

## VIEWS AND PERCEPTION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS REGARDING DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF MID DAY MEALS PROGRAM IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

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### Abstract

*The study was conducted to find views and perceptions of primary school teachers of 3 districts of Himachal Pradesh regarding different aspects of Mid day Meal Programme. Selection of 200 government primary school teachers was made by employing incidental sampling technique i.e. those teachers who were willing to provide requisite information on the self-developed questionnaire were selected by the researcher to know their views and perceptions about different aspects of Mid day Meals Programme. These 200 government primary school teachers were selected from a total of 188 primary schools situated in three sampled districts. Along with this, various problems related to implementation of this scheme were identified and suggestions were provided for making the scheme more effective. The study will be very helpful to the politicians, bureaucrats, researchers, teachers and all those who are concerned with the mission to develop elementary education and reach the goal of UEE in India.*

**Keywords:** *Mid day Meal Programme, primary stage.*



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## INTRODUCTION

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 commonly known as the Mid Day Meals programme was launched as a centrally sponsored scheme on August 15, 1995. 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.

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. 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 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>, 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. 22<sup>nd</sup> 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.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To study the views and perception of primary school teachers regarding different aspects of mid day meals programme in Himachal Pradesh.
2. To identify problems related to implementation of mid day meals programme in Himachal Pradesh.
3. To formulate suggestions for making mid day meals programme more effective.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Sangwan and Meenakshi (1999) observed that only six schools had provision of mid day meals that include fruits, snacks and milk. It was also observed that mushrooming of pre-schools in dark, small and single rooms with limited toys and equipments are affecting overall growth and development of future human resources.

In an evaluation study report by Planning Department of Govt. of NCT of Delhi in the year 2000, it was reported that mid day meal is not provided during 200 school days in majority of schools. Meals are not provided to the students as per their choice and preference. Timing of mid day meals distribution needs to be reviewed. The infrastructure in form of manpower and storage facility is lacking in many schools. Random inspections and supervision should be carried out by the authorities.

Jaitley (2002) suggested that ill-health is a reflection of the multidimensional link between poverty and social inequality, malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies, and lack of access to critical amenities. Poor socio-economic background has its adverse impact not only on the nutritional status of the children but also leads to a higher dropout and poor school enrolment. Most of the children from the low socio-economic strata of society suffer from malnutrition and often dropout from schools at an early age which adversely affects personality development at a later stage.

Chhetri (2006) reported that a group of school teachers was involved in embezzling mid-day meals meant for students of an impoverished village in a remote tea garden. Residents of Pembong village under the Mim tea estate have complained that students at the primary school have not got midday meal for the past 18 months.

## **METHODOLOGY**

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

### **SAMPLING**

Selection of 200 government primary school teachers was made by employing incidental sampling technique

### **RESEARCH TOOLS DEVELOPED**

To study the views and perception of teachers working in government primary schools regarding different aspects of mid day meals programme, a questionnaire was developed by the investigator herself. This questionnaire was structured in nature comprising of both close ended as well as open-ended type questions.

### **PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION**

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 on the basis of their literacy status. At the second stage, 188 government primary schools were selected by the researcher on her own convenience for studying the availability of infrastructural facilities for mid day meals programme, At the third stage, selection of 200 government primary school teachers was made by employing incidental sampling technique i.e. those teachers who were willing to provide requisite information on the self-developed questionnaire were selected by the researcher to know their views and perceptions about different aspects of mid day meals programme. These 200 government primary school teachers were selected from a total of 188 primary schools situated in three sampled districts.

## ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data collected through questionnaire was analyzed. Here percentage was used for the interpretation of data.

The views of teachers regarding the adequacy of different facilities available for mid day meals programme in government primary schools are given in Table 1

**TABLE 1**

**Views of Government Primary School Teachers regarding Adequacy of Different Facilities for Mid Day Meals Programme**

Item No.	Item Statement / Response	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
1.	Availability of adequate facilities for cooking and distributing mid day meals.		
	(i) Yes	65	32.50
	(ii) No	135	67.50
	If No, facilities which are inadequate:		
	(i) Separate kitchen	121	89.63
	(ii) Cooking Utensils	18	13.33
	(iii) Water Facility	02	1.48
	(iv) Fuel Facility	21	15.56
(v) Mid Day Meals staff	32	23.70	
(vi) Transportation/ Carriage	15	11.11	
(vii) Storage Facility	45	33.33	

