

Impact of Mid Day Meal Scheme on Enrolment, Attendance and Employment Opportunities- A Case Study of District Pulwama in Jammu and Kashmir

Abstract

Government of India has launched various schemes from time to time in order to remove malnutrition, reduce dropout rate, wastage and stagnation and improve attendance and enrolment among the children up to the age of 14 years. A scheme was launched by government of India, which is largest food scheme in the world called the National Program for Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NPNSPE) popularly known as mid-day-meal scheme. Mid day meal scheme was launched in April 1995 in India with the objective: protecting children from classroom hunger, increasing school enrollment and attendance, improve socialization among children belonging to all castes, addressing malnutrition, and social empowerment through provision of employment to women. The study has been carried out in block Kakapora of district Pulwama in which 20% sample has been taken through multistage random sampling technique. The present study focuses on impact of mid day meal on enrolment, attendance and employment opportunities of different sections of the concerned area. It has been observed that mid day meal has proved positive impact on enrolment, attendance and employment. This study reveals that there is positive impact of mid day meal on enrolment, attendance and employment generation of women especially weaker sections of the society.

Keywords: Midday Meal, Attendance, Enrolment, Pulwama and Employment.

Introduction

Education in every sense is most important fundamental factor for economic development of any country. No country can achieve sustainable economic development without substantial investment in human capital. The impact of investment in education is profound, education results in raising income, improving health, promoting gender equality, mitigating climate change and reducing poverty. Education promotes economic growth and is in turn influenced and induced by economic growth. Economists have long been aware of significance of human capital as a source of economic progress and economic growth. Education in India falls under the control of both the Union Government and the states, with some responsibilities lying with the Union and the states having autonomy for others. The various articles of the Indian Constitution provide for education as a fundamental right. India has made a huge progress in terms of increasing Primary education attendance rate and expanding literacy to approximately two thirds of the population. India's improved education system is often cited as one of the main contributors to the economic rise of India. As India is committed to "Millennium Development Goals" at the international level and "Education for All" at the national level to achieve these goals, the government of India has launched two flagship programmes as Mid-Day Meal and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The MiddayMealScheme is the popular name for school meal programme in India which started in the 1960s. It involves provision of free lunch on all working days. The key objectives of the programme are: protecting children from classroom hunger, increasing school enrollment and attendance, improved socialization among children belonging to all castes, addressing malnutrition, and social empowerment through provision of employment to women.

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Methodology

Present study has been carried out in district Pulwama which came into existence after being carved out from district Anantnag in 1979. The district comprises of 04 tehsils and 08 educational zones. According to censuses 2011, the district comprises 331 villages, 08 villages are un-inhabitant. During the decade 2001-11 there has been a population growth rate 29.30 percent. It is predominantly inhabited by Kashmiri Muslims. Hindus and Sikhs are forming the minority communities.

Educationally the district has not achieved a remarkable progress as compared to other districts of the state. The literacy rate of the district is 65 (male 75.42 and female 53.59) which is lower than both national 74.04 and state level 68. Among the 08 educational zones, zone kakapora has been selected for the present study, because in block Kakapora, mid-day meal is being provided in maximum number of schools as compared to other zones. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. However, in order to make the study result oriented, much emphasis has been laid on primary data for which three field surveys have been conducted to collect the requisite data. The methodology of which is given as under;

The three field surveys conducted in April-June 2014 include Institutional survey and Student and their parents.

The Secondary Data has been Collected from the following Sources

Directorate of School Education, Jammu and Kashmir, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, planning and Development, Department of Jammu and Kashmir Government, District Education Office, Pulwama, Zonal Education Office, Kakapora, Books, Journals, Reports, Magazines, Newspapers, etc.

For field survey, questionnaires were suitably framed in time with the already set objectives. To begin with, a pilot study was conducted with the aim of trying out and finalizing the tools to be included in the questionnaires. After that it was decided to conduct multi-stage survey.

