

EVALUATION STUDY ON MID DAY MEAL SCHEME BETWEEN JALPAIGURI MUNICIPALITY (URBAN) & RAJGUNJ BLOCK (RURAL) IN WEST BENGAL

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Abstract: Discrimination in social and economic progress in any civilised society could be cracked by education. Involvement in education does not only increase efficiency, it also helps to lead quality and societal, individual life. Elementary education is the base of our education system. During this elementary period, students are encouraged to think independently and to develop basic values of social life. To achieve this, Government of India made a constitutional right to provide free and compulsory education to all children until the age of 14 in the year 1950. The Midday Meal scheme is one of the major strategies to strengthen. The study was carried out in eighty schools in Jalpaiguri Municipality (urban) and Rajganj (rural) to make a comparative analysis in between rural and urban areas of Jalpaiguri district. Eighty head teachers from each sample area were interviewed. The present study was taken to make a comparative analysis between Jalpaiguri Municipality (urban) and Rajganj (rural) in terms of impact of MDM. The present study shows that impact of MDM has contributed significantly on overall achievement of SSA in Jalpaiguri Municipality and Rajganj block. Majority of the students were satisfied with MDM scheme while parents in rural area perceived that little and insignificant impact of MDM on health of their children, attendance. The researches recommended MDM should be provided with utmost care that student must feel that MDM is their human rights and it can be possible through strong development of social network.

Keywords –Mid day meal. Enrolment, Attendance.

1. Introduction

With a view to enhancing enrolment, encouraging poor children, help them concentrate on classroom activities and simultaneously improving nutritional level among children, the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) was launched on 15th August; 1995. In 2001 the Supreme Court of India has made mandatory to all State Governments to provide Mid- day Meal in the schools. All schools in Jalpaiguri are covered under the MDM scheme. The rural population of Jalpaiguri as per 2011 census 73 percent and scheduled caste (37 per cent) and scheduled tribes (19 per cent) had contributed a significant share in the overall population. While MDM scheme was found to be remarkable but the programme faces some problems. The various reasons for

problems are the absence of children, lack or poor performances of the cook, poor quality of foods, absence of proper kitchen and kitchen shed, deficiency of kitchen devices,etc.

Education and health are closely related for this education and health are viewed as in the light of capability approach, and the conception of poverty has been viewed as “ capability deprivation” by providing an inferior quality of foods to the poor (Laxmi Narayanan,2010). Apart from nutritional effect, sitting together in a launch programme teaches the value of togetherness without discrimination of caste and. The Scheme has much contributed to the children’s well being and future and with adequate resource and quality safeguards midday meal can play a significant role in boosting attendance, eliminating hunger and fostering social equity (Jean Dreze,2003).MDM also found to be very successful in raising enrolment and attendance among children mainly from the economically challenged category with less educated parents (Stephanie Bonds,2012). No doubt MDM plays a more significant role to achieve the goal of UEE. But quite often insects and unhygienic meal put the scheme unwanted by the parents and students. The most distrusting fact is that the quantity of the food is not sufficient and it is much lower than Govt. Guidelines. Enrolment in primary students has increased substantially, but upper primary level’s enrolment has not responded much (ISI, 2013). Repetition of the dull menu and lack of taste do not affect much in attendance and enrolment. Since its inception, MDM has played a very significant role in the universalisation of elementary education. And so despite all flaws, the way to go on MDM is forward and not backward. So, it is highly needed to evaluate the policy.

2. Objectives of the Study

The participation of MDM ensures involvement in elementary education.MDM has resulted preventing classroom hunger, promoting school participation, bridging social equity .But the table 1, revealed that difference in enrolment and beneficiary of the MDM was 14% in Hooghly district, followed by Jalpaiguri (13 percent) and Maldah (12 percent). The meal pattern of the MDM should be such that it provides a nutritional and balanced diet to the students Non-participation in MDM affects active learning capacity. Malnutrition has an impact on UEE in the form of absent in the school which turns into the drop out of school. As most of the children belong to the poor economic family, MDM programme acts as a motivator for the parents with the belief that children will get sufficient food. As 13 percent of the school children not availing the benefits of MDM as per AWP & B 2017-18 (Annual Work Plan and Budget) is a matter of concern in Jalpaiguri district.

