

An Economical and Psychological Analysis of Impact of Mid-Day-Meal Scheme on Rural Students-Parents-Teachers: A Case Study

Rupak Kumar Borah¹ and Puna Das²

¹ Ph.D. Research Scholar, Humanities and Social Science Department, Indian Institute of Information Technology, Guwahati, (IIITG), India

² Master in Economics, Dibrugarh University, Assam, India

ABSTRACT

The main objectives of the paper are to evaluate the economic and psychological impact of the Mid Day Meal scheme on the rural teacher-parents-students and the impact of the program on primary school enrollment. Both personal interview and observation methods are used. Personal interview comprises of open-ended as well as closed-ended questions and observed both participant and non-participant. The observation method was adopted to note the condition of kitchen shed, maintenance of the kitchen garden, and availability of the drinking water facility, preparation and distribution of the meal, manners of the children during the time of serving mid-day meal and hygienic conditions in the kitchen and school premises. School data on enrolment, number of teachers, weekly menu, etc. were collected from the headmasters and teachers. This program is able to promote school enrolment and also better learning in schools. Parents persuade their children to go to school and for teachers to retain children in the classrooms. Act as an instrument in bringing better social integration through eating together with all the children. Also, foster a sound social behavior among children and dispel feelings of difference between various castes. The success of the program will depend on continued public participation and vigilance as well as sustained political interest in the scheme. .

Keywords: *Mid Day Meal, rural students, school enrolment*

Introduction:

Given the correlation between educational attainment and economic growth, policies that both effectively and efficiently decrease the financial barriers to primary school education in developing countries are of extreme interest to government and non-government organizations alike (Bonds, 2012). In 1995, the Government of India implemented a school-feeding program to incentivize children to attend primary school through the provision of a subsidized mid-day

meal. The government has left no stone unturned to achieve the aim of universalization of elementary education by launching various schemes to enroll and retain the maximum number of students and minimize the drop-out rate. One such scheme launched by the government was Mid day meal scheme that aims to primary and upper primary level in improving the nutritional status of children, encouraging poor children, belonging to disadvantaged sections, to attend school more regularly and help them concentrate on classroom activities. Nutrition Support to Primary Education popularly referred to as Mid Day Meal program (MDM) seeks to provide for each school child roughly a third of the daily nutrient requirement in the form of a hot fresh cooked meal. The present study is taken an attempt to evaluate the economic and psychological impact of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme on rural teacher-parents-students and this paper evaluates the Mid-Day Meal Program by estimating the impact of receipt of the program on primary school enrollment through a case study of one of the school in Assam.

Brief Historical Background of MDMS (Mid-Day Meal Scheme):

When the MDMS was launched in 1995, state governments (who were responsible for implementing the scheme) were given two years to put necessary systems in place to be able to provide cooked meals to primary school children. However, in the first six years after the scheme was launched (i.e., until 2001), most states failed to put the required arrangements in place and instead provided students with monthly dry rations (wheat or rice) based on their attendance in school. Tamil Nadu had launched a cooked MDMS in the 1950s and expanded it significantly in 1982, and Gujarat introduced mid-day meals in the 1980s. Besides this, the entire state of Kerala, and some pockets of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, began providing cooked meals in 1995. In the five years since 2001, the situation has changed quite dramatically. In an interim order dated November 28, 2001, the Supreme Court directed all state governments "to implement the Mid-Day Meal Scheme by providing every child in every government and government-assisted primary school with a prepared mid-day meal with a minimum content of 300 calories and 8- 12 grams of protein, each day of school for a minimum of 200 days". Very few states shows ever, introduced cooked meals in primary schools before the Supreme Court's initial deadline of February 28, 2002. The deadline was later extended to January 2005 by the Supreme Court. State Inaction prompted grassroots activists to start public mobilization efforts. The first major campaign activity was an "action day on mid-day meals on April 9, 2002". In 100 districts across

nine states, people expressed their dissatisfaction with the state of implementation of the SC's order. In Bangalore, children lined streets with empty plates; in other places, copies of the SC order were distributed. The most effective form of protest was the provision of a symbolic "people's mid-day meal" to school children in public places, aimed at shaming the government into action. Following the Supreme Court's orders and public mobilization, the government of India revised its guidelines for the MDMS in 2004. According to these guidelines, the MDMS was being fully implemented in 20 states and all seven union territories, and partially in the remaining eight states.

