

IMPACT OF MID –DAY MEALS PROGRAMME ON STUDENT’S ENROLMENT AND DROPOUT AT PRIMARY STAGE IN HIMACHAL –PRADESH

Shivani Nagpal

(Associate Professor) Dept. Of Teacher Education, KLB DAV College for Girls, Palampur, Himachal Pradesh, India

Abstract

The study was conducted to find out the impact of mid-day meals programme on student’s enrolment and dropout at primary stage in Himachal Pradesh. Therefore, ‘Descriptive Method of Research’ was used for conducting the present study. And to obtain data for the present study, the procedure of multi-stage sampling was followed. At the first stage, three districts viz. Kangra, Chamba, and Mandi district out of the twelve districts of Himachal Pradesh were selected on the basis of their literacy rates i.e. Kangra amongst the highest literacy rates, Chamba amongst the lowest and Mandi district lies in the middle among the twelve districts of the state. At the second stage, 188 government primary schools were selected for studying student’s enrolment and drop-out (from year 2001 to year 2011). The data collected through school Information schedule for student’s enrolment and drop-out was tabulated separately for each year from 2001 onwards. The information collected through school information schedule was put to percentage analysis to give meaning to the data. It was interpreted that mid-day meals programme has not significantly influenced the student’s enrolment and drop-out at primary stage in Himachal Pradesh.

Keywords: Mid-day Meal Programme, enrolment, drop-out, primary stage.



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INTRODUCTION

In a world shrinking fast into a global village characterized by knowledge, technology and industries taking off at top speed and information highways opening up new vistas of prospects, education is increasingly being perceived as a stake of crucial significance, capable of modifying the economic scenario and transforming the dream of millions of human beings for a better and higher quality of life into a reality. education is a process which drags a person from darkness, poverty and misery by developing his individuality in all its aspects - physical, mental, emotional and social. Education is a process of human enlightenment and empowerment for the achievement of a better and higher quality of life. It is said to be the third eye of a man. In the life of a human being, education starts right from the birth of the individual and continues till the death of the individual. Formally, education of a child starts from elementary stage. . Elementary education in India means eight years of schooling from

the age of six. The Government of India has made elementary education compulsory, free and a basic fundamental right. But, the goal of Universal Elementary Education in India has not been achieved till now despite a number of programmes and schemes being launched. This is because of the persistent poverty and various prejudices prevailing in the Indian society. It is a never denying fact that neither a child that is hungry, nor a child that is ill can be expected to learn. Hence, to eradicate the problems of malnutrition among young children, a centrally sponsored scheme National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (commonly known as Mid-Day Meals Programme) was initiated with the aim to cover all students from class I-V in Government, as well as Government aided schools.

NATIONAL PROGRAMME OF NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT TO PRIMARY EDUCATION OR MID DAY MEALS PROGRAMME

National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education commonly known as the Mid Day Meals programme was launched as a centrally sponsored scheme on August 15, 1995. Its objective was to boost “Universalization of Primary Education” by increasing enrolment, retention and simultaneously impacting on nutrition of students in primary classes. The mid day meals programme is intended to give a boost to universalization of primary education by increasing enrolment, retention and attendance and simultaneously impacting on nutrition of students in primary classes. The basic philosophy behind the scheme is to provide nutritional food to the primary students so as to rope in the out-of-school children and to ensure universalization of primary education.

MID DAY MEALS PROGRAMME IN INDIA: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW.

Mid Day Meal in schools has had a long history in India. In 1925, a Mid Day Meal Programme was introduced for disadvantaged children in Madras Municipal Corporation. By the mid 1980s three States viz. Gujarat, Kerala and Tamil Nadu and the UT of Pondicherry had universalized a cooked Mid Day Meal Programme with their own resources for children studying at the primary stage. . By 1990-91 the number of States implementing the mid day meal programme had increased to twelve, namely, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh. By the year 1997-98 the NP-NSPE was introduced in all blocks of the country. It was further extended in 2002 to cover not only children in classes I-V of government, government aided and local body schools, but also children studying in centres run under the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and innovative Education (AIE)

Scheme. In keeping with the promise made in the budget speech of 2004, the NP-NSPE, introduced in 1995, was revised in September 2004 to provide cooked mid day meal with 300 calories and 8-12 grams of protein to all children studying in classes I – V in Government and aided schools and EGS/ AIE centres.

