



## A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF MID-DAY MEAL IN THE PROGRESS OF THE CHILD IN ACADEMIC AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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### **Abstract:**

The Mid-Day Meal is a welfare scheme funded by the government of India, which offers free cooked meals to students in primary and upper primary schools, aiming at improving nutritional status and school enrollment. This program is also known as “noon-meal program.” Supply of one supplementary meal is the main purpose of this program. Thus, in the proposed study the investigator thought of investigating the impact of Mid-Day Meal (MDM) in the progress of the child in physical and academic development among the students of two lower primary schools of mid-day meal of Chabua district, Dibrugarh, Assam. Descriptive survey methods have been used in the study for obtaining pertinent and precise information concerning the current status of the phenomenon and whatever valid general conclusions from the fact observed. A total of 50 students from various classes of lower primary level were taken as a sample. And for collecting the data, a self-prepared questionnaire was used as a tool. Moreover, after analyzing the data collected, the investigator reflected on the areas or aspects where the students are suffering and has tried to give certain measures or suggestions to cope up with the problems and adjust with it accordingly in a proper manner without any problematic situation for the benefits of the students so that they can be able to lead a better life to improve the personality. Various programs have been established in order to overcome such problems but mid-day meal program has been one of the earliest supplementary nutrition programs in the country which has nutritional as well as educational objectives.

**Keywords:** *academic, child, development, impact, mid-day meal, physical.*

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## 1.1: INTRODUCTION:

“Education is the manifestation of divine perfection already existing in man”

.....Swami Vivekananda

Education plays a vital role in the overall development of a person. Education is a process of initiating the child into the way of life. It is concerned with the overall development of the individual which includes physical, mental, aesthetic, cultural, ethical, intellectual, social, spiritual and vocational development which means education helps in the overall personality development of an individual. A child always has some kind of rough idea of a language which is being aided by the presence of the language acquisition device (LAD) in the brain of every child or individual for that matter. This again brings the idea of acquiring the basics of a particular language to what Chomsky (1965) has rightly summed up saying, “Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance”.<sup>†</sup> Chomsky also believed in the competence of an individual considering the linguistic ability saying that it is precise skill which is acquired by the learners while learning a particular language which makes a particular learner differentiate between the correct grammatical way of speaking and an incorrect grammatical way of speaking. In the words of Lydia White, “the major task for the L1 acquirer is to arrive at a linguistic system which accounts for the input, allowing the child to build linguistic representations and to understand and produce language”.<sup>‡</sup>

According to the National Programme of nutritional support to Primary Education the central government of India has sponsored a new National Programme which is commonly known as mid-day-meal scheme. It was launched as a centrally sponsored scheme on 15<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>†</sup>Chomsky, Noam. (1965). *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, The M.I.T. Press, p 3.

<sup>‡</sup> White, L. (2003). *Second Language Acquisition and Universal Grammar*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p 34.



august 1995. Children are generally the future citizen of a nation. Childhood is the primary stage of human life. During this period, behavior pattern and habits are formed. The function of the school is to help in the all-round development of the child. It is the school system which is to fit the requirements of the child and not otherwise. Primary school education has many aspects including the educational atmosphere. The child gets his first lesson in discipline, cooperation and group feelings. The child is made to realize effectiveness of nutritional food of their domestic life.

For the peraphysical development of the school, student nutritional support is very important and to cover children studying in Education Guarantee Scheme (E.G.S.) and alternative and innovation education (AIE) Centre, drought affective during summer vacation and importance of enrolment, attendance and learning levels of children and enrollment and regularity of attendance especially those belonging to disadvantaged section. Its chief motto is to boost 'Universalization of Primary Education' by increasing enrolment, retention and attendance and simultaneously impact and nutrition of student from class I-V. In the year 2001, mid-day-meal scheme was announced under which every child in every government school should be provided with prepared meal with a minimum 300 calories of energy and 8-12gram protein per day for a minimum of 200 days. In October 2007, the scheme was intended to cover children of upper primary classes (i.e. class VI-VII).Mid-Day-Meal provides school meals, which acts as a strong incentive for parents to send their children to school and help to build nutritional foundation that is essential for Childs intellectual development and physical well-being. Education plays a vital role in the development of human potential. The state governments are spending considerable portion of their limited resources to provide educational facilities in each and every sectors of the country. As its chief motto is to boost Universalization of elementary education it appears to be far and elusive due to improper socio-economic factors prevailing in the society.