Table 1 Children Coverage Vs Enrolment in West Bengal Under Mid day Meal Scheme

Sl. No.	Districts	Enrolment as on 30.9.2016	Average number of children availing MDM	Diff	% Diff
1	2	3	4	5=4-3	6=5/3*100
1	Alipurduar	114651	114069	-582	-1%
2	Cooch Behar	235784	232585	-3199	-1%
3	Dakshin Dinajpur	141343	135403	-5940	-4%
4	Uttar Dinajpur	391477	372005	-19472	-5%
5	Darjeeling	57300	56620	-680	-1%
6	Hooghly	288864	249775	-39089	-14%

7	Jalpaiguri	180361	157800	-22561	-13%
8	Malda	493768	435279	-58489	-12%
9	Siliguri	78628	78183	-445	-1%

Source-AT-4-5 of Annual Work plan & Budget 2017-18, West Bengal

The above study likely to analyse the impact of MDM in Jalpaiguri Municipality(urban) and Rajgung Block(rural) in respect of enrolment, drop out, attendance, study behaviour and also the research work will show the essential elements that govern in promoting MDM.

3. Review of Related Literature

In this division, the researcher has studied many articles, thesis, reports etc. related to research work, but it was decided to select those studies which are directly or indirectly related to the studies

Reetika Khera (2006) expressed her opinion about MDM's achievement and challenges in her paper "MDM in primary schools: Achievement and Challenges". MDM success stories faced some challenges in the urban area partly due to crowding, inadequate and lack of hygiene. The author identified three major infrastructure facilities which remain major challenges for the Govt i) water facilities ii) Kitchen shed and storage facilities iii) cooking and serving utensils. The author concluded that the success of the programme would be possible with the involvement of public and private partnership and regular vigilance by the authority.

Kumar Rana (2006) expressed his views regarding impacts, problems and possibilities of mid-day meal (MDM) in the paper "the possibilities of the mid-day meal programme in West Bengal". In this study, the research team found a different response from different class based on the interview. Majority of SC, ST and other poor people wanted a cooked meal for the children, while other relatively affluent people consider it unnecessary and also harmful to schooling. The major complaints about the MDM were the quality and dullness of the menu. Not only that, inadequate infrastructure, ingredients, low remuneration for the cook raised the problems of MDM.

Savita Kaushal (2009) reported about the status of MDM in Rajasthan and also identified the best practices in the implementation of MDM in the paper "A study of best practices in the Implementation of MDM programme in Rajasthan". The following observations were obtained from the study like appointment of cook by SDMC, washing hands before MDM, etc.

Yawar Hamid and Asmat Hamid (2012) attempted to assess the impact of MDM on attendance, enrolment, drop out of children in primary schools of district Anantnag in Jammu Kashmir. The study was undertaken by interviewed 100 students, 50 parents, 20 teachers and 20 Govt. Officials. The study revealed that MDM has produced a significant positive impact on attendance and drop out in both general and reserved categories. With the MDM, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan also contributed to a great extent for increasing enrolment and decreasing drop out. However, the quality of the food is not satisfactory, and with this financial assistance & supervision and monitoring, the programme is also not adequate.

Janmejaya Samal (2014) discusses public health concern of MDM which requires greater attention from the administration in the paper "Mid-day meal menace in Bihar: The Public Health Concerns of the Tragedy". Death of 23 children after the MDM consumption in Gandaman Dharmasati Primary Schools of Chapra District in

Bihar (2013) was an example of point source epidemic. The report shows that the presence of pesticide in MDM and it is evidenced that lack of proper food surveillance measure.