MID DAY MEALS PROGRAMME IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

The programme of mid day meals was launched in the state of Himachal Pradesh as a centrally sponsored scheme in 1996-97. Initially, un-cooked food grains (rice) @ 3 Kgs. per month per student, were provided to the children of class 1st to 5th, with 80% attendance for 10 academic months in all the government/government aided primary schools of entire State, till May 2003. The hot cooked meal programme was introduced in the state in the phased manner. In the first phase, hot cooked meals were being provided w.e.f. 22nd May, 2003 in tribal areas of the state covering 583 government primary schools. In the second phase, the scheme was extended to non-tribal areas of the state w.e.f. 1st September, 2004 in which all the remaining government and government-aided primary schools were covered. The scheme was extended to upper primary stage to cover all the students (classes VI to VIII) of all the middle units of govt. middle /govt.-aided middle / high / senior secondary schools of the state w.e.f. 1st July, 2008.

Hunger, we feel sometimes, is the worst tribulation of being poor. Not knowing where the next meal is coming from day after day is a fear not many of us reading this have experienced. But, unfortunately millions do, everyday. For parents, nothing brings them down to their knees like a hungry child at home who refuses to drink water again and again for breakfast, for lunch and for dinner. The challenge for us in the country has been to ensure fewer and fewer children go to bed hungry. The Supreme Court of India in one of its landmark decisions linked a feeding programme to the government's quality education programme. This was to encourage poor families to enroll their children in government schools and thereby enable them to guarantee at least one square meal a day. Called as MDMS, all State Governments in the country have to ensure that every child coming to a government school gets one wholesome meal for lunch on school days. Nutrition Support to Primary Education popularly referred to as Mid Day Meal programme (MDM) is considered as a means of promoting improved enrolment, school attendance and retention.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the impact of mid day meals programme on enrolment of students in primary schools of Himachal Pradesh from year 2001 onwards.
2. To assess the impact of mid day meals programme on drop-out rate at primary stage in Himachal Pradesh from year 2001 onwards.

LITERATURE REVIEW

CARE-India (1977) reported that the mean percentage of attendance increased. Absenteeism had not only decreased but the mid-day meals scheme had increased the enrolment rate by 4%.

Diwan (1992) revealed that provision of free text books and MDM has not drawn expected results or have not been utilized at all. He admitted that these programmes have, to a large extent, brought improvement in the general health of the children resulting in decreasing the drop-out rate and thus, contributing to the increase in enrolment and retention among children. Srama et. al (1994) undertook a study in the state of Andhra Pradesh to assess the impact of the MDM programme and indicated improved attendance, increased retention rate with reduced dropout rates, and a marginal improvement in the scholastic performance. Ambasht and Rath (1995) found that teacher attendance, homework and mid day meals were found to be positively related to tribal students' enrolment.

Ed. CIL (2002) undertook a study on "role of family, community and school factors in improving retention and achievement level of disadvantaged children" and it was reported that training imparted to VEC members was helpful in enhancing enrolment and retention of disadvantaged children in their respective schools. Naik (2005) has reported sharp rise in enrollment, particularly in rural areas due to mid day meals scheme. The programme has had a positive impact on teacher absenteeism.

METHOD OF THE STUDY

'Descriptive Method of Research' was used for conducting the present study.

SAMPLING

To obtain data for the present study, the procedure of multistage sampling was followed. At the first stage, three districts viz. Kangra, Chamba and Mandi districts, out of total twelve districts of Himachal Pradesh were selected. The selection of these districts was made on the basis of their literacy status i.e. Kangra among the districts having highest literacy rates, Chamba district is among the districts having lowest literacy rates and Mandi

district lies in the middle among all the twelve districts of the State on the basis of their literacy rates.

At the second stage, 188 government primary schools were selected by the researcher on her own convenience for studying students' enrolment and drop-out (from year 2001 to year 2011). Out of these primary schools, 80 primary schools were from Kangra district, 68 were from Mandi district and 60 schools were situated in Chamba district.

RESEARCH TOOLS DEVELOPED

In order to ascertain the impact of Mid-Day Meals programme on students' enrolment and drop-out in government primary schools, school information schedule was developed by the researcher herself.

The information regarding students' enrolment and drop-out from the year 2001 onwards in the government primary schools was collected from respective school records with the help of concerned teacher incharge.

