



National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid Day Meal Scheme) in Bhoranj block of Hamirpur District: An Evaluative Study

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this paper is to study the enrolment, retention and attendance of students in primary schools and the quality of mid day meal in primary schools at Bhoranj block of Hamirpur district. The result of the study reveals that, there was increasing trend of enrolment among the boys and girls students in primary schools. Further, the quality of the mid day meal was good in visited bhoranj block primary schools of Hamirpur district. There was also regularity in receiving the food grains and variety of the mid day meal menu for the students in the schools.

Keywords: MDM, Quality, Evaluative study.

1. INTRODUCTION

The aims of education changes from time to time according to the needs of the society. In modern time the main aim of the education is allround development of the child which includes physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, psychological and social development etc. Man learns something everyday and every moment. His entire life is a continuous process of education. Society produces educated persons in order to pass on civilization and culture to the next generations. So, the education is very important for the progress of both the individual and the society. It is very difficult to give one single definition to the term "education". The reason is that education is a wider and its concept is dynamic. It has passed through many ages and stages in the process of evolution and at every stage it has a different meaning according to the conditions then prevailing. The concept of education is still in a process of evolution and that process will never come to an end and it must continuously grow and change. The concept of education is like a diamond, which appears to be a different, when seen from a different angle. India became one hundred and thirty fifth country to make education a fundamental right of every child when it came into the force on 1st April 2010. Article 21A of the Indian constitution declares that the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such a manner

as the state may determine. This provision was added by the 86th Constitutional Amendment act of 2002. Thus this provision makes only elementary education a Fundamental Rights and not higher or professional education.

1.1 NATIONAL PROGRAMME OF NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT TO PRIMARY EDUCATION (MID DAY MEAL SCHEME)

Government of India has initiated various schemes such as District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Operation Blackboard, Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP), Total Literacy Movement (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan), Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV), National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education, National Program for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) etc with the aim of universalization of education and to attract children towards the education. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is being implemented as India's main programme for universalizing elementary education with overall goals consist of universal access, retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in education and enhancement of learning levels of children.

Among these various schemes, the Mid day Meal Scheme is the one of the most popular name for school meal programme in India. It provides lunch to children of elementary classes as on free of cost on all working days. The key objectives of the scheme are protecting children from classroom hunger, increasing school enrolment and attendance, improved socialization among children belonging to all castes, addressing malnutrition, and social empowerment through provision of employment to women. With a view of enhancing enrollment, retention and attendance and simultaneously improving nutritional levels among children, the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE), popularly known as Mid-Day Meal Scheme, was launched as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on 15th August 1995. It was initially launched in 2408 blocks in the country, however in the year 1997-98 the NP-NSPE was introduced in all blocks of the country.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF MID-DAY MEAL SCHEME

The objectives of the Mid-Day Meal scheme are:

Improving the nutritional status of children in classes I – VIII in Government, Local Body and Government aided schools, and EGS and AIE centres.

- i. Encouraging poor children, belonging to disadvantaged sections, to attend school more regularly and help them concentrate on classroom activities.
- ii. Providing nutritional support to children of primary stage in drought affected areas during summer vacation.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Baskran (1995) studied the “The Impact of Mid Day Meal Programme among SC Students of Primary Schools in Thiruvallur Taluka Tamil Nadu” and found that introduction of Mid Day Meal Scheme was one of the important factor for improving enrolment of SC students in schools. The decrease in number of drop outs was below 10 percent and good nutrition helped SC students to learn better in

their classroom. National Council of Educational Research and Training (2000) reported that the noon meal scheme of Tamil Nadu and supply of food grains in Uttar Pradesh have helped to improve the enrolment and retention of girls in schools. Misra and Behera (2004) conducted a study on “Child nutrition and primary education: a comparative study of Mid Day Meal Programme in Orissa and Tamil Nadu”. They found in their study that between pre-MDM period (1989-90 to 1994-95) and post- MDM period (1995-96 to 1998-99) there was an increase in percentage rate of attendance, retention and decline in drop-out rate in post-MDM period in Orissa as compared to Tamil Nadu, where all the parametric functions of education were on the favourable side due to long existence of the programme (since 1956). However, in spite of the educational development realized through Mid Day Meal Programme several socio-cultural administrative managerial and financial factors affected the Scheme's effectiveness in both States.