Tanika Chakraborty and Rajshri Jayaraman (2016) studied the effect of the MDM programme on children learning outcomes in the discussion paper “school feeding and learning achievement: Evidence from India’s Midday meal Programme”. The study based on secondary data from ASER. The MDM helps to increase test score and mathematical ability. The authors found a positive co-relation between MDM exposure and test score. The test score is lower for girls than comparing to boys. The study revealed that MDM has a significant effect on learning achievement with a test score in primary schools, increasing by 18 percent for reading and 9 percent for mathematics

4 Methodologies

The district Jalpaiguri in the state of West Bengal, India is considered for the present study, and it is the largest district of North Bengal. The midday meal is operating in most of the Government Schools only. In Jalpaiguri Sadar 40 schools have been selected for the study. Rajganj rural consists of 12 villages, out of the five villages were selected randomly in the first stage namely Panikauri, Sukhani, Mantadari, Shikarpur and Balaigach. All the selected villages are having a literacy rate between 65 percent to 70 percent. The survey covered five villages in Rajganj Block. Eight primary schools were randomly selected from each village. From each school, one headmaster and an assistant teacher from each school were interviewed.

For the study in Jalpaiguri Municipality, there are 26 municipality wards. Out of these, twelve municipality wards were taken for study, in the first stage. Out of this, twelve municipalities, 3 to 4 schools were selected randomly in the second stage. Here also, from each school, one headmaster and an assistant teacher from each school were interviewed.

Altogether 160 respondents were interviewed for the study. From the data collected from different schools through questionnaire from headmasters and teachers are analysed in respect of each category has been discussed below.

5. Results and Discussion

It is considered essential to see whether the group of teachers in the two sample area significantly differed or not on six variables. Therefore it is attempted to study the significance of difference between the mean performance of Jalpaiguri Municipality (Urban) and Rajganj (Rural) in enrolment, drop out, attendance, improvement in studies, quantity of MDM served and increase in girls’ enrolment towards MDM effectiveness through testing the following hypotheses using Independent sample ‘t’ test for significance of difference between the means and details are presented in the table. The present study attempts to make comparison of Enrolment, Drop out, attendance, improvement in study, quantity of MDM, between Jalpaiguri municipality (Urban) and Rajganj block (rural) according to perception of teachers.

Table 2 Details of 't'test for difference in enrolment, Drop out, attendance, improvement in study, quality and quantity of MDM served between Jalpaiguri Municipality (Urban) and Rajganj (rural)

SL No	Variables	Group Statistics				t value	p value
		Area	N	Mean	Std. Deviation		
1	Increase in enrolment	Jalpaiguri (Urban)	80.00	1.98	0.97	5.223	0.000(HS)
		Rajganj (Rural)	80.00	2.68	0.71		
2	reduction in drop out	Jalpaiguri (Urban)	80.00	2.58	0.69	1.602	0.111(NS)
		Rajganj (Rural)	80.00	2.74	0.59		
3	Increase in School attendance	Jalpaiguri (Urban)	80.00	2.45	0.87	2.419	0.017(HS)
		Rajganj (Rural)	80.00	2.74	0.61		
4	Increase in study behaviour	Jalpaiguri (Urban)	80.00	2.35	0.86	1.211	0.001(HS)
		Rajganj (Rural)	80.00	1.93	0.84		
5	Quantity of MDM sufficient	Jalpaiguri (Urban)	80.00	2.70	0.53	0.871	0.385(NS)
		Rajganj (Rural)	80.00	2.61	0.72		
6	Increase in girls enrolment	Jalpaiguri (Urban)	80.00	2.69	0.67	1.05	0.292(NS)
		Rajganj (Rural)	80.00	2.78	0.52		
		Rajganj (Rural)	80.00	2.852	0.47		

Note-HS-Highly Significant-Significant, NS- Non Significant at 0.05 levels

5.1. Enrolment-Hence there is There is a significant difference for improvement in enrolment after implementation of MDM scheme between Jalpaiguri Municipality(Urban) and Rajganj(Rural).based on the mean score it is found that mean value of the improvement in enrolment of in Jalpaiguri 1.937, and that of Rajganj is 2.35. It means that Rajganj has higher enrolment than Jalpaiguri Municipality.

