

THE IMPACT OF MID DAY MEAL PROGRAM ON ENROLMENT AND RETENTION OF PRIMARY STAGE LEARNERS IN AMRITSAR DISTRICT

Dr. Ruchi Bhargava*

ABSTRACT

The present study was an attempt to investigate the impact of mid day meal program in Amritsar district in relation to enrolment and retention. The data was collected randomly from the sample of 10 government primary schools and the self made perception scale was administrated on randomly selected 50 teachers, students and parents each. The result reveals that there is a significant increment in enrolment and retention of primary stage learners from session 2010-14.

INTRODUCTION

Indian education can be divided into Primary, Secondary, Senior Secondary and Higher education stages. But it is the Primary education which serves as a base for all other educational stages and even for the whole life. According to World Development Report (2000-2001), "The value and the role of knowledge are different in every culture, but a good basic education is essential in every culture and at all levels." The government of India is desperately want to achieve 100% enrolment at primary level but despite all there are still some problems relating to drop - out rate, low levels of learning achievement and low participation of girls, tribe's and other disadvantaged groups. So, in order to overcome these problems and for the universalization of elementary education, government of India has launched the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan program.

The Mid day meal program is a multi-faceted program of the Government of India under the SSA fold that which seeks to address issues of food security, lack of nutrition and access to education. It involves provision for free lunch on working days for children in primary and upper primary classes in schools, Government Aided, local Bodies, Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternate Innovative Education (AIE) Centers, Madarsa and Maqtabs supported the schools run by Ministry of Labor under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and National Child Labor Project (NCLP). The main aim to introduce mid day meal at primary level was to increase enrolment and retention rate of students. Afridi

(2011) found that the introduction of the mid day meal raised the average monthly attendance of girls in Class 1 by 10 percentage points, significantly closing the gender gap.

Mid day meal also improve nutritional level of students. Singh et al. (2012) finds that the mid day meal acts as a safety net for children in the drought-stricken areas. They find that the negative health impacts of a drought, as nutritional intake falls, are in fact significantly compensated by the mid day meal. Kameshwari's (2007) study reflects that mid day meal has brought a sharp increase in school enrolment and attendance rates across all the states. These result inspired the investigator to investigate the research in Amritsar district.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF VARIABLES

Enrolment: Enrolment means the official recording of the entrance of students in a particular school. In the present study, enrolment means admission of students as a regular candidate in primary classes (I-V).

Retention: According to Merriam Webster (an Encyclopedia) the meaning of retention is "to continue, to use, to hold or to have". In the present study retention means the number of years of retention of the primary stage learners (I-V class) in the primary classes

Primary Stage learners: Primary stage learners mean the students which are learning at primary level of schools. In the present study, learners who are learning from I to V classes in primary schools are taken as primary stage learners.

*Assistant Professor, Khalsa College of Education, Ranjit Avenue, Amritsar (Punjab)

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the impact of mid day meal program on enrolment of the students from class I to V from (2010-2014).
2. To study the impact of mid day meal program on retention of the students from class II to V from (2010-2014).
3. To study the perception of the students, teachers, and parents towards the mid day meal program.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. Mid day meal program will help in significant increase in enrolment of the students from class I to V from 2010-2014.
2. Mid day meal program will help in significant increase in retention of the students from class II to V from 2010-2014.
3. The perception of the students, teachers, and parents towards mid day meal program will be positive and favorable.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study had delimited to 10 primary schools of Amritsar block of Punjab state and study conducted on government primary schools which provide mid day meal.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

Researcher had taken year 2009 as base year for the study and collected data from year 2010-2014 of primary classes (I-V) from school office, Government office and Block Development Office. Perception scale had prepared to study perception of stakeholders (teachers, students and parents) and had administered on them. The collected data from the base year (2009) and successive years (2010-2014) had compared and analyzed and the hypotheses had tested. The interpretation about impact of mid day meal program and result of perception scale had analyzed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1- Mid day meal program will help in significant increase in enrolment of the students from class I to V from 2010-2014.

Enrolment of Students in Class I to V from Session 2010-14 of Amritsar District (Table 1.1)

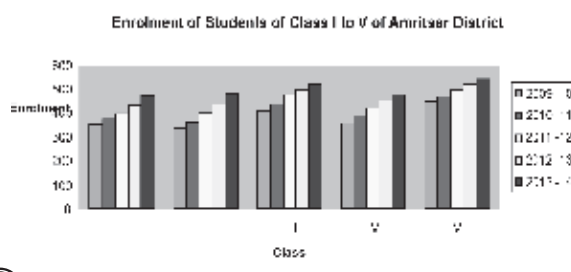
Class	Session	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
I		356	374	400	432	475
	%		5.05%	6.95%	8%	9.95%
II		313	358	405	441	445
	%		7.28%	10.05%	8.88%	0.97%
III		41	440	477	500	522
	%		7.05%	8.40%	4.82%	4.4%
IV		33	390	423	454	480
	%		8.02%	8.46%	7.32%	5.72%
V		47	467	498	521	542
	%		4.7%	6.03%	4.6%	4.02%
Total		918	2039	2203	2348	2504
	%		6.30%	8.04%	6.58%	6.64%

It is clear from exceeding table that in the session 2009-10, the total enrolment of students was 1918. In the session 2010-11, the total enrolment of students was 2039 and the growth percentage of enrolment compared to previous year was 6.30%. In the session 2011-12, the total enrolment of students was 2203 and the growth percentage of enrolment compared to previous year was 8.04%. In the session 2012-13, the total enrolment of students was 2348 and the growth percentage of enrolment compared to previous year was 6.58%. In the session 2013-14, the total enrolment of students was 2504 and the growth percentage of enrolment compared to previous year was 6.64%.