Statistical Tools and Techniques

The data collected has been tabulated and analyzed in consonance with the objectives of the study to draw inferences and conclusions. Appropriate statistical techniques like, simple averages, percentage, bar diagram, pie-chart etc. were used to make the analysis simple and attractive. In addition to above correlation and growth rates have also been calculated. The formula for rank correlation is as

$$\rho = 1 - 6 \left[\frac{\sum d^2 - \frac{1}{12}(m^3 - m) + \dots}{(N^3 - N)} \right]$$

The formula for calculating correlation coefficient is as:

$$r = \frac{\sum xy}{\sqrt{\sum x^2} \sqrt{\sum y^2}}$$

The formula for finding the growth rate is

$$\text{Growthrate} = \frac{Y_t - Y_{t-1}}{Y_{t-1}} \times 100$$

For testing hypothesis t-test has been used and the formula for the test is as:

$$t = r \sqrt{\frac{n-2}{1-r^2}}$$

Mid-Day Meal Scheme in Jammu and Kashmir

MDMS was initiated on the basis of the philosophy that "when children have to sit in class with empty stomachs, they cannot focus on learning". The scheme is important for improving enrolment, attendance and retention of primary school children, while simultaneously improving their nutritional status. The problem of 'out-of-school children, dropouts and malnutrition has a special relevance in Jammu and Kashmir state which has a unique distinction of state subsidization of education at all levels. It is immense to investigate here that to what extent the government schemes are successful in eradicating problems in the society, especially mid day meal scheme as it covers the main objectives of bringing more and more children in the school, reducing hunger and malnutrition, increase attendance and reduction in gender bias.

Organizational Structure

The MDM is centrally sponsored scheme. The centre guidelines allow the state government to manage the MDM through designated nodal department such as education department, department of primary education, rural department and social welfare department. In case Jammu and Kashmir the steering cum-monitoring committee, headed by the chief secretary, monitors the implementation of the program. At the divisional level, the divisional commissioner heads the committee and the deputy commissioner heads it at district level. At the block level the Z.E.O of the concerned zone takes the charge of the meal. The school head master or the assistant teacher is in charge of the programme at the school level. One cook is engaged as a part time staff to cook the meal. As per the guidelines of the scheme Village Education Committee should get involved in the implementation and supervision of the scheme.

Achievements

The scheme was launched in the state from 1st September, 2004. The physical achievements in terms of number of students covered under the scheme over the years are shown as under

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Table A
Year Wise Students, Enrolment and Employment under MDM Scheme in Jammu and Kashmir State

S.No	Years	No of Institutions	Enrolment	Employment	Percentage Increase in Enrolment
1	2004-05	1000	100000	-	-
2	2005-06	12452	1028000	13421	928
3	2006-07	13153	1093000	14642	6.32
4	2007-08	18310	127000	20424	16.19
5	2008-09	19214	1545000	21021	21.65
6	2009-10	20323	1552000	22228	.45
7	2010-11	22053	1554000	24452	.12
8	2011-12	23145	1585000	25461	

Source, education department, J & K

In the launching year of the scheme only one lakh students and 1000 institutions were covered under the scheme and 10.28 lakh students were benefitted with this scheme. It is also clear from the table that highest percentage increase was in the year 2008-09 that is 21.65 percent due to coverage of students up to 8th standard. During 2010-11 a total of 15.54 lakh students are covered under the scheme both at primary and upper primary level .And in the same yr the growth rate is less as compared to the previous level. Also there is tremendous increase in employment of cooks especially women. The number of cooks increased from 13421 to 25461. There are two ways to increase employment opportunities – first by increase in number of institutions and second by increase in the enrolment in the school.