Thorat and Lee (2004) conducted a study on discrimination against *dalits* within the MDMS and the Public Distribution System in Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. They found that in those areas where accessibility for *dalits* is higher there was less prejudice and exclusion on the basis of caste. Mathur (2005) studied on, “Situation Analysis of Mid Day Meal Programme in Rajasthan” and revealed that introduction of menu based Mid Day Meal Programme has positively impacted enrolment and daily attendance of children. Cooked mid day meal has reduced classroom hunger especially those belonging to underprivileged sections. Cooked mid day meal has also contributed to the cause of social equity as children from different social groups sit together to take the meal. Sixty seven percent of the parents interviewed and opined that the quality of mid day meal is satisfactory. Further the eighty five percent parents felt that the Scheme should continue.

Noronha and Samson (2005) conducted a survey on twelve Mid Day Meal schools in Delhi and found that school children in all the schools are getting cooked food. Fifty percent of the parents said that they were happy with the quality of meal. Impact on attendance is likely to be more on girls who come without breakfast.

Ravi (2006) indicated from the records at the Department of Public Instruction that school attendance has improved since the introduction of the Mid Day Meal Scheme by 2-10 percent across Karnataka. Kumar (2009) revealed that, there is decline in average enrolment of students in government primary schools of Himachal Pradesh. The enrollment of students partially increased only to a little extent in comparison to last five years. Average quality of raw material provided by is provided by FCI well in time. Sahoo (2014) found in his study that school enrollment has increased after implementation of MDM from 72 percent to 100 percent. Molla & Sheikh (2015) revealed in their study that the Mid-day Meal programme helped to increase the school attendance children in primary level. So it may be mentioned that the quantity of the school attendance children in primary level is increases but quality of the students falling down due to lack of management of this concerned programme. Boriwal and Mittal (2019) conducted a study on Perception of beneficiaries of Mid Day Meal Programme and its impact on general health of girls students. The results of the study showed that girls have positive perception about MDM, satisfied with the quantity served and usually consume all the food served to them. Further, the

study showed that majority of girls had fair appearance, normal conjunctiva, normal colour of hair, nails and tongue. There was no problem of night blindness, no visible thyroid, normal gums, normal lips, normal white teeth and bright skin in the girls. Overall the study showed that there is a positive impact of MDM on the general health of girls and it provides the better nutrients to them.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the enrolment, retention and attendance of students under the Mid Day Meal Scheme in primary schools at Bhoranj block of the Hamirpur district.
2. To study the quality of mid day meal in primary schools at Bhoranj block of Hamirpur district.

3.1 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study was delimited to following aspects:

1. Out of the five blocks of Hamirpur district, only the Bhoranj block was selected for the study.
2. The study was further restricted only to Government primary schools. Government aided primary schools and EGS/AIE Centers were excluded from the study.

3.2 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

1. **MDM:** MDM stands for Mid Day Meal programme. It is a free school meal programme designed to improve the nutritional status of school age children nationwide.
2. **Quality:** Quality talks about the standard of something as measured against other things of a similar kind, the degree of excellence of something. In MDM we talk about the exact amount ingredient and variety prescribed by government of India to be given to children in MDM scheme.
3. **Evaluative Study:** Evaluative study means seeking views of headteachers/Incharge, about the running of Mid Day Meal scheme as per guidelines. In the present study evaluation of National Programme of Nutritional Support to elementary education (Mid Day Meal Scheme) has been considered in terms of enrolment of students, retention of students, attendance of students and improvement of nutritional status of students of primary school stage.

3.3 SAMPLE

In the present study, head-teachers and Incharge of Mid Day Meal of primary schools of Bhoranj block of Hamirpur district constitute the population. There are ninety seven schools in the Bhoranj block of Hamirpur district. Firstly, a list of ninety seven primary schools is arranged from the Deputy Director Office, Primary Education, Hamirpur. The researcher selected the forty primary schools out of the ninety primary schools through the random sampling. For this purpose, researcher used toss/coin method of random sampling. From the list of schools researcher tossed the coin for each of the school. If the there is head, then school is selected and rejected the schools for tail. The researcher tossed the coin till the forty schools are not selected.

3.4 RESEARCH TOOL

Keeping in view the nature of the study a questionnaire for the Incharge, Mid day meal is developed by the researcher.

3.5 STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE

In the present study, percentage analysis was be used to analyse the data.

4. RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 STUDENTS ENROLMENT AT GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The students enrolment of boys and girls students of bhoranj block of Hamirpur district is given below in the table 1.1 from the year 2014 to 2019:-

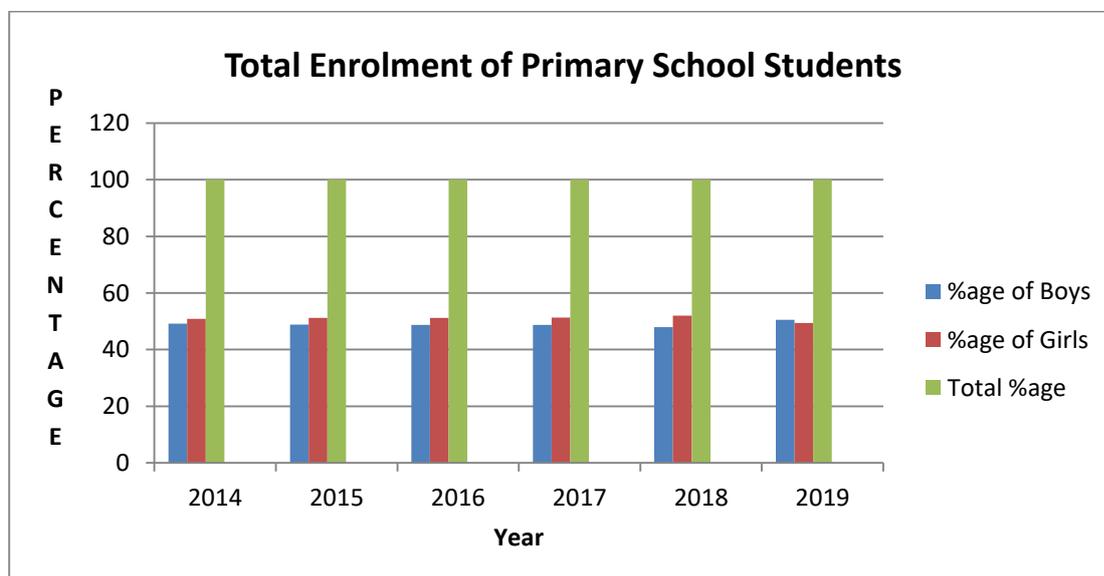
Table 1.1
Students Enrolment of the Government Primary Schools

Year	Boys	Percentage	Girls	Percentage	Total
2014	649	49.13	672	50.87	1321
2015	623	48.82	653	51.18	1276
2016	637	48.77	669	51.23	1306
2017	643	48.71	677	51.29	1320
2018	661	47.97	717	52.03	1378
2019	696	50.54	681	49.46	1377

From the table 1.1 it is clear that the total enrolment of students in government primary schools was 1321 in 2014 out of which, 649 were boys and 672 of girls. The total enrolment showed the declined trend in 2015, out of total enrolment 1276, boys were 623 and 653 of girls. Further the table showed that, there were 1306 students, in which 637 were boys and 669 of girls in 2016 and out of 1306 students, 643 of boys and 677 of girls in 2017. In 2018 total enrolment was 1378, out of which 661 were of boys and 717 of girls, whereas in 2019 out of 1377 the total enrolment, 696 were of boys and 681 of girls.

The graph 1.1 showed the total boys and girls students enrolment with the total percentage enrolment of the girls primary student.

Graph 1.1



The blue, red and green colour column showed the percentage enrolment of boys, girls and total percentage of the primary school student respectively. It is clear from the graph that , the percentage enrolment of boys student was 49.13, 48.82, 48.77, 48.71, 47.97 and 50.54 percent from the year 2014 to 2019 respectively.

However, in case of girls student percentage enrolment was 50.87, 51.18, 51.23, 51.29, 52.03 and 49.46 percent from the year 2014 to 2019 respectively.

From the above analysis it may be noted that:

1. The total enrolment of the students in government primary schools showed the declined trend from 2014 to 2015, however the total enrolment increases from the year 2016 to 2019. In case of the total boys students the enrolment showed the declined trend from 2014 to 2015 and it showed the increasing trend from the year 2016 to 2019. The total enrolment of girls student it showed the declined trend from the year 2014 to 2015 and increasing trend from the year 2016 to 2018. However, it showed the declining trend from the year 2018 to 2019.
2. The percentage enrolment of boy's student showed the continuous declining trend from the year 2014 to 2018, while it increases in the year 2019.
3. The percentage enrolment of the girl's student showed the increasing trend from the year 2014 to 2018, while it decreased in 2019.