In order to ensure the validity of the school information schedule, the expert assistance of school heads, teachers and teacher educators was solicited.

STATASTICAL TECHNIQUE USED

The information collected through school information schedule was put to percentage analysis to give meaning to the data.

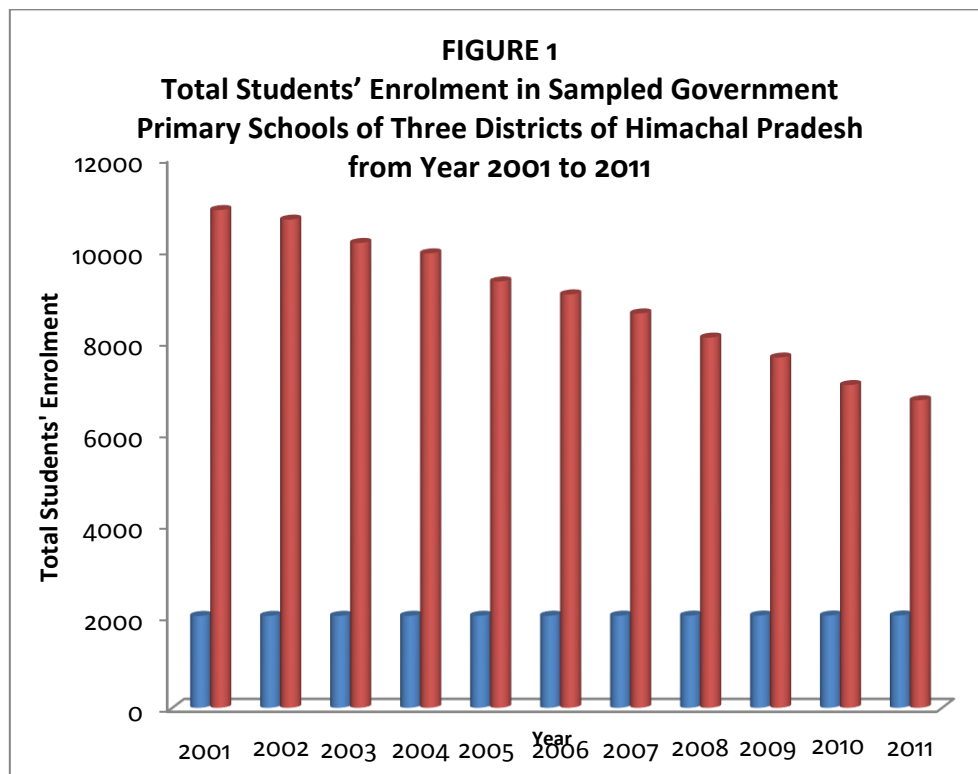
ANALYSIS OF DATA

For studying the impact of mid day meals on students' enrolment at primary stage, the relevant data on students' enrolment were obtained from concerned school records of sampled 188 government primary schools (where mid day meals are provided to the students. These data were obtained from the year 2001 onwards i.e. after inception of mid day meals in the state of Himachal Pradesh so that it may be ascertained that to what extent there had been change (growth or decline) in students' enrolment in government primary schools on account of provision of mid day meals. The students' enrolment (from class I to class V) from the year 2001 onwards along with its percentage change (from year 2001 to year 2011) in three sampled districts of Himachal Pradesh is given in table 1:

TABLE 1
Students' Enrolment in Government Primary Schools of Three Sampled Districts from
Year 2001 onwards and Percentage Change from Year 2001 to Year 2011 (Base Year
2001)

Year	District-wise Students' Enrolment (Class I to Class V)			
	Kangra (N = 80)	Mandi (N = 68)	Chamba (N = 40)	Total (N = 188)
2001	5589	3055	2221	10865
2002	5467 (-2.18)	2935 (-3.92)	2254 (+1.49)	10656 (-1.92)
2003	5217 (-4.57)	2780 (-5.28)	2150 (-4.61)	10147 (-4.77)
2004	5150 (-1.28)	2667 (-4.06)	2102 (-2.23)	9919 (-2.24)
2005	4837 (-6.07)	2519 (-5.54)	1950 (-7.23)	9306 (-6.18)
2006	4680 (-3.24)	2427 (-3.65)	1916 (-1.74)	9023 (-3.04)
2007	4450 (-4.91)	2287 (-5.76)	1870 (-2.40)	8607 (-4.61)
2008	4135 (-7.07)	2102 (-8.08)	1842 (-1.50)	8079 (-6.13)
2009	3829 (-7.40)	2025 (-3.66)	1790 (-2.82)	7644 (-5.38)
2010	3526 (-7.91)	1756 (-13.28)	1761 (-1.62)	7043 (-7.86)
2011	3346 (-5.10)	1666 (-5.12)	1698 (-3.58)	6710 (-4.73)
Change (2001 to 2011)	-2243 -40.13%	-1389 -45.47%	-523 -23.55%	-4155 -38.24%