Most of the children from low socio economic background suffer from improper nutrition more often them dropout from schools at an early age which directly affects their personality development. Various programmes has been established in order to overcome such problems but mid-day meal program has been one of the earliest supplementary nutrition programs in the country which has nutritional as well as educational objectives. The Mid-Day Meal is a welfare scheme funded by the government of India, which offers free cooked meals



to students in primary and upper primary schools, aiming at improving nutritional status and school enrollment. This program is also known as “noon-meal program.” Supply of one supplementary meal is the main purpose of this program. Thus, in the proposed study the investigator thought of investigating the impact of Mid-Day Meal (MDM) in the progress of the child in physical and academic development among the students of two lower primary schools of Chabua, district of Dibrugarh, Assam. Descriptive survey methods are used in the study for obtaining pertinent and precise information concerning the current status of the phenomenon and whatever valid general conclusions from the fact observed. For the proposed study, all total of 50 students from various classes of lower primary level have been taken as a sample. And for collecting data, a self-prepared questionnaire has been used as a tool. Moreover, after analyzing the collected data, the investigator reflects on the areas or aspects where the students are suffering and tries to give certain measures or suggestions to cope with the problem and adjust accordingly.

### **1.2: NEED OF THE STUDY:**

Mid-day meal is one of the major and important schemes in the primary school. It has been found that the economic conditions of many of our school children are not good and they come from a poor family. Also, most of the students are below poverty line and so they are deprived from the primary school education and other facilities in their life. Therefore, mid-day meal scheme is considered as an important scheme in primary school stage. A healthy and cheerful school climate helps in the proper development of both mental and physical health of the students. Mid-day meal programme is perceived as a major means to impart positive habits among the children and also in educating them on the importance of health, sanitation, and socialization. It is also seen as a factor for economic support to poor parents and educating them about the value of education instead of sending their children for manage daily earnings. Most importantly, it is aimed to facilitate and increase the school participation among the underprivileged children which would lead to their educational as well as economic upliftment. Moreover, the mid-day meal programme promises to provide each child one third of the daily nutrient requirement in the form of cooked meal to combat his/her food nutritional deficiencies. The mid-day meal programme is the India’s second largest food security programme. For the children and it is perhaps the largest food security programme in the



world. Therefore, this study is prepared to see the impact of mid-day meal scheme in the progress of the child in academic and physical development of the children's of Chabua Anniruddha Dev School and Deudhai LP School.

### **1.3: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:**

In the past, although fair amount of research was done, they appeared to be one-dimensional in nature as they did not encompass the various effects in a whole hearted manner. Major findings of the review related to the influence Mid-Day meal in the progress of the child in academic and physical development are given below:

1. Prof. Amarty Sens's Pratichi Trust: A study in Birhum District, cooked Mid-Day Meal program in West Bengal, 5<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2005.

The main objectives were-

- a) Effect of mid-day meal.
- b) To find out the impact of mid-day meal.
- c) To find out the teachers' attitudes toward the scheme.

The major findings are-

- i) It is a positive intervention in eliminating classroom hunger.
- ii) Mid-Day-Meal made positive intervention in Universalization of Primary Education by increasing enrollment, attendance of the children.
- iii) It has narrowed social distances.

2. National Council of Educational Research and Training(15<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2005):National Council of Educational Research and Training latest report learning achievement of students at the end of class V inferred that children covered under MDM Program have higher achievement level than those who were not covered under it. It further stated that MDM is a better managed program than many other schemes.



3. Nielson (2007)- In his study Mid-Day-Meal Program for school children, Akashayaptra- unlimited Food for life' reported that enrollment of girls had improved more significantly than boys and school attendance rate had improved by 8.2% in Jaipur. Mid-Day Meal Program had reduced the dropout rates and improved the retention rates in all higher classes. Around 85% of heads of the schools and teachers reported that classroom performance of children had improved.

4) Hadi (2009) found that Mid- Day Meal scheme introduce by the congress government for school going children is shoeing positive results in Aurangabad in Maharashtra. In Aurangabad alone, the scheme is currently running in about 296 government aided schools. Almost 24,411 students from the first to fifth grade and 6025 students from the sixth to eight grade are the beneficiaries special care is also being taken to provide wholesome food. The National Program of Nutritional Support to primary education (commonly known as Mid-Day Meal schemes) one of the world's largest nutritional program which covers more than one million schools.

5. Priyanka Jalal and Neena Sareen(2018)-Title- A study to assess the knowledge about mid-day meal scheme in Bikaner district of Rajasthan.

Findings: from the study it has been found that most of the school children, parents, as well as teachers belonged to medium level of knowledge regarding mid-day meal scheme. They had good knowledge about the duties of helper followed by timing and frequency of serving meal with proper hygiene, menu of mid-day meal and roles and responsibilities of teachers whereas less number of respondents knew about the daily diet requirement of a child, year of start and state, as well as revised guidelines of mid-day meal scheme by government of India.