Since then, the coverage of the MDMS has been further extended, and today it is close to universal. It is worth noting that some states have gone beyond the scope of the mandated coverage. For instance, in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, the destitute and the aged are permitted to partake of the mid-day meal in school. In Gujarat, the scheme covers children from classes 1 to 7. The new guidelines, in line with the Supreme Court order dated April 20, 2004, provide for meals to be served during the summer vacations in drought-affected areas. Some states, including Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, have been following this directive.

The objectives of the mid day meal scheme are:

- (i) Improving the nutritional status of children in classes I – VIII in Government, Local Body and Government aided schools, and EGS and AIE centers.
- (ii) Encouraging poor children, belonging to disadvantaged sections, to attend school more regularly and help them concentrate on classroom activities.
- (iii) Providing nutritional support to children of primary stage in drought-affected areas during summer vacation.

Rationale:

- **Promoting school participation:** 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 daily
- **Preventing classroom hunger:** Many children reach school on an empty stomach. Even children who have a meal before they leave for school get hungry by the afternoon and

are not able to concentrate - especially children from families who cannot give them a lunch box or are staying a long distance away from the school. Mid day meal can help to overcome this problem by preventing “classroom hunger”.

- **Facilitating the healthy growth of children:** Mid day meal can also act as a regular source of “supplementary nutrition” for children, and facilitate their healthy growth.
- **Intrinsic educational value:** A well-organized mid day meal can be used as an opportunity to impart various good habits to children (such as washing one’s hands before and after eating), and to educate them about the importance of clean water, good hygiene and other related matters.
- **Fostering social equality:** Mid day meal can help spread egalitarian values, as children from various social backgrounds learn to sit together and share a common meal. In particular, mid day meal can help to break the barriers of caste and class among school. Appointing cooks from Dalit communities is another way of teaching children to overcome caste prejudices.
- **Enhancing gender equity:** The gender gap in school participation tends to narrow, as the Mid Day Meal Scheme helps erode the barriers that prevent girls from going to school. Mid Day Meal Scheme also provide a useful source of employment for women, and helps liberate working women from the burden of cooking at home during the day. In these and other ways, women and girl children have a special take in Mid Day Meal Scheme.
- **Psychological Benefits:** Physiological deprivation leads to low self-esteem, consequent insecurity, anxiety and stress. The Mid Day Meal Scheme can help address this and facilitate cognitive, emotional and social development.

Review of Literature:

The mid-day meal scheme was introduced to mitigate social inequalities inherited through the hierarchical division of society, or what is called “resilience of social structures” (Garg and Mandal, 2013). “Resilience of social structures” refers to the perpetuation of social inequalities inherited through the hierarchical division of society. This structural discrimination directly impedes an equal access to benefits of development by the way of exclusion. Thus, programmes for social development always end up in benefiting privileged sections of the society, and therefore, perpetuate inequality. This has resulted in poverty, high levels of

malnutrition and low levels of education among the socially excluded groups. The National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education or the mid-day meal (MDM) programme was introduced in our country to mitigate this problem.

One common finding encountered by researchers studying the shaping of social policy in India is that the social structure ensures that benefits of social development are distributed according to inequality of status, i e, those who are in relatively higher status get the maximum benefit of social development and the vice versa (e g, Govinda and Bandyopadhyay 2010; PROBE 1999; Sedwal and Kamat 2008). As a result, there exists a marked widening of the gap, for instance, in educational and nutritional development among various social groups. One of the important reasons for this developmental gap is “resilience of social structures” (D’Souza 1990).

The importance of education to economic development cannot be overstated, considering its impact on several critical development measures. Not only does education provide better job market opportunities, leading to higher wages and an improved standard of living, but evidence also suggests that improved schooling inputs can lead to a greater sense of political awareness, reduced acceptance of traditional authority, and increased gender equality (Friedman et al 2011).

The decision to send a child to school, like other household investment decisions, can be modeled by a cost-benefit framework (Dreze and Kingdon 2001). Schooling requires an initial investment, composed of both the direct cost of schooling—such as transportation, textbooks, meals, and other classroom fees—and the opportunity cost of schooling. This opportunity cost reflects the foregone benefits a child could provide his or her family if not in school, through labor market income or household chores. While education reduces poverty in the long run by providing greater job access and higher wages, the short-run costs of schooling can be very steep, particularly for families living below the poverty line. Thus, many families find that the future benefits of education do not justify its immediate cost.

