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## OPINION OF TEACHERS/ INCHARGES OF MDM TOWARDS MID DAY MEAL SCHEME IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS OF AGRA CITY

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### Abstract

*The study was conducted to assess the opinion of teachers/Incharges of MDM towards Mid Day Meal scheme in Government schools of Agra City. It was found that teachers/Incharges of MDM have the same opinion that Mid Day Meal Scheme has boosted the enrolment of students has increase attendance of school children after introduction of MDM , health of school children have improved due to MDM and Mid Day Meal is successful scheme.*

*Key Words: Mid Day Meal (MDM), Incharges, opinion*

### INTRODUCTION

The Mid Day Meal scheme is the popular name for school meal programme in India. Mid Day Meal scheme 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. (Worsley, A, 2005) Mid Day Meal scheme had proved to be an effective means to check high dropout rates of children from economically weaker sections, while also addressing their nutritional needs.

This scheme was launched in Uttar Pradesh in September, 2004. The Mid Day Meal Scheme is a well-intentioned programme. Government of India has attempted to address the fundamental problems of health, education, and overall development of children in the country by implementing programme all over the country. It provides children with at least one nutritionally adequate meal a day. This program is known to lead to higher attention spans, better concentration, and improved class performance. School meal program also provides parents with a strong incentive to send children to school, thereby encouraging enrolment and reducing absenteeism and dropout rates. It supports health, nutrition, and education goals and consequently will have a multi-pronged impact on a nation's overall social and economic development ( Gopaldas, 2005).

### METHODOLOGY

For the present study, the population constitutes teachers/Incharges of Mid Day Meal from Primary and Elementary Government schools of Agra city, Uttar Pradesh. For the selection of sample, Random sampling technique was adopted.70 teachers/Incharges of MDM were randomly selected from Primary and Elementary schools for data collection. Questionnaire

and interview schedule were used to generate data for the study. The tool used in this study was self constructed having 12 observation questions.

### COLLECTION OF DATA

The primary data was collected from the Government teachers/Incharges of MDM scheme. Purpose of visit was explained to them. Checklist and interview schedule was used for collecting information from the school teachers/Incharges of MDM. The information drawn from teachers/ Incharges of MDM was also verified through personal observation employing observation technique.

### RESULTS

**Table - 1: Percent frequency distribution of socio-personal characteristics of teachers/Incharges of MDM**

Socio personal characteristics		No. (%)
Gender of teachers/Incharges of MDM	Male	38 (54.28)
	Female	32 (45.72)
Age Group	22-32 years	23 (32.86)
	32-42 years	22 (31.43)
	42-52 years	17 (24.28)
	52-62 years	8 (11.44)
Experience of teaching	1-10 years	22 (31.43)
	10-20 years	22 (31.43)
	20-30 years	18 (25.71)
	30-40 years	8 (11.43)

\* Figures in parenthesis shows percentages

Table 1 reveals that for the present study, 54.28% of teachers/Incharges of MDM were males, 45.72% were females. Among the age group, all most same percentage (32 %) were of the age group of 22-32 years and 32-42 years, 24.28% were between the age of 42-52 years, 11.44% were between the age of 52-62 years. Same percentage of teachers/Incharges of

MDM were having teaching experience between 1-20 years. Small percentage (11.43%) of teachers/Incharges of MDM were having teaching experience between 30-40 years.

**Table -2: Percent frequency distribution of responses of opinion of teachers/ Incharges of MDM towards Mid Day Meal scheme (N=70).**

Sr. No	Items	YES		NO	
		F	%	F	%
1.	Arrangement of MDM in school is good	60	86.0	10	14.0
2.	MDM scheme has boosted the enrolment of students	43	64.3	27	35.7
3.	Increase in attendance after introduction of MDM	44	62.9	26	37.1
4.	MDM scheme is a good scheme for children education	44	62.9	26	37.1
5.	Place for cooking food is kept neat	49	69.6	21	30.4
6.	Nutritional food is provided to children.	46	65.4	24	34.6
7.	Different dishes are provided to children	58	82.2	12	17.8
8.	Food is provided at right time to children	55	78.58	15	21.42
9.	Children get meals as per their need	70	100.	----	----
10.	Mid Day Meal has extra burden on teachers work load	28	40.0	42	60.0
11.	Health of children improved due to Mid Day Meal	44	62.9	26	37.1
12.	Mid Day Meal a successful scheme	42	60.0	28	40.0