**TABLE 2**

**Views of Government Primary School Teachers regarding Quality of Food Grains / Cooked Food Provided under Mid Day Meals Programme**

Item No.	Item Statement / Response	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
2.	Quality of food grains provided by the government.		
	(i) Good	18	9
	(ii) Normal	153	76.50
	(iii) Low	29	14.50
3	Quality of cooked meals provided to the students.		
	(i) Good	52	26.00
	(ii) Normal	127	63.50
	(iii) Low	21	10.50

**TABLE 3**  
**Perception of Government Primary School Teachers regarding Improvement in Nutritional Status of Children due to Provision of Mid Day Meals at Primary Stage**

Item No.	Item Statement / Response	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
4.	Capability of mid day meals in saving children from malnutrition and allied diseases.		
	(i) Yes	92	46
	(ii) No	108	54
	If No reasons there of		
	(i) Low quality of food grains.	69	63.89
(ii) Food grains, vegetables are not cleaned and washed properly before cooking	55	50.92	
5.	Improvement in nutritional status of children due to mid day meals.		
	(i) Yes	76	38.00
	(ii) No	124	62.00
	If Yes, level of improvement.		
	(i) High	21	27.63
(ii) Low	55	7.37	
6	Improvement in physical development due to mid day meals.		
	(i) Yes	68	34.00
	(ii) No	132	66.00

**.Problems related to mid day meal scheme**

The major problems encountered by government primary schools in appropriate implementation of mid day meals programme are listed in Table 4

**TABLE 4**  
**Major Problems faced by Government Primary Schools in Proper Implementation of Mid Day Meals Programme**

Item No.	Major Problems	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
7	(i) Less teachers' strength in schools.	92	46.00
	(ii) Wastage of much time in mid day meals management.	81	40.50
	(iii) Lack of infrastructure for mid day meals.	63	31.50
	(iv) Unavailability of fuel.		
	(v) Low quality of food grains.	52	26.00
	(vi) Storage of food grains.	51	25.50
	(vii) Less staff for mid day meals works.	45	22.50
	(viii) Transportation and carriage problems.	33	16.50

(ix) Less salary of mid day meals workers.	29	14.50
(x) Lack of cooperation from local community.	27	13.50
(xi) No problem faced.	16	8.00
(xii) No Response.	13	6.50
	07	3.50

### Suggestions for Making Mid Day Meals Programme More Effective

On the basis of analysis of views of primary school teachers, suggestions are listed in Table 5 that could be considered by the concerned authorities for making mid day meals programme more effective.

**TABLE 5**

### Suggestions for Making Mid Day Meals Programme More Effective

Item No.	Suggestions	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
8	(i) Appointment of additional teachers in primary schools.	98	49.00
	(ii) Making adequate and timely budgetary provisions.	57	28.50
	(iii) Appointing extra staff for mid day meals work.	51	25.50
	(iv) Ensuring appropriate infrastructural facilities for mid day meals.	45	22.50
	(v) Keeping check on quality of food grains.	36	18.00
	(vi) Proper supervision and follow-up.	21	10.50
	(vii) Involving local community members through SMCs.	17	8.50
	(viii) By bringing proper accountability in system.	14	7.00
	(ix) Bringing attitudinal change among teachers.	09	4.50
	(x) Monitoring of MDM by SMC and local panchayat at regular intervals.	06	3.00
(x) No Response.	11	5.50	

### CONCLUSIONS:

1. A very large majority (89.63%) of teachers indicated that government primary schools are mostly lacking in separate kitchen and storage facilities required for mid day meals programme.

2. A very large majority (76.50%) of govt. primary school teachers pointed that the food grains provided by the government under mid day meals programme are of normal quality. A good majority (63.50%) of primary school teachers ranked cooked meal as of normal quality and about one fourth (26%) teachers considered the same as of good quality.
3. Majority of sampled government primary school teachers (54%) were of the opinion that mid day meals provided to the children is not capable in saving the children from malnutrition and allied diseases. The main reasons cited by the teachers in support of their opinion included; low quality of food grains (63.89%) and non-cleaning and washing of food grains and vegetables before cooking (50.92%).

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