Numerous research studies support this correlation between poverty and low educational attainment, and find that entrenched, household characteristics are highly predictive of children’s academic success. In their analysis of the determinants of school participation in rural North India, Dreze and Kingdon (2001) find that the probability of school participation increases with higher levels of parental education, and that this relationship is particularly strong between parents and children of the same gender. Additionally, the effects of caste status, household wealth, and level of parental motivation are highly significant. Research conducted in Brazil

supports a positive relationship between parent and child education levels, and suggests that higher levels of maternal education reduce intra household gender biases that may prevent females from attending school (Emerson and Souza 2007). Finally, in their study of child labor and schooling decisions in Ghana, Canagarajah and Coulombe (1997) find that education decreases and child labor increases as household wealth declines, supporting the theory that schooling can be a financial burden for poorer families. If these results hold across regions, then the 69 million children not enrolled in school worldwide (United Nations 2010) and the 1.4 billion people living below the poverty line (World Bank 2008) will be less likely to afford education for their children, further perpetuating the cycle of poverty through future generations. Policy intervention is therefore needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education and ensure that all children have equal access to education.

An important policy response to this issue has been to target the cost of education itself, providing subsidies and in-kind or conditional cash transfers when a household would otherwise be unable to afford education. For example, the PROGRESA program, initiated by Mexico in 1997, provided cash transfers to rural households conditional on satisfactory school attendance by their children, and it has been estimated to increase school attendance of treatment children by 0.66 years on a baseline of 6.80 years (Schultz 2004). Furthermore, PROGRESA increased enrollment even for children who were ineligible for the program, but benefitted from the influence of peers, particularly those from the poorest households (Bobonis et al., 2006). In Bangladesh, a targeted school stipend administered through Bangladesh's Food-for-Education program had strong effects on school participation, leading to an average of a 17.3 percentage point increase in attendance rate for boys and a 16 percentage point increase for girls (Ravallion and Wodon, 2000).

The particular policy intervention evaluated in this paper is a government-sponsored school feeding program, which partially mitigates the cost of schooling by offering a free or subsidized meal or snack, conditional on a child's enrollment and attendance. This type of intervention improves school participation by addressing both the financial and health factors that contribute to lower attendance rates. Past research finds that children who are suffering from disease, infection, or poor nutrition have significantly lower school participation rates than children who are healthy (Miguel and Kremer 2004; Bobonis et al 2006). Even if a child is able to attend school, they are unlikely to be focused and productive if they are undernourished and

weak. By providing free and nutritious food during the school day, India's mid-day meal program has been shown to significantly increase daily caloric intake as well as levels of protein and iron for recipient children (Afridi 2007). Therefore, provision of an in-class meal has the added benefits of keeping children in school who would otherwise be too sick or weak to attend, and improving academic achievement for those enrolled in school. Therefore present studies try to analyze the economic and psychological impact of mid day meal programme on rural student-parents-teachers in Assam through a case study on a rural LP school.

OBJECTIVE –

The present study is consist of the following objectives

1. To evaluate the economic and psychological impact of MID DAY MEAL SCHEME on rural teacher-parents-students.
2. To evaluate the impact of receipt of the program on primary school enrollment.

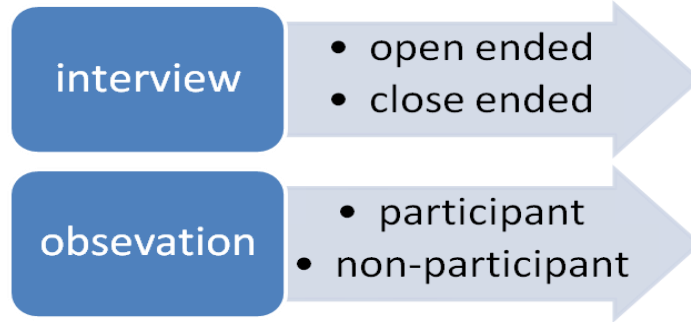
METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE FOR THE STUDY:

The sample taken in the present study was taken from 229 no. Karangakhat L.P. School, situated in the Jorhat District of Assam where this scheme has been implemented since 2007 and still is on the run. Also, the sample encompasses the stakeholders (parents, students, and teachers) who are familiar with this scheme and deriving benefits from the scheme in one way or the other.