Note: *Figures in Parentheses indicate percentage change in students' enrolment over the preceding year.*



On the basis of this data analysis and interpretation, it may be inferred that in all three sampled districts, there was a decline in students' enrolment at primary stage from the year 2001 to the year 2011 which is shown in Figure 4.1. The decline in students' enrolment is indicative of the fact that despite of inception of mid day meals programme in government primary schools, the students' enrolment has not increased in primary schools. Hence, it may be interpreted that mid day meals programme has not significantly influenced the students' enrolment at primary stage in Himachal Pradesh.

In order to ascertain the impact of mid day meals on students' drop-out at primary stage, the data on students' drop-out were obtained from respective school records of sampled 188 government primary schools (where mid day meals are served to the students). These data were recorded from the year 2001 onwards i.e. after inception of mid day meals in the state of Himachal Pradesh so that it may be ascertained that to what extent there had been change (growth or decline) in students' drop-out in government primary schools in spite of provision of mid day meals. The number of students (from class I to class V) who had dropped out from the schools before completing their studies at primary level from the year 2001 to the year 2011 in three sampled districts of Himachal Pradesh is shown in table 2:

TABLE 2
Students' Drop-Out in Government Primary Schools of Three sampled Districts from
Year 2001 to 2011

Year	Number of Drop-Outs in Sampled Govt. Primary Schools			
	Kangra (N = 80)	Mandi (N = 68)	Chamba (N = 40)	Total (N = 168)
2001	01	---	03	04
2002	---	---	02	02
2003	01	---	04	05
2004	---	01	03	04
2005	---	01	04	05
2006	02	---	02	04
2007	01	---	---	01
2008	---	---	---	00
2009	---	---	---	00
2010	---	01	---	01
2011	---	---	02	02
Total	05	03	20	28

The year-wise drop-out in sampled government primary schools (either separately for each district or for all three selected districts) when compared with total students' enrolment was observed to be almost negligible. It was further revealed from field observations and discussions with the concerned school authorities that such drop-out children mostly belonged to migrant workers from other states of the country who had shifted to other places on account of their labour works. , it may be said that the inception of mid day meals programme had not resulted in reducing drop-out rate at primary stage to a considerable extent.

CONCLUSION

In all three sampled districts, there was a decline in students' enrolment in govt. primary schools from the year 2001 to 2011. in district Kangra, the enrolment of students in sampled government primary schools has declined from 5589 in year 2001 to 3346 in the year 2011 thereby showing a percentage decline of 40.13% over the period. In case of Mandi district, the students' enrolment in sampled government primary schools has gone down to 1666 in the year 2011 from 3055 in year 2001 thereby indicating a sharp decline of 45.47%. The students' enrolment in sampled government primary schools of Chamba district has declined from 2221 in the year 2001 to 1698 in the year 2011 thereby indicating 23.55% decline in students' enrolment. in the year 2011 which indicates an overall decline of 38.24% over the study period. inception of mid day meals programme in government primary schools, the

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students' enrolment has not increased in such primary schools. mid day meals programme has not significantly influenced the students' enrolment at primary stage in Himachal Pradesh. All the sampled government primary schools (N = 188) of three selected districts had witnessed a drop-out of merely 28 children before completing their primary education. The year-wise drop-out in sampled government primary schools (either separately for each district or for all three selected districts) when compared with total students' enrolment was almost negligible. As the data related to drop-out do not reflect any trend in terms of increase or decrease in number of drop-outs in selected primary schools over the study period i.e. 2001 to 2011. Hence, any conclusive inference regarding impact of mid day meals programme on drop-out at primary stage in Himachal Pradesh cannot be cited. However, it may be inferred that the inception of mid day meals programme had not resulted in significant reduction in drop-out rate at primary stage in Himachal Pradesh.

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