Brief Profile of Educational Institutions of the District

The district pulwama came into existence after being carved out from the district Anantnag in 1979. The district comprises of 04 tehsils and 08 educational zones. According to 2011, the district comprises of 331 villages with total population 5760 out of which 08 villages are uninhabitant. During the decade 2001-11 there has been a population growth rate 29.30 percent it is predominantly inhabited by Muslims. Hindus and Sikhs are forming the minority communities. as for as the educational institutions are concerned, the district consists 505 primary schools, 268 middle schools, 52 high schools, 30 higher secondary's, 4 government degree colleges and 1 university. Besides these government institutions, the district have number of private schools and B.Ed. colleges. Educationally the district has not achieved a remarkable progress compared to other districts of the state. The literacy rate of the district is 65 (male 75.42 and female 53.59) which is lower than both national (74.04 %) as well as State level (68 %). The mid day meal scheme in district pulwama was launched in 2004-05 in all primary schools and mid day meal was extended upto the 8th standard from 2007-08 in all educational zones. A year wise cooking cost of mid day meal is shown in the table 1

Table - 1
Year Wise Cooking Cost of MDM in District Pulwama (Rs. In lacs)

S.No	Year	Primary	Middle	Total
1	2004-05	9.19	-	9.19
2	2005-06	51.39	-	51.39
3	2006-07	101.17	-	101.17
4	2007-08	118.51	-	118.51
5	2008-09	102.46	53.1	155.56
6	2009-10	98.62	58.55	157.17
7	2010-11	79.26	58.09	137.37

Source, C.E.O. Pulwama

As is evident from the table that from 2004-05 to 2009-10 there has been continuous increase in costs with every passing year but in the year 2010-11 these costs were low compared to previous two years, it is due to summer unrest which took place in the valley in three consecutive years i.e. 2008, 2009 and 2010. The government schools remain closed during unrest and meal was not served at all.

Table - 2
Block Wise Cost Structure of MDM in District Pulwama from 2004-05 to 2010-11

S.No	Block	Cooking Cost	Percent
1	Pulwama	90.81	13.05
2	Kakapora	81.38	11.71
3	Pompore	81.62	11.74
4	Awantipora	75.10	10.81
5	Tral	48.00	6.80
6	Tahab	108.82	15.56
7	Shadimarg	126.20	18.14
8	Loorgam	84.14	12.09
	Total	696.07	100

Source, C.E.O Pulwama

The table reveals that the highest costs were incurred in block Shadimarg and the lowest in block Tral .It was observed during field survey that in block Tral there is a good number of private schools .While as in block Shadimarg number of private schools is less as compared to other blocks of the district. Low enrolment in government schools of Block tral is the main reason for low cost structure of mid day meal.

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in March-April 2012. The enrolment of these schools is shown in table 4

The mid day meal scheme has been introduced for the purpose to enroll more and more children in the schools, So far as enrollment is concerned the impact is positive in district pulwama too as is the case with other districts of the state. Table 3 gives the enrolment details in district pulwama.

Table - 3

Year Wise Enrolment in District Pulwama

S.no	year	Students Covered	Rate
1	2004-05	2641	-
2	2005-06	37580	-
3	2006-07	37409	-0.45
4	2007-08	37645	0.63
5	2008-09	52476	39.39
6	2009-10	50094	-4.53
7	2010-11	46850	-6.47

Source: Chief Educational Office, Pulwama

The purpose of the table is to see the impact of MDM on enrolment. It is evident from the table 3 that number of students has increased from 2641 to 46850 in 2004-05 to 2010-11. It is also clear from the table 2006-07, 2009-10 and 2010-11 have shown the negative growth rate. There are two reasons behind such a change one is the mushroom growth of private schools in nook and corner of the district and second is the turmoil of 2008, 2009 and 2010 which forced people to get their ward discharged from government schools and enroll in private schools. But on an average the impact of the scheme on enrolment remain positive.

Primary Data and Its Analysis

The Mid Day Meal programme was launched in India in 1995. In J&K it has been introduced in all government primary schools in 2004 and middle schools in 2008. Just like other district; district Pulwama also introduced the scheme in 2004-05. District Pulwama consists of 08 educational zones namely Pulwama, Kakapora, Pompore, Awantipora, Tral, Shadimarg, Tahab and Loorgam. Among the above mentioned blocks, kakapora was chosen for the study through purposive sampling technique because in comparison to other blocks kakapora has highest number schools running MDM programme. The total number of schools where MDM is being provided is 100 in all. Out of hundred schools 20 schools were selected through stratified random sampling for study. Among these 20 schools 10 are primary, 08 middle are and 2 high schools. Due representation was given to primary boys, primary girls, middle boys middle girls, co-education, girls high school and boys high schools. The data was collected through a well framed questionnaire. The respondents in the schools were mainly students, headmasters, teachers in charge MDM and cooks. The second part of the field work involved interviews of the parents of the selected sample children. 170 parents were selected for this purpose. One of the objectives of the scheme is to increase enrolment at the elementary level. In order to investigate how far and to what extent this objective has achieved, a sample survey of 20 sample schools was carried out in block kakapora

Table - 4

Year Wise Total Enrolment of Sample Schools from Block Kakapora as on 1st Dec. 2013.