METHODS USED:

The formal methodologies adopted were interview (open-ended as well as closed-ended questions), observation (both participant and non-participant). The observation method was adopted to note the condition of the kitchen shed, maintenance of kitchen garden, and availability of the drinking water facility, preparation and distribution of the meal, manners of the children during the time of serving mid-day meal, and hygienic conditions in the kitchen and school premises. School data on enrolment, number of teachers, weekly menu, etc. were collected from the headmasters and teachers.



Strategies

- Vigilance of proper management and monitoring of the programme by development boards of the block.
- Training of Cooks and helpers.
- Adequate storage facilities. The Kitchen cum store should be provided to prevent putrefaction.
- Awareness about the programme through the door to door visit.
- Community participation at large.
- Setting up a committee to keep an eye on the execution of the scheme.
- Note the progress and evaluation.
- Public grievance redress all.

Assumptions

- Universalization of education.
- Increase in enrollment and retention.
- Reduction of poverty.
- Nutrition support
- Elimination of classroom hunger.
- Act as an incentive.

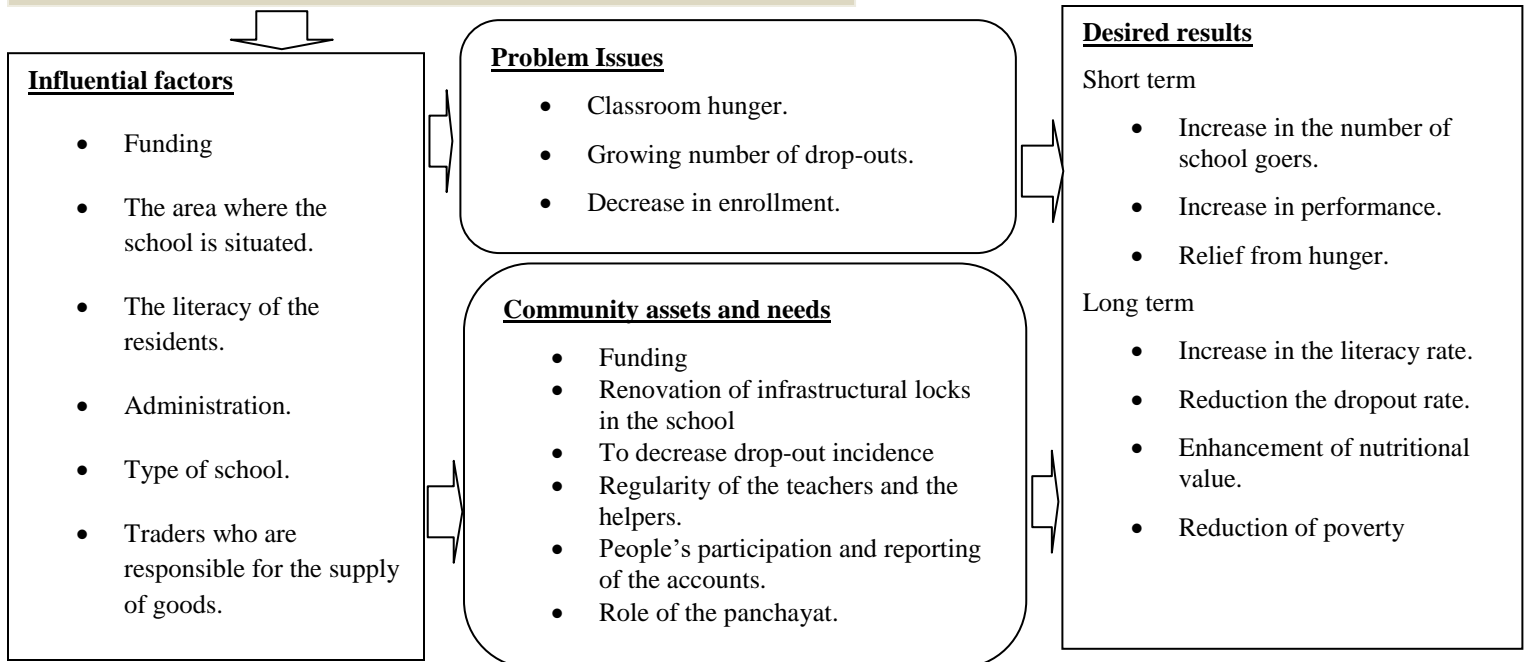


FIG: THEORY BASED LOGICAL MODEL

The questions formulated for the stakeholders were following the model developed for the same:

Questions for children:

1. Do you take MID-DAY MEAL daily at your school?
2. Are you coming regularly to school after the starting of the MID DAY MEAL scheme?
3. Do you take breakfast daily before coming to school?
4. Do you take lunch at home after school?
5. Are you getting sufficient food in MID DAY MEAL SCHEME?
6. Do you carry your lunch box with you?
7. Do you bring your utensils for food?
8. Do you require any particular separate place where you can take your MID DAY MEAL?
9. Are you getting hygienic and healthy food in MIDDAY MEAL SCHEME/
10. Do you feel healthier after you have started taking the MID DAY MEALS at your school?
11. Who helps in serving MID DAY MEALS at your school?
12. Do you think that because of mid-day meals served in your school you should come to school every day?
13. After you have your meal in the school, do you feel hungry in the post classes?
14. Is the food better than you have at home? Or do you think something is missing on your plate to make it tastier and enjoyable?

Questions for teachers

1. How far do you think the introduction of this scheme has increased the number of children attending your classes?
2. Do you realize that the infrastructure in your school is creating hindrances in the implementation of this scheme?
3. Do you think that there is a genuine need for a legitimate step to be taken by the government for its proper implementation? (example; training, seminars workshops)
4. Do you think whether more schemes like the mid-day meal scheme should be introduced in the school curricula to increase the learning and growth incidence of children?

5. Are there any difficulties faced by you in the monitoring of the scheme? What would be the possible remedial measures to improvise it and give it a new mode?
6. How frequently the development officers of the government visit your school? Do you think the roles and responsibilities played by them are appropriate?
7. What is your view about the quality and quantity of food supplied?
8. Withstanding the focus of the SCHEME which is aimed to provide nutritional supplements? Is it really fulfilling the aim after all you are actively participating in this programme implementation?
9. What are your revelations and reactions about the Mothers committee who is keeping an eye on this programme? Are their grievances noted and further addressed?

Questions for parents and Mothers committee

1. Do you think that the introduction of the scheme has attracted your children about going to school?
2. How far do you think that the meals provided are aiding in the nutritional improvement of your child?
3. Do you report of hunger after coming from school even after having the meal?
4. Did your child go to any other private school before joining here?
5. What are the activities that are done by the committee members? How is the operation done at the subliminal level?
6. If we talk about literacy in this village what would be the percentage that you would want to assign?
7. Are your grievances readily addressed by the school authority or the concerned development boards?
8. There are problems in the execution, what do you think or the suggestive measures that would benefit in the success of this programme?
9. Do you think the meal provided is sufficient or there should be some changes in the quantity as per the age of the child?

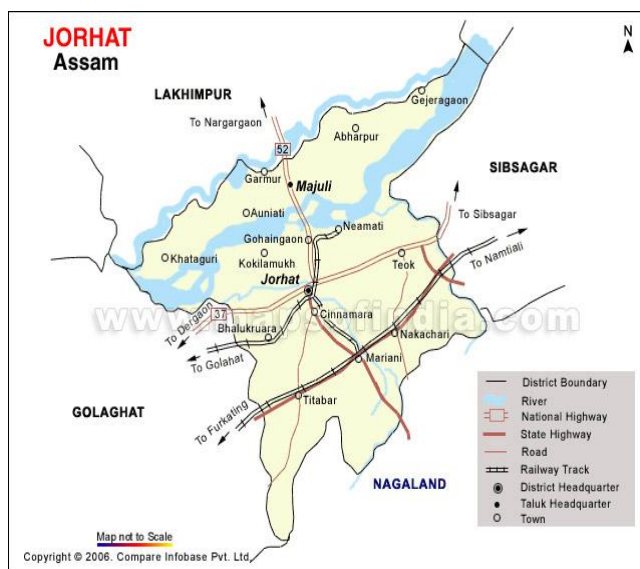
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

The data gathered through the interviews and observations are analyzed in the light of the above questions and the epistemology adopted by the researcher. Also, it is facilitated by the observations made by the researcher.

DISCUSSION:

The government of India embarking on the mid-day meal scheme has incessantly tried its efforts to bring children to the platform of ‘universalization of primary education’ with the motto of retention, increasing enrollment, and simultaneously uplifting the nutritional status of the child.

The State of Assam is divided into 33 districts. In the present study, the covered area was a school 229 Karangakhat lower primary school situated at the Jorhat district of Assam and along with it parents, teachers, cooks, helpers and the community members were also involved.