6) Neha Singh(2019): Title: Evaluation of mid-day meal programme on grass root level in India.

Objectives of the study: To increase the nutritional level of the school going children to enhance the educational attainment of the children, to retain the children in the school for a long period of time, to develop the process of socialization.



Findings of the study: The MDM (Mid day meal) in the form of NP-NSPE has become not only a nationwide program but also a national programme. The studies reviewed indicated that though the programme was started with very noble objective of providing nutritious meal to the younger most generation of the nation in order to attract towards the primary education, the achievement of the objective was partial. MDM (Mid day meal) has positive impact on enrolment rate and attendance rate of school children and become a measure to attract students towards the school and attend the classes. Parents and children were satisfied with the mid-day meal program on the contrary, some parents and children were not happy and satisfied with the quantity and quality of the mid-day meal programme. Nutritional status of school children's can be improved by providing healthy diets to them properly. This scheme benefited 140 million children in government assisted schools across India in 2008, strengthening child nutrition and literacy. In a country with a large percent of illiterate population with a high percentage of children unable to read or write, governmental and non-governmental organizations have reported that mid-day meal scheme has consistently increased enrollment in schools in India. One of the main goals of school lunch program is to promote the health and well-being of the nation's children.

7. Nidhi Sinsha(2019):Title of the study: Mid- Day Meal: A detailed study of Indian States.

Objectives:

- i) To study how infrastructure facilities are related with each other and to Mid-day meal.
- ii) To study the inequality in availing of mid-day meal in rural and urban areas, among boys and girls among income and social groups.

Findings:

From the study it is concluded that there is no direct and significant relation between infrastructure facilities and mid-day meal. Spatial inequality is observed in terms of children availing mid-day meal. But there was no sign of inequality or discrimination practice against girls, rather mid-day meal has boosted girls' enrolment and attendance. It was found that mid-day meal is more popular in rural areas of India. The prevailing inequality in availing of Mid-Day Meal is mostly work of space. Therefore, "it matters where you live." This is because



governance issues really have upper hand in success and failure of Mid- Day Meal in any state or region. Caste has small roles to play in the programme at all India level. The picture may vary at rural and urban level for which study is not conducted. But class wise variation in availability of Mid- Day Meal is observed. High income group have low probability of availing Mid- Day Meal in comparison with low income group.

8. Lipikajyoti Dowerah(2020)Title- implementation of Mid- Day Meal Scheme: A study on government Primary School of Tinsukia.

Objective- to study the implementation of the Mid- Day Meal Scheme in Government primary schools of the Tinsukia District of Assam.

Findings: The result showed that Mid-Day meal scheme is playing an important role in reducing classroom hunger of students. But the functioning of the mid-day meal scheme in many surveyed school is not by the guidelines of the scheme provided by the government particularly in respect of the timely supply of grains, storage facility of grains and plates for distribution of meal to the children.

### **1.4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

The methodology is an important part of a research work employed by an investigator. In the proposed study, descriptive survey method is used. It is highly important because first-hand information will be gathered through it in a well-organized manner without any discrimination. It is an organized attempt to analyze, interpret and report the present status of a social institutions, group or area.

Population - A population refers to any collection of specified group of human beings or of non-human entities such as objectives, institutions etc. Population states all elements, individuals or units that are selection criteria for a group to be studied and from which a representative sample is taken for detailed examination. The present study deals with the childrens' of Aniruddha Dev. School and Daudhai LP school, Chabua.

Sample of the study – In the proposed research, purposive sampling is used to select the sample as it will be selected arbitrarily and the researcher will use own judgment in selection.



Tools used – There are large number of tools and techniques available for the collection of data in research work. In the proposed study following tools will be used-

i) Interview schedule- Interview schedule involves the collection of data through direct verbal information between the interviewee and interviewer. Interview is a conversation carried out with the definite purpose of obtaining certain information by means for the spoken word. Here. data are collected through interview schedule.

ii) Questionnaire- This method acts as a great course or a facility for the collection of data from the school. A questionnaire consists of a variety of questions printed or typed in a definite order on a form, the respondent has to answer these questions on his own. Questionnaire has unique advantage and properly constructed and administered. It may serve as a most appropriate and useful data gathering device in a research project. Questionnaire administered personally to groups of individuals have a number of advantage. The person administering the instrument has an opportunity to establish rapport, to explain the purpose of the study, and to explain the meaning of items that may not be clear. In questionnaire directions are clear and complete, important terms are defined, each questions deals with a single idea, all questions are worded as simply and as clearly as possible, and the categories provide an opportunity for easy, accurate, and unambiguous responses. Questionnaire is, therefore, made to collect data from the respondent.

iii) Observation- Observation is more natural way of gathering data. It is recognized as the most direct means of studying people of watching them in action as they express themselves in various situations and activities. In this study, data is also collected through observational method.

iv) Data collection: Data collection is an important part of the research process. In this study, the researcher has used questionnaire and interview schedule for collecting the data. In the study, the researcher had an informal visit at AnniruddhaDev School and Deudhai LP school, Chabua and collected the data properly.



