

MID DAY MEAL IMPLEMENTATION IN STATE OF GUJARAT

SUJANKUMAR KANUBHAI PATEL^{*}, DEEPAK PANCHOLI^{**}

ABSTRACT

Mid Day Meal scheme is implemented for each and every child of all Govt. and Govt. Aided schools studying in primary and upper primary. It is heartening to note that the Mid Day Meal scheme is running successfully in Gujarat and all important parameters show a steady and significant improvement.

INTRODUCTION

A Mid Day Meal scheme was introduced in Bangalore city in 1946, to provide cooked rice and yoghurt. In 1953, Uttar Pradesh government introduced a scheme, on voluntary basis to provide meals consisting of boiled or roasted or sprouted grams, ground-nut, puffed rice, boiled potatoes or seasonal fruits.

The significant objectives of the programme were: to protect children from classroom hunger, to increase school enrolment and attendance, improved socialization among children.

The impact of mid-day meal was positive on students' academic achievement but no systematic effort has yet been made to look into the role of factors, on which impact of midday meal is related to academic achievement with a comprehensive manner.

OBJECTIVES OF THE MID DAY MEAL SCHEME, THE GOVERNMENT OF GUJARAT

- To provide wholesome food having requisite calorie & protein content to school children of Primary, Upper Primary & NCLP Schools

(Govt., Govt.-Aided, Local body, Gujarat schools).

- To increase enrollment and retention and also to curb dropouts
- To reduce cast prejudices, class inequality & gender gap (in-education)
- Thrust on right to life & right to food to disadvantaged section of the society
- To provide nutritional support to the school children in drought affected areas during summer vacation.

MDM Organization Structure in Gujarat

The concept of Mid-Day Meal has a long history in India. In 1925, a Midday Meal programme was introduced for children belonging to poor socioeconomic status in Madras corporation area.

In 1928, Keshav academy of Calcutta introduced compulsory Mid-Day Tiffin for school boys on payment basis at the rate of four annas per child per month. In 1941, in parts of Kerala, the school lunch programme was started, which in 1942 Bombay started implementing a free Mid-Day Meal scheme.

^{*} Research Scholar, Madhav University, Pindwara, Sirohi, Rajasthan.

^{**} Department of Education, Madhav University, Pindwara, Sirohi, Rajasthan.

Correspondence E-mail Id: editor@eurekajournals.com

In the 1950s, many states came to introduced mid day meal programmes with the assistance of different international agencies like UNICEF, FAO and WHO. International voluntary/ charity organizations like catholic Relief service (CRS), Church world service (CWS), and CARE, USA's Meals for Million, etc, also came forward to assist in these programmes. During 1958-59, an Expanded Nutrition programmes (ENP) was introduced jointly by FAO, WHO, UNICEF and Government of India was introduced, and subsequently expanded into Applies Nutrition programme (ANP).

It was also suggested that a participatory monitoring effort on the food for work programme on a pilot basis should be taken up in a few districts to study the outcome by indentifying proper indicators and involving civil society participatory networks that exist at the grass roots level. The broad features of the programme were:

- Coverage of primary school children in a phased manner to cover 9.45 crore children by the end of the seventh plan; the estimated expenditure for the whole plan being Rs.4000 crore.
- Provision of uniform nutrition for the children at 300 calories per day with 12-15 grams of proten (100 grams of cereal, 10 grams of dal and 5 grams of edible oil).
- Expenditure per child, including expenses on administration to be 60 paise.
- FCI to release food grains at Central Issue prices; the value of which to be counted against central assistance to state, estimated central assistance for the year 1989-90 being reckoned at Rs.623.50 crore state shall make arrangements for pulse and oil.
- Linkage of implementation of the scheme with existing civil supplies distribution system.
- Supply of rations to be in kind and deliveries thereof be made through state/cooperative agencies.

- Central assistance to be limited to 50 per cent.
- Each state to have its own specific scheme with appropriate infrastructure and delivery systems subject to laid down parameters.
- Funds to be provided, for the programme not to be construed as part of the outlay under the Head Education.
- Funds required for the programme to come from provisions earmarked for poverty alleviation scheme.
- States should evolve suitable logistics and make arrangements for cooks, helpers, administrations, supervision and monitoring.
- Community involvement in the implementation of the scheme.
- At the State level the programme is administered by the Commissioner (MDM), who is supported by one Joint Commissioner, two Assistant Commissioners.

At the District/Municipal level, the Collector/ Municipal Commissioner is in over all charge and is assisted by one Deputy Collector/ Mamlatdar, and a team of three support staff, including deputy Mamlatdar (Administration), Deputy Mamlatdar (Inspection) and Deputy Mamlatdar (Accounts).

At taluka (block) level the taluka Mamlatdar is in overall charge of the program, supported by a full-time deputy Mamlatdar (Administration) and Deputy Mamlatdar (Accounts). At school level Organizers, Cooks and Helpers are appointed to cook and distribute the mid-day meal. School Management Committee is also expected to supervise the overall working of scheme.

CONCLUSION

- To prevent classroom hunger and promote school participation thereby enhance enrolment, retention and attendance; foster social equality and gender equity and simultaneously improve nutritional levels among children.

- Through the Mid Day Meal Scheme, the Government of Gujarat is helping underprivileged children by providing them with a healthy, balanced meal that they would otherwise have to work for. The meal is an incentive for them to continue their education. It helps reduce the dropout rate to an enormous extent and increases classroom attendance.

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