- 2016.

The study will also be delimited to the collection of responses from the students, teachers and guardians related with the primary school of this block.

STUDY DESIGN: The present study is a descriptive survey study among the primary school children in Maynaguri block. The information are collected from the students, as well as their parents and teachers and the attitude of the students, teachers and the guardians toward the Mid – day – Meal programme was observed.

STUDY SETTING: The study was conducted in selected (sample) Government and Government aided primary schools in Maynaguri Block in Jalpaiguri district (W.B).

STUDY METHOD: Descriptive survey method will be adopted for the present study.

STUDY POPULATION: The present study is conducted in Maynaguri Block. So, all the students enrolled in the Government and Government aided primary schools teachers and guardians are taken as the population.

There are 207 (Two hundred seven) primary schools in this block. In each of the primary schools average 150 nos. of children are enrolled. Hence the population of the study is 31050.

SAMPLE: Systematic sampling method is followed to draw the sample from the targated population. At first the name of the 207 schools are listed Gram Panchayat wise. There are 16 Gram panchayat in this block. Sol, sixteen lists of school are prepared to draw the sample. Then no.3 schools from then top list of each more populated G.Ps (eight) and average number 2 from each less populated G.Ps are taken as sample. Hence the number of school as sample becomes 40. From each of the selected schools 10 numbers of students are selected as sample. So, the sample of the study become $(40 \times 10) = 400$ students. Besides using the systematic sampling method 80guardians and 80 teachers are selected as the sample to collect responses for the study.

TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION: Questionnaires are developed for the collection of data section 'A' is for the students, section 'B' is for the guardians and section 'C' is for the teachers. The Questionnaires are comprised of both open ended and close ended questions.

PROCEDURE OF DATA COLLECTION: Asking the questionnaires, data are collected from the students, guardians and the teachers. 10 students of each selected schools are selected to write the response of the questionnaires through the systematic sampling method. Two guardians and two teachers of each of these schools are also provided questionnaires to write their responses. These questionnaires are collected from them. Their responses are note down in Table and charts for further analysis. Thus the data are collected and organized for further analysis.

DATA GATHERING/ORGANIZING: After collecting the responses using questionnaires, data are gathered/ organized for analysis. These data's are gathered in these following charts.

- **In part – 'A' the questionnaire for the students.** They are asked about their attendance in schools if 'Mid – day – Meal' is continuing and if MOM is stopped for few days. The responses are shown in table No 2.

| Status of MDM | Total Number of Students | | Attend School | | Not Attended school | | No responses | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls |
| Mid – day Meal Continued | 208 | 192 | 187 | 173 | 00 | 00 | 21 | 19 |
| Mid – day Meal stopped | 208 | 192 | 132 | 135 | 56 | 55 | 20 | 12 |

Table No 2.

- In this section, I asked the students if they regularly take Mid – day – Meal their parents sent Tiffin for them. The responses are shown in the following table: (No.3)

| Total Students | | Take regular Mid-day-Meal | | Parents sent Tiffin | |
|----------------|-------|---------------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|
| Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls |
| 208 | 192 | 199 | 185 | | 07 |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|----|--|
| | | | | 09 | |
|--|--|--|--|----|--|

Table No 3.

- The students were also asked if Mid – day – Meal is not supplied during the Tiffin period; they responded that they felt hungry as their parents did not sent anything in Tiffin period. So, they try to escape the school in Tiffin period. The responses are show in the chart below. (Table No 4.)

| Total Students | | Try to escape school | | Not try to escape | | No response | |
|----------------|-------|----------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|-------------|-------|
| Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | B oys | Girls |
| 208 | 192 | 142 | 112 | 34 | 55 | 32 | 25 |

Table No 4.