Year	Boys	Girls	Total	Growth Rate
2001-02	332	241	573	-
2002-03	339	253	592	3.31
2003-04	344	257	601	1.52
2004-05	341	278	619	2.99
2005-06	350	317	667	7.75
2006-07	373	334	707	5.99
2007-08	361	373	734	3.81
2008-09	403	353	756	2.99
2009-10	420	366	786	3.96
2010-11	405	412	817	3.94
2011-2012	411	420	831	1.17
2012-2013	419	432	851	2.24

Source: Field Survey

It is clear from the above table that the enrolment trends are encouraging in the reference period except three years due to turmoil in the state. The average growth rate before mid day meal was 1.8 among boys and 3.27 for girls and after the scheme it was 2.54 and 6.06 for boys and girls respectively. The increase in enrolment is not only due to MDM, there are other supporting factors responsible for it like educational awareness, education of the parents, school infrastructure and quality of education. It is also clear from the table that enrolment of girls is slightly high than boys. Thus it supports our hypothesis that the scheme is gender neutral. It can also be explained with the help of following diagram.

Kitchen Facilities

For good hygiene a clean and safe kitchen is a necessity. Generally in most of the schools, food is not being prepared in the kitchens. From the primary survey in table 4.9 it has been found that 55 percent of schools have permanent kitchens facilities.

Table - 5

Availability of Kitchen Sheds in the Sample Schools

S. No	Cooking Place	No of Schools	Percent
1	Schools kitchens sheds	11	55
2	Schools classroom	7	35
3	Home of the cook	2	10
	Total	20	100

Source, Field Survey

In schools where Mid Day Meal is prepared in class rooms has become a nuisance and has adversely affected the teaching learning process as both students and teachers get distracted from real business, while as in schools where food is being prepared in the home of cooks, there is no check on quality of food besides other problems. As one teacher, Imtiyaz Ahmad Bhat, said, "In our school food is being prepared in the home of the cook, the food never served in time, so it disturbs our daily work schedule". In another school a cook said, "I am preparing food at home which is near about one kilometer away from the school. It becomes very

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difficult for me to carry the large number of utensils to the school". It has also been observed that when food is cooked in open lawn or during bad weather in class room/school building, the teaching learning process suffers due to smoke and noise. We can say without kitchen sheds in the school mid day meal is a problem and not a solution to the problem.

Storage Facilities

A proper storage facility can maintain the quality of food grain to an extended period. In the case of MDM problem, there is no provision for storage facilities. Sometimes this creates problem at the time of cooking. There are complaints by most of the cooks that food takes lot of time to prepare, the reason is that cleaning takes time as due to lack of proper storage facilities, some dust particles, excreta of rates, etc. get mixed with it. The cooks and teachers suggest that there should be plastic container to store the food grains. This will improve the quality and reduce the costs.

Table - 6

Availability of Storage Facilities in the Sample Schools

S No	Storage Space	No of Schools	Percent
1	School premises	13	65
2	Teachers home	5	25
3	Cooks home	2	10
4	Surpunch's home	0	0
5	VEC home	0	0
	Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 6 reveals that near about 2/3th of the schools store food grains in school premises and in case of rest of the schools it is either stored in teacher's home or cook's home. Majority of schools lack proper and good storage facilities.