4.2 ATTENDANCE OF THE STUDENTS IN GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOLS

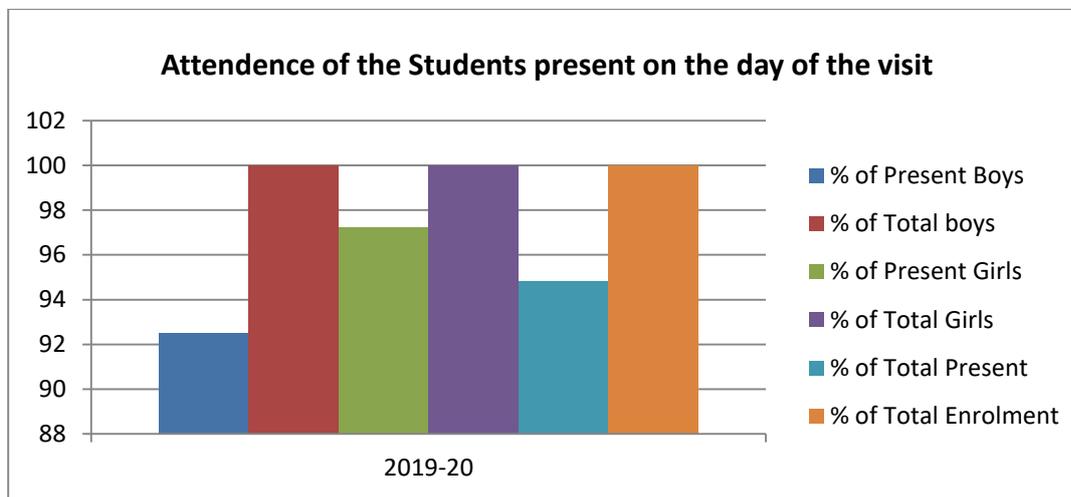
The attendance of the students in the government primary schools is taken on the day of visit, it is given in table 1.2 as:

Table 1.2

Attendance of Government Primary Schools students

Year	Boys (Present in the school)	% age	Total Boys	Girls (Present in the school)	% age	Total Girls	Total (Present on the day)	% Age	Total Enrolment
2019	644	92.52	696	662	97.21	681	1306	94.84	1377

The table 1.2 showed that, there were 1377 enrolled students in sampled government primary schools, out of which, 1306 were present in the schools on the day of visit. Further, 644 boys students were present out of the 696 students, whereas 662 girls student out of the 681.



The above graph 1.2 showed that, there were 97.21 percent girls and 92.51 percent boys present on the day of visit. Out of the total enrolment 94.84 percent of the students were present on the day of the visit.

On the above analysis, it may be noted that:

The attendance of the girls student was more than that of the boys student on the day of visit. However, 94.84 percent of the total students were present on the day of visit in the sampled schools.

4.3 DROPOUT STUDENTS IN THE GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL

As per record taken from the sampled schools there was no single dropout student in these schools.

4.4 QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF MID DAY MEAL SCHEME IN GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The table 1.3 showed in brief the while children are getting hot or mild cooked meal, quality of food grains and cooked meal and quantity of cooked meal.

Table 1.3
Quality and Quantity of the Meal

Sr.No.	Variables	Frequency	Percentage	
1.	Serving cooked meal			
	a.	Hot	26	65.00
	b.	Mild Hot	14	35.00
	Total		40	100.00
2.	Rating of quality of Food Grains			
	a.	Good	29	72.50
	b.	Average	11	27.50
	c.	Low	00	0.00
	Total		40	100.00
3.	Rating of quality of Cooked meal			
	a.	Good	31	77.50
	b.	Average	09	22.50
	c.	Low	00	0.00

	Total	40	100.00
4.	Quantity of cooked meal		
	a.	Sufficient	40
	b.	Insufficient	00
	Total		40
			100.00

From the above table it may be inferred that:

1. Most of the schools were satisfied with the quality and quantity of food grains provide to the schools.
2. Sixty five (65) percent of the schools provide the hot cooked meal to the students, while thirty five (35) percent of the schools mild hot cooked meal to children. Out of sampled schools 72.50 percent of the schools rated the quality of the food grains as good, whereas 27.50 percent of the schools rated it as of average quality.
3. In case of quantity of the meal 77.50 percent of the schools favoured that their children got the properly cooked meal with good taste and proper mixture of the ingredients, whereas 22.50 percent of the schools rate it as of average. Hundred percent of the schools were satisfied with the quantity provided for the food grains.