- **In section 'B' i.e. questionnaire for guardians;** the guardians are asked that what type of attendance, they had noticed in their childhood in the primary schools, before starting the cooked Mid- day – Meal programme and what type of attendance they now notice in the primary schools of their children with Mid – day – Meal programme. The responses are, shown in the chart below with the table no.5.

| Percentage of attendance before launching MDM | Percentage of attendance after launching MDM | Number of Guardian |
|---|--|--------------------|
| 50 - 55 | 95 - 100 | 15 |
| 45 - 50 | 90 - 95 | 20 |
| 40 - 45 | 85 - 90 | 10 |
| 35 - 40 | 80 - 75 | 25 |
| 30 - 35 | 75 - 80 | 10 |

Table No. 5

- Guardians are asked about their attitude on the effect of Mid – day – Meal on the society. The responses are stated below- (Table No 6).

| Nos. of Guardian | | Positive response | | Negative response | | No charge notice | |
|------------------|--------|-------------------|--------|-------------------|--------|------------------|--------|
| Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| 208 | 192 | 142 | 112 | 34 | 55 | 32 | 25 |

Table No. 6

- **In section 'c' questionnaires for teacher's;** they are asked about students attendance during the days when Mid – day – Meal is continuing and those days when MDM was stopped for few days. The responses are shown in the chart below (table no.7) with the help of 'Ogive'.

| Attendance in the presence of MDM | Attendance in the absence of MDM | No. of Teachers |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 95 - 100 | 50 - 55 | 10 |
| 90 - 95 | 45 - 50 | 25 |
| 85 - 90 | 40 - 45 | 10 |
| 80 - 85 | 35 - 40 | 20 |
| 75 - 80 | 30 - 35 | 15 |

Table No. 7

About the motivation towards studies as the impact of the 'Mid – day – Meal' Programme the teachers response differently. This is given in the table no:8.

| Observation | Nos. of teacher's responses | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----|--------|
| | Yes | No | Spoilt |
| Change (positive) | 65 | 12 | 03 |

Table No. 8

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS:

Through out the dissertation work, a lot of findings are noticed. The analysis of data, collected from the students, clearly revealed that Mid – day – Meal has brought a great change in attendance, dropout rate and motivation towards the teaching learning process of the school. The students reported that their classmates attended the school; (boys 86.45% and girls 90.10%) when Mid – day – Meal remained continue. These attendances reduce to 63.46% and 70.31%. if MDM is stopped for few days. Guardians reported average 85% to 90% attendance of students in present situation (MDM programme Continue) and it was average 40% to 45% during the session before launching the Mid – day – Meal programme. The teachers also reported 35% to 90% attendance when Mid – day – Meal is in running condition and this reduces to 45% to 50% when Mid – day – Meal is stopped for few days. So, Hypothesis (1) is selected appropriately that 'Mid –day – Meal has brought a positive attendance in the primary schools in this block'.

From the data analysis of the students it is noticed that 68.26% boys and 58.34% girls confessed that they cannot give proper attention to studies after tiffin period if Mid – day – Meal remain stopped. So, they tried to run away from schools. Almost 21% teachers reported those students are positively motivated towards teaching learning throughout the day if Mid – day – Meal is supplied regularly. Thus the Hypothesis (iii) "The students will be positively motivated by Mid – day – Meal towards school curriculum" proved correct.

81.25% male and 83.33% female guardians' i. e. parents confessed that they cannot nutritious food even adequate quantity of foods to their children. So the children began to work out side; in tea – shops, factories or other agricultural fields to meet their hunger. So, the dropout rate was larger before introducing mid – day – Meal programme. Analyzing of data from the teachers

regarding dropout rate also revealed that in 2003 – 2004 session the dropout rate of children in the govt. and govt. aided primary schools of this block was 11.31% and now in the session 2015 – 16 it reduced to 1.16%. So, the second Hypothesis, 'Mid – day – meal' programme will reduce dropout rate of the student at an early age, proved true.

CONCLUSION: Mid – day – Meal programme is a great step of the govt. for the students of primary and Upper – primary classes. There are some hurdles in the way of its implementations. But its success is far better than the hurdles in the field of education. The backward areas like the Maynaguri Block have great demand of MDM programme to make the elementary education universal. It helps to reduce dropout rates of the primary students in this block in one hand and increases the daily attendance of the students on the other hand. The hungry students get a nutritious meal during the school tiffin period and concentrate the rest of the periods of the day. Thus making education system progressive, the MDM programme has brought a great social change. It more and more motivates the learners towards the school activities. The poor guardians of this block have a great support to the MDM programme. Those who are affluent, send their children to the private primary schools. But the lower middle class and poor parents who are almost 90% of the society of Maynaguri block, frankly confessed the importance of mid – day – Meal programme to the school and also to the learners.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH: In this present study, I cannot cover all the schools of this block. Clear picture about the 'Impact of Mid – day – Meal' be come up regarding enrolment, attendance and other details if more researchers will be done on the same topic.

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