\* Figures in parenthesis shows percentages

Table 2 depicts that majority of teachers/ Incharges of MDM (86.0%) agreed that arrangements for mid day meal are good in schools. The perusal of results indicate that Mid day meals have big effects on school participation, not just in terms of getting more children enrolled in the registers but also in terms of regular pupil attendance on a daily basis. More

than half of teachers/ Incharges in MDM (64.3%) agreed that mid day meal have boosted in the enrolment of students whereas 35.7% said that the Mid Day Meal scheme has not played any role in the enrolment of school children. Table 2 also reveals that all most same percentage of teachers/ Incharges of MDM (62.9%) reported that Mid Day Meal has boosted the attendance of students in school. The teachers said that student's attendance had increased noticeably following the introduction of the mid-day meals because the meals we provided here were so much better than what the children were getting at home. Teachers told that some of the students were also attending the school just for having mid-day meals and return home after having them. Most of them are economically poor and they attend the school without taking breakfast at home. It was reported to us that the only meal for them throughout the day is the MDM, and therefore there is full attendance. Teachers also reported a surge in daily attendance, which all of them attributed mainly to the school meal program 69.6% of teachers/Incharges of MDM stated that place for cooking food is kept neat and clean. Whereas 30.4% of several teachers commented that place for cooking food is not kept neat and clean. Significant number of teachers/Incharges of MDM (73.8%) stated that care is taken about cleanliness while cooking meals for children. 65.4% of teachers felt that care is taken about nutritional contents for children's Mid Day Meal whereas 34.6% of teachers commented that care is not taken about nutritional contents for children. Mid day meal has also act as a regular source of "supplementary nutrition" for children, and facilitate their healthy growth. Significant number of teachers/Incharges of MDM (82.2%) stated that variety of eatables are provided to children. Whereas less number of teachers (17.8%) commented that variety of eatables are not provided to children. Significant number of teachers/Incharges of MDM 78.58% agreed that the food is provided at right time to children whereas a small percentage (21.42%) did not agree with the statement. The Mid Day Meal Incharges have agreed that children get meals as per their need. 40.0 % teachers/Incharges of MDM agreed that they feel that mid day meal has extra burden on teachers work load whereas 60.0% mid day meal Incharges did not agree with this statement. 62.9% teachers have agreed that health of children improved due to MDM whereas 37.1% of several teachers commented that health of children are not improved due to MDM. 60.0% teachers/ Incharges have agreed that Mid Day Meal is a successful scheme whereas 40.0% mid day meal Incharges did agreed with this statement.

## DISCUSSION

Focus group discussion with teachers was carried out to get their feedback about the MDM Programme. The results of the present study clearly depict that majority of teachers/ Incharges of MDM (86.0%) agreed that arrangements for mid day meal are good in schools. The perusal of results indicate that Mid day meals have big effects on school participation, not just in terms of getting more children enrolled in the registers but also in terms of regular pupil attendance on a daily basis. Simroth (2011) find even larger positive effects on enrolment in all primary grades, with the largest effect (a 21% increase) for Grade 1 enrolment. It helps retention (postponement of incidents of dropouts and even regular attendance.) More than half of teachers/ Incharges in MDM (64.3%) agreed that mid day meal have boosted in the enrolment of students. The results are similar to the findings of Kameshwari's (2003) who found that Mid Day Meal had brought a sharp increase in school enrolment and retention. The result of Rajshri (2011) also found that from 2002 to 2004, Mid Day meal scheme result in substantial increase in primary school enrolment, driven by early primary school responses to the programme. Blue (2005) studied the mid day meal scheme