5.2. Reduction in Drop Out-The p-value is greater than 0.05, Hence there is no significant difference with regard to reduction in drop out .based on the mean score, Jalpaiguri municipality has a lower reduction in drop out (2.58) than Rajganj.

5.3Increase n School Attendance- the p-value is less than 0.05; there is a significant difference with regard to improvement in school attendance. Based on the mean score, Rajgunj block (4.15) have higher improvement in attendance than Jalpaiguri Municipality.

5.4 Increase in study behaviour-Here the p-value is less than 0.05,there is There is a significant difference in the responses teachers for improvement in study after implementation of MDM scheme between Jalpaiguri Municipality (urban) and Rajganj (Rural)

5.5-Quantity of MDM- p-value is more than 0.05, Hence there is There is no significant difference in the responses teachers for the quantity of MDM served between Jalpaiguri Municipality (urban) and Rajganj block(rural)

5.6 Increase in Girls' Enrolment-It is revealed that p-value is more significant than 0.05, hence it is concluded that There is no significant difference in the responses teachers for an increase in girls enrolment after implementation of MDM between Jalpaiguri Municipality (urban) and Rajganj block(rural)

6. Conclusions

The opinion of the teachers in both the sample area indicates that there was an impact of an increase in enrolment and reduction in drop out, increase in attendance after the implementation of MDM. But the ratio of increment was found higher in Rajgunj (Rural) in respect to Jalpaiguri (urban).

The ratio of increment in the children study behaviour in Jalpaiguri was more than Rajganj children's study behaviour. Approximately 60 per cent of teachers in Jalpaiguri was agreed that study behaviour during MDM scheme had increased followed by 32.5 per cent in Rajganj. The opinion of the teachers indicates that there was a different impact of quality of MDM between sample areas. Approximately 75 per cent of the teachers (out of 80) have perceived that that quality MDM is being served in Jalpaiguri (urban) is sufficient. But the ratio of increment was found higher in Rajganj (Rural) was 87.5 per cent. The opinion of the teachers indicates that there was a different impact of the quantity of MDM provided to students. Only 3.75 per cent of the teachers (out of 80) have admitted that that quality MDM is insufficient, being served in Jalpaiguri (urban). But the ratio of was found little higher in Rajganj (Rural) was 13.75 per cent. It was found that 64 (80 per cent) teacher perceived that an increase in girl's enrolment had been affected due to the introduction of MDM in Rajganj followed by 67(83.8 per cent) in Rajganj.

Based on the mean score, in teacher's opinion, Rajgunj (rural) have more perception on increase in enrolment (2.68), reduction in drop out (2.74), increase in attendance (2.74) and increase in girl's enrolment (2.71) than Rajganj.

As the study was restricted to only Govt and Govt aided schools in Jalpaiguri Municipality and Rajganj block. The most obvious limitations of this study is The sample size may not adequately represent the true and fair picture of the study. Clean water (water purifier), sanitation (washing hands), and hygiene need to be promoted vigorously. Headmaster, cook and other community members must look into the matter and duty of them to establish the fact that MDM is sanitary and safe. The separate dining hall is very much necessary to make sense that MDM is their right. With this hygiene issues, nutritional standards of the menu should be checked monthly. Till date, all the stakeholders are really struggling to run the MDM in schools due to less financial support from Government Agencies. The best option to invite private agencies, corporate along with NGOs to contribute sufficiently in MDM scheme's against such contribution from corporate, Government may allows rebates or reliefs to the corporate.

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