## 1.5: FINDINGS:

After collecting the data, the findings of the study can be summarized in the following ways-

### **Anniruddha Dev School-**

In this essay, the investigator has tried to present a vivid picture of the present mid-day meal scheme of Anniruddha dev school of Chabua district, Dibrugarh and reported data and information which were collected on the basis of questionnaire. Those were accordingly analyzed. In this school, the investigator has found that the mid-day meal scheme could reach their objectives and it has a deep impact on the academic career of the child. According to the data, it has been found that the school is playing a very important role and the scheme mid-day meal has its impact on the nutritional status of the child because the school is situated in the rural area of Chabua block. Some of the important key findings are as follows-

- i) The overall attendance of the students increased due to this program.
- ii) It has also been found that due to this program the academic and nutritional status of the students have increased.
- iii) The students are more willing to come to school and attend the regular classes.
- iv) From this program some of the important daily habits in our day to day life such as eating, hand wash cooperation, sharing etc.
- v) In this school all the students are in favor of continuation of Mid- Day Meal scheme.
- vi) The workers who are involved in cooking the meal maintains a hygienic environment so that the students can be able to acquire proper healthy foods in the school.
- Vii) It has also been found that there is proper understanding among the parents regarding the mid-day meal scheme and they support the scheme because it has become an essential part of the students as it increases the nutrition and academic status of the students systematically.



### **Deudhai LP school-**

According to the investigators observation, the school is very sincere and the school authority have been doing their duties very properly. They have their own playground, proper kitchen facilities for mid-day meal. And the investigator personally talked to the school authority and has got positive response and views about the scheme. Therefore, according to the data gathered, it has been found that although in the initial stage the response was not good but gradually it has its positive impact for the betterment of the students' academic welfare and for their nutritional forms. In the present study, the investigator has analyzed and compared that both the school possess a positive result although during the initial stage its result was not proper but with time it has improved its impact in the academic career of the child and the nutritional status of the child has improved because both the school is situated in the rural areas as their parents could not provide proper facilities to their children. Therefore, they are very much thankful to the mid-day meal scheme of government to introduce such an effective and meaningful concept. Some of the key findings from this school regarding mid-day meal program are as follows-

- i) From the survey it has been found that most of the students are able to concentrate more on study after taking mid-day meal.
- ii) It has also been found that mid-day meal program helps to improve the mental and physical health of the students.
- iii) According to most of the teachers, mid-day meal scheme is helpful in implementation of U.E.E at upper primary stage.
- iv) Moreover, according to some of the parents they told that their children's are learning some of the important habits such as- sharing, cooperation, moral values etc.
- v) It has been found that mid-daymeal program is very much useful and important for the students because it has tremendous improvement in the academic status and nutritional status of the students.



vi) All the parents, teachers and students are in favour of continuation of mid-day meal scheme for the better development of the personality of the students so that they can be able to adjust themselves in any situation and in any circumstances.

### 1.6: CONCLUSION:

The purpose of the study is to know about the impact of mid-day meal in the academic career and nutritional status of the child. The investigator has selected two schools of Chabua, Dibrugarh district for the survey and had done a comparative study between both the schools. From the study, it has been found that the students' academic career is in progress and they are able to get nutritious food from them as per their requirements. The school authorities are very much sincere and they are utilizing the scheme very properly for the betterment of the child's future. Therefore, it is very necessary for having more facilities like mid-day meal scheme for the welfare of the students, to have a bright future. Thus, from the research it can be concluded that mid-day meal aims to avoid classroom hunger, increase school enrolment, increase school attendance, improves socialization among castes, address malnutrition, empower women through employment. The mid-day meal program helps to change the mindset of the children's which leads to change in the mindset of the parents and hence of the community about education and nutritional aspects of the children. Community leaders/school development committee members play a major role under this program and encourage the rural families to give education to their children by enrolling their children in the school. The mid-day meal program helps in improving the nutritional status of school children, with its proper implementation and functioning such as updating the menu, good infrastructure facilities, maintenance of mid-day meal attendance and other records, keeping good quality of the meal, drinking water and separate water facilities.



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