4.5 SOCIAL AND GENDER EQUITY IN GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF BHORANJ BLOCK OF HAMIRPUR DISTRICT

The table 1.4 provide the information for sitting arrangement of the children, while serving the meal in government primary schools along with the gender equity.

Table 1.4

Sitting Arrangement of the Children

Sr. No.	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1.	All children sit together in verandas	40	100.00
2.	In the Classroom together	00	0.00
3.	Separate class-wise	00	0.00
4.	Boys and girls separately	00	0.00

It is revealed from the table 1.4 that in all forty (40) sampled schools the sitting arrangement of the schools was in the verandas of the schools, where all the students sit together to take the meal without any gender, caste or religious issue.

From the above analysis, it may be said that:

1. There was in hundred percent of the sampled schools the students take the meal together with other students in verandas without any gender and caste issue. Further, there was also no issue of

any objection and unhappiness of parents for sharing the meal with other students of different caste and creed etc. in the hundred percent of the sampled schools.

4.6 PARENTS EXPRESSION FOR SHARING THE MEAL WITH OTHER STUDENTS

The table 1.5 showed the parents objection and unhappiness while sharing the meal with the children of other caste, creed and religion.

Table 1.5

Sr. No.	Items	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Have parents ever objected to share the meal of their children with the children of other caste, creed and religion?		
a.	Yes	00	0.00
b.	No	40	100.00
2.	Have children from different castes ever expressed unhappiness of sharing the meal with the children of other caste, creed and religion?		
a.	Yes	00	0.00
b.	No	40	0.00

The above table 1.4 described that there was no such issue of objection and unhappiness of sharing the meal with other caste, creed and religion.

From the above analysis it may be interpreted that:

1. There was in hundred percent of the sampled schools the students take the meal together with other students in verandas without any gender and caste issue. Further, there was also no issue of any objection and unhappiness of parents for sharing the meal with other students of different caste and creed etc. in the hundred percent of the sampled schools.

4.7 REGULARITY IN DELIVERING FOOD GRAINS TO THE SCHOOL

1. Hundred percent of the sampled schools were receiving the food grains regularly on the time and also they maintained the one month buffer stock of the food grains in their schools. There was 72.50 percent of the schools were receiving the food grains at their doorsteps, while 42.50 percent of the schools are not receiving the food grains at their steps.

4.8 VARIETY OF THE MENU

1. There was in hundred percent of the schools, where display of weekly menu of the meal on the notice board. In 35.00 percent of the schools menu was decided by the department of education, in 42.50 percent of the schools by the head of the schools and by the teachers of the schools in 22.50 percent of the schools.
2. In hundred percent of the schools there was variety in the daily meal provided to the children.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 It may be concluded from the above study that, there is a little increase in the percentage enrolment of boys students from the year 2014 to 2020, whereas in case of the girl students it showed the declined trend of enrolment. Apart from this, it was found that, the percentage attendance of girl students was more than that of boy students. There was no dropout student in visited schools.

5.2 In most of the schools the quality and quantity of the mid day meal served to the schools was as per norms and good. There was no social discrimination among the students on the basis of caste, gender and religion etc. Further, there was no objection of any parent to take the meal collectively for their ward in the school.

5.3 There was regularity in receiving the food grains in the schools and variety of the mid day meal menu for the students.

6. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE MID DAY MEAL SCHEME AT THE PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL

There are some suggestions to improve the mid day meal scheme in government primary schools-

6.1 There should be a post of clerk to maintain the record and registers of the mid day meal in every government primary school.

6.2 This scheme should be maintained in such a way that teaching-learning process should not be disturbed.

6.3 There should be adequate staff or increased the staff in government primary schools, so that scheme as well as the teaching-learning process should not be disturbed.

6.4 There should be mandatory participation of local bodies members to keep eye on the mid day meal scheme.

6.5 Mid Day Meal Scheme should be handed over to any responsible local agency like Gram Panchayat, Mahila-Mandal or NGOs which may implement the Scheme and maintain the whole records.

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