Utensils

Government supplied cooking utensils to every school under MDMS at the inception of the programme. Inquires revealed that in the sample schools cooks are dissatisfied with the adequacy of utensils presently available for cooking enough food for the children enrolled. There is no supervision to examine whether the utensils are adequate for any particular school or not. The number of students to be enrolled in a particular school is not fixed. So when the number of students increases it creates problem for the cook with the utensils supplied earlier. It was observed that only 20% of schools have complete cooking and serving utensils and rest 80 percent of schools face the problem of utensils. It has also been observed 10 percent of students bring plates from home for taking meal. So it has been found that shortage of

cooking pots and pans is a common problem in most of the schools in block kakapora.

Fuel

Efficiency in cooking depends up on the type of fuel being used. In most of the sample school, the cooks were found to be dissatisfied due to irregular and insufficient supply of funds for fuel. Table 7 shows the fuel distribution of 20 sample schools.

Table - 7

Distribution of Fuel in Sample Schools

S No	Fuel	No. of Schools	Percent
1	LPG	7	35
2	wood	13	65
3	Kerosene Stove	0	0
	Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 7 indicates that 2/3 of schools are preparing food on wood, out of 20 schools 13 schools have source of fuel as wood where as 35 percent cooking the meal on gas and Stoves are not used at all. It is perhaps because of non availability of kerosene oil. The main difficulty lies that there is no separate funds for fuel. It has to be managed by the schools from their local funds. More often the problem of shortage of fuel lies with majority of the schools.

Staff

Under the scheme there is provision of one cook and one helper per school. In the case of MDMS in Jammu and Kashmir a cook –cum-helper are appointed per school. The meal is cooked on every working day even when the cook is absent. When the cook is absent, the one of the family member takes the charge of cooking the meal. Generally cook come to school at 11.00 am where food is prepared in the schools. First they wash the pots and then start preparing food, at 1.10 a.m. the meal is served to the students on canvas. Teachers also help them in serving the MDM. After the children finish their meals, the utensils are washed again and the students help them in washing the utensils in some schools especially girl child. Poor infrastructural facilities affect smooth functioning of the scheme. As one teacher in sample school said, "we prepare meal in good way, we don't serve meal in proper way as we lack the serving place" The main aim of the MDM scheme is to bring more and more children in the schools especially those who belong to the educationally backward and weaker sections of the society. Most of the recent studies have shown that the MDM scheme has positive impact on the enrolment of the students especially girls. The table 8 category wise number of beneficiaries in 20 sample schools.

Table - 8

Category wise Status of the Respondents

S no	Category	Gender		% age		Total	Percent
		Male	Female	Male	Female		
1	General	85	50	85	71.43	135	79.41
2	RBA	6	4	6	5.71	10	5.88
3	Social cost	9	16	9	22.86	25	14.71
	Total	100	70	100	100	170	100

Source: - Field Survey

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As per the information collected from the respondents, the majority of the students of sample schools come from general category i.e. near about 80%. It goes against spirit of the scheme, as scheme suggested bringing more and more children of disadvantaged group of society in to the schools. The reason behind this is that in the study area near about 90 percent of population belongs to general category and only one village is backward. All the respondents are Muslims and among Muslims the schedule caste concept does not prevail. However, there are other categories like RBA, social caste etc. but in the study area a very less percentage of these categories exist

Impact on attendance

The primary objective of the mid day meal scheme is to enhance the attendance of the students at elementary level. All the teachers and parents interviewed were of the opinion that attendance has increasing after the implementation of the scheme quit significantly. In general it was found that attendance has substantially improved mainly because of MDM meal provision. During the field survey, a record was collected from the school registers regarding attendance from the period 2002 to 2010 to know to what extent the scheme has achieved the said objective in the study area. The information is recorded in the following table

Table - 9

Year Wise Average Attendance of sample Schools

Year	No of Days Meal has Distributed	Average Annual Attendance (All Classes)
2002-03	-	46
2003-04	-	45
2004-05	30	47
2005-06	150	72
2006-07	160	78
2007-08	180	85
2008-09	140	64
2009-10	165	80
2010-11	110	56

Source, Field Survey

It is clear from the above table that there is positive correlation between MDM and attendance. As the number of meal days increased, attendance also increases. It is also evident from the table that before the implementation of the scheme, average annual attendance was very low. After the implementation of the scheme a continuous increment in the attendance has been witnessed except 2008-09, 2010-11 the reason behind this as mentioned earlair was summer unrest in the valley during the said period. The correlation coefficient between MDM and attendance is 0.94. That is relationship between two variables is very significant.