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in Udaipur district. Eight rural primary schools were selected from three blocks of Udaipur district. Teachers in Udaipur felt that mid day meal not only boosted the daily attendance among students but also helped to keep them in the class for the duration of the school day. The average daily attendance before the introduction of the programme was 35-40 per cent which increased to 45-50 per cent after introduction of mid day meal scheme. Whereas 35.7% of teachers opined that the Mid Day Meal scheme has not played any role in the enrolment of school children. This could be because in some schools, there was no increase in the enrolment of students after the introduction of MDM scheme. The teachers said that student's attendance had increased noticeably following the introduction of the mid-day meals because the meals we provided here were so much better than what the children were getting at home. Teachers told that some of the students were also attending the school just for having mid-day meals and return home after having them. Most of them are economically poor and they attend the school without taking breakfast at home. It was reported to us that the only meal for them throughout the day is the MDM, and therefore there is full attendance. Teachers also reported a surge in daily attendance, which all of them attributed mainly to the school meal program.

Further 62.9% of teachers reported that the health of school children has also improved due to Mid Day Meal scheme. The results are supported with the findings of Singh, et. al find that the programme had positive effect on health of school children in Andhra Pradesh. Similar results were found by Meena S. (2010) who conducted a study on children enrolled in Government run rural primary schools in Mathura district in Uttar Pradesh. A wholesome, nutritionally balanced Mid Day Meal scheme provided by an NGO for the students in the 6 primary schools was selected as intervention group. Height, weight, change in height/month, change in weight/month, prevalence of protein-energy malnutrition and prevalence of signs of vitamin deficiencies, were measured. Food was provided for 221 days in one year. Within group and between groups repetitive measures were compared using generalized estimating equation (GEE).

Result also shows that 60% teachers/Incharges have the opinion that MDM is a successful scheme. 69.6% of teachers/Incharges of MDM stated that place for cooking food is kept neat and clean. Whereas 30.4% of several teachers commented that place for cooking food is not kept neat and clean. 65.4% of teachers felt that care is taken about nutritional contents for children's Mid Day. Mid day meal has also act as a regular source of "supplementary nutrition" for children, and facilitate their healthy growth. Afridi (2010) found positive nutrition effects among children in Madhya Pradesh- comparing nutrition intake on a school day with, she finds that nutrition intake of programme participants increased substantially by 49% to 100% of transfers.

Significant number of teachers/Incharges of MDM stated that variety of eatables are provided at right time to children whereas a small percentage (21.42%) did not agree with the statement. The Mid Day Meal teachers/Incharges have agreed that children get meals as per their need. 40.0 % teachers/Incharges of MDM feel that mid day meal has extra burden on teachers work load whereas 60.0% mid day meal Incharges did not agree with this statement. All the teachers/Incharges of MDM have agreed that the Government has not imparted any special training on Mid Day Meal. This shows that there are few short comings with regard to Mid Day Meal scheme and there is a scope to improve it.

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Results reveal that the Mid Day Meal scheme is one of the reasons for increasing attendance rate and enrolment of students. This programme had reduced the burden of parents for providing one time meal to their children and this can be considered it as a great support to their families. It is further added that MDM aided in active learning of children and improved their academic performance. The scheme has also played a significant role in bringing social equality and has created a very congenial atmosphere for education, health growth and overall well being of the poor and needy children. This scheme has increased the possibility of retaining children in school for a longer period during day and thereby increasing the learning opportunities for them.

## CONCLUSION

The finding of the study reveals that teachers/ Incharges of MDM have the same opinion that Mid Day Meal Scheme has boosted the enrolment of students has increase attendance of school children after introduction of MDM. Mid Day Meal scheme is good scheme for education. Place for cooking food is kept neat and clean, nutritional food is provided to children, health of school children have improved due to MDM ,according to teachers MDM has extra burden on teachers work load and Mid Day Meal is successful scheme.

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