Hence it is clear from above table that mid day meal program had positive impact on student's enrolment status. Each year, numerous students were enrolled from class I to V because of the magnetism in the direction of mid day meal program.

Enrolment of students from session 2009-14 is also presented by the graph.

Graph 1.1



From the exceeding graph, it can be shown that the total enrolment of students had constantly amplified from session 2009-10 onwards every year, as the affirmative impact of mid day meal program. Increase of enrolment in every class shows the positive impact of mid day meal program on student's enrolment status. Therefore, hypothesis that mid day meal program will help in significant increase in enrolment of the students from class I to V of Amritsar district is accepted.

Hypothesis 2- Mid day meal program will help in significant increase in retention of the students from class II to V from 2010-2014

Retention of Students in Class II to V from Session 2010-14 of Amritsar District (Table 1.2)

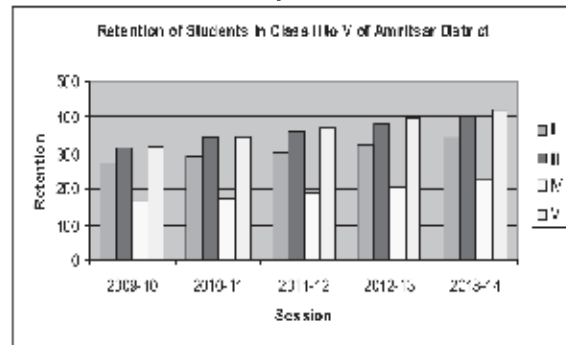
Class/Session?	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
II	277	290	303	325	342
%	5.89%	4.45%	6.60%	5.88%	
III	317	315	359	383	400
%	8.87%	0.05%	6.26%	4.43%	
IV	167	174	139	205	225
%	4.19%	8.62%	8.46%	9.75%	
V	321	346	358	398	425
%	7.78%	6.35%	8.15%	6.28%	
Total	1075	1155	1219	1309	1390
%		7.44%	5.54%	7.38%	6.18%

It is clear from exceeding table that in the session 2009-10, the total retention of students was 1075. In the session 2010-11, the total retention of students was 1155 and the growth percentage of retention compared to previous year was 7.44%. In the session 2011-12, the total retention of students was 1219 and the growth percentage of retention compared to previous year was 5.54%. In the session 2012-13, the total retention of students was 1309 and the growth percentage of retention compared to previous year was 7.388%. In the session 2013-14, the total retention of students was 1390 and the growth percentage of enrolment compared to previous year was 6.18%.

Hence it is clear from above table that mid day meal program had positive impact on student's retention status. Each year, numerous students were retained in class II to V because of the magnetism in the direction of mid day meal program.

Retention of students from session 2009-14 is also presented by the graph.

Graph 1.2



From the exceeding graph, it can be shown that the total retention of students had constantly amplified from session 2009-10 onwards every year, as the affirmative impact of mid day meal program. Increase of retention in every class shows the positive impact of mid day meal program on student's retention. Therefore, hypothesis that mid day meal program will help in significant increase in retention of the students from class II to V of Amritsar district is accepted.

Hypothesis 3- The perception of the students, teachers, and parents towards mid day meal program will be positive and favorable.

DISCUSSION & INTERPRETATION

For determining perception of students, teachers, and parents in relation to mid day meal, the researcher took eight dimensions related to dissimilar aspects of mid day meal program which she would like to evaluate. The main dimensions was- MDM (mid day meal) as wastage of time and resources, MDM as a cause of timetable and teacher's annoyance, Amplify student's attendance and enrolment, quality and quantity of MDM, MDM fulfils student's satisfaction/ quantity, impact of MDM on attendance and retention in school, participation of parents, teachers and administration and suitable condition of hygiene, storage and

serving utensils. Researcher has taken the help of expert to make the scale standardised. The finding was positive and satisfactory, associated to mid day meal which distributed in the schools. 73% of stakeholders want to continue this program for long time duration, rest 20% stakeholders want some positive modification in program and rest 7% stakeholders want to close this program because of its negative consequences on child's health. Therefore hypothesis that, the perception of the students, teachers, and parents towards mid day meal program will be positive and favorable is accepted.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Following are the educational implications of the study-

1. It helps the planners to start new strategies to increase enrolment and retention of students such as increase of funds, proper inspection of program etc.
2. It suggests planners to take equal initiative to develop the program for all the districts and remote areas of different states in India.
3. It helps the planners to plan some new strategies for the improvement of mid day meal program i.e. supply of dry food & fruits, hygienic conditions, proper water and sanitation facilities, proper infrastructure facilities etc.

REFERENCES

- Aiyar, S. P. (1985). Educational and the Traditional Society in India. Green Education Quarterly , III.
- (2003). All India Sample Survey to Estimate the Number of Out of School Children in the Age Group 6-13. Survey.
- Angom, S. (2008). Good Practices of Mid Day Meal Sceme in Manipur. Research Survey.
- Anuradha, D. (2005). Towards More Benefits from Delhi's Mid Day Meal Scheme. Research work, CORD.
- Singh, A. (2012). School Meals as a Safety Net: An Evaluation of the Mid Day Meal Scheme in India. Research work.
- Kameshwari, J. (2007). Education and Nutrition. Yojana
- (2007). Measuring Effectiveness of Mid Day Meal Sceme in Rajasthan, India. CUTS CART in Partnership with The World Bank.
- (2006). Measuring Effectiveness of Mid Day Meal Scheme in Rajasthan: Paticipatory Expenditure Tracking Survey. CUTS CARTS, Jaipur.
- MHRD. (2006). National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education Guidelines. New Delhi.
- (2007). Mid Day Meal Scheme in Madhya Pradesh. Research Survey, National Institute of Public Cooperation & Child Development, Indore.