Impact on Employment Opportunities

One of the objectives of MDM scheme is to provide employment opportunities especially for those who belong to the marginalized sections of the society. Table 10 give year wise information about employment of cooks in block Kakapora.

Table - 10

Number of Cooks Employed in Block Kakapora

S. No	Year	No. of cooks employed	General	RBA	Sc	widows
1	2004-05	50	42	1	3	4
2	2005-06	75	63	2	5	5
3	2006-07	75	63	2	5	5
4	2007-08	78	66	2	5	5
5	2008-09	100	74	3	12	9
6	2009-10	104	78	3	12	9
7	2010-11	107	81	3	12	9

Source: Z E O, office

It is clear from the table majority of the cooks are being appointed from the general category. The question administered at the school level brings forth the fact that there has been some employment generation opportunities' for both the marginalized sections and general category. In 20 sample schools the entire cooks are women. The respondents of the sample schools under the study confirmed that preference has been given to those who are nearby school; widows, the sole bread earners and who do not have any other source of money income.

Table - 11

Employment Generations in Sample Schools Category Wise

S. No	Category	No. of Person Employed	Percent
1	General	16	80
2	R B A	1	5
3	Social caste	3	15
	Total	20	100

Field Survey

Table 11 shows that 80 percent cooks employed in the MDMS belong to the general category, followed by 15 percent from the social caste and only 5 percent of cooks are being employed from RBA. The inferences drawn from the table are Mid-Day Meal Programme in the state is not functioning as per guidelines. The objective of the scheme as per guidelines is cooks should be employed from disadvantaged section of the society. It is true that in Kashmir valley there are no schedule castes and schedule tribe population but the 23 years conflict in the state has devastated the socio-economic and demographic fabric of society. Multiple identities have emerged among women. We have a huge number of widows and half-widows or we can say the victims of conflict in each and every corner of the state especially Kashmir valley. Priority should be given to those women and not those who enjoy the qualification of being near to schools. The table can further be explained by the following diagram.

Conclusion

Free and compulsory education of all children up to the age of fourteen years is our Constitutional Commitment. The Government has initiated a number of programmes to achieve the goal of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) among which the mid day meal scheme is the most recent one. Although its presence was only in few regions. In the post independence period, attempts

have been made, with some success, to implement MDM in various states including Jammu and Kashmir. However, if one looks at the indices that measure child health, children in the school and dropout rate, one realizes the inadequacy of such schemes. For example, 69 percent of adolescent girls in India suffer from anemia due to iron and folic acid deficiency, and 94% of children in the age group 6-9 years are mildly, moderately or severely underweight. In the recent past, however, the importance of implementation of the MDM scheme has caught the attention of the judiciary and the government. Thus, the scheme is important in terms of its potential for substantially improving the health of the younger generation, enrolling the children and reducing the dropout rate of the children of the country. Therefore, it becomes imperative that a comprehensive analysis of the scheme has to be undertaken to judge its efficacy. The broad objective of this study is to clearly identify some of the critical issues associated with the MDM scheme and carry out an objective evaluation in terms of efficiency in delivery system and service quality (which includes food safety, food nutrition and sensory aspects).

The Mid Day Meal Scheme is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme which was launched in India on 15th August, 1995. The main objective of the scheme is to increase enrollment, retention and attendance of children in primary and upper primary schools and to improve the nutritional level of such children through supplementary nutrition.

The main findings of the study are as under:

1. That the scheme have shown positive relationship between mid day meal scheme and attendance and $r = 0.94$
2. That the survey revealed that 95.0% beneficiaries were from general category and 5% were from backward classes.
3. That the scheme gives rise to employment of women belonging to poor families.
4. That the scheme has shown positive impact on enrolment for both boys and girls. It was found that enrolment rate has increased from 1.8 to 2.54 among boys and from 3.27 to 6.06 among girls.

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