Jorhat District, Assam.



Teachers and helpers of the school.

The 229 No. Karangakhat LP school was established in 1935 and for many years it has been providing value education to the residents and the local community. Mid day meal scheme in this school was implemented in the year 2007. The school is a lower primary school and it comprises of 4 teachers and a total strength of 40 students all-inclusive of class 1-5. The implementation of the mid day meal scheme is entrusted to the mother’s committee which

consists of five members from the community itself. They prepare the menu, substitute with themselves if the cooks and helpers are unavailable, watchful in the maintenance, also regarding the wholesomeness, cleanliness and regularity of the food provided to the children. The school administration is assisted and run by the headmistress and other 3 assistant teachers who report to her. In the case of midday meal, all the necessary calculations and allotment of money are done by the headmistress herself. 40 students were interviewed in a group and it came to be known that, many were eager to drop their schools because their parents were unable to incur their expenses at school. However, they were pretty enthusiastic about the mid-day meal programme where they could get free time, sit and eat together. When asked whether they have breakfast at their homes before coming to school most students said that they have it and they feel hungry by the time meals are served at noon. Before-handedly when uncooked meals were served by the school, they said, "We only came to take the ration as mom would send us". After having a meal at school they do not complain of hunger which means that the meal provided is quite satisfactory at their level. Utensils are provided in the school and water facility is also available at the school premises. A tube-well is placed at the lawn where they wash their dishes and that water is also used for cooking. Students till date haven't been without their meal. They hastily said that their mother's committee members do come every week and have a watch what is being served. Even if the cook or the helper is absent one of the members comes to assist in cooking the meal. However, discontent was seen in the eyes of the pupils when it came to the terms of talking about the menu. They said that there are times in a week when they are served the same vegetables with daal and that too it is mixed in nature. They opined that the meal served although is fulfilling is not tasty, so if there is a change in the menu and everything is cooked differently it will taste like home. No one in the class was willing to say as to why they come to school whether only because of mid day meal or to learn at school. Mixed answers filled the air. Some said because of their parents and others were idealistic about their answers but only because of mid day meal they didn't come to attend their classes that were very clear cut. The fact that follows is due to the belonging of children from upper-middle-class and lower middle-class families coming to the school.

**WATER FACILITY****THE STOREROOM**

The pious teachers of the school have engaged themselves whole heartedly in the successful implementation of the scheme. It was reflected in their words when interviewed. All the teaching staffs who were four in number were from the same locality and their cultural background was commensurate. The exclamation of pleasure was seen when they were asked about the scheme and its efficiency. Opinions as expected were the same. Students who were not eager to come to school before-handedly now are so much tempted to come to school. Another reason was that children from the lower-middle class were prominent amongst the 40 students. So not exactly poverty but the financial condition of the families cannot be ignored which pushed them to attend the school. It was pertinent to note that when only rations were served, the children appeared in the school when the rations were handed out. With the introduction of the scheme of serving cooked meals, the scenario has completely changed. It took another turn, children regularly attend their classes and the state of happiness and satisfaction could be seen from the way they do their work assigned. However, they express some discontent on the government and the associated bodies because they leave no area for the development of the nutritional impetus of the child. Mostly the financial allotment to the schools in the name of the scheme is quite discouraging for the teachers. As per the scheme every student is allotted a sum of Rs. 3.11meal per day which includes everything. The reason is that if there are fewer students it is very difficult for the school authorities to fulfill the idea. If the strength of students had been large it would have necessitated the purpose. Also, the stirring price rise in the economy has directly affected the spurt of the prices of the commodities. Therefore as an outcome sometimes the nutritional motive is ignored deliberately. The teachers also opine that the type of meal supposed to be served to that age-group due to the underlying factors has not been appropriately fulfilled. Also, the insurmountable problem of availability of cereals and pulses and vegetables in the market is an addition to the problem of the nutritional impetus. Sometimes they are not

available as the school is situated in the village and although local suppliers do supply but there are times when the same vegetables are supplied.

When asked about the infrastructure and the basic requirements like the utensils to cook the food, they are adequate in their manner as they handled very properly by the mothers committee. The kaccha storeroom in the school premises was built when the scheme started full-fledged in the year 2007. The idea of building a pakka storeroom was developed and necessary funds were also allotted, a contractor was given the deal but it was half completed and at 1, it was left undone. So grievances lie on that part. During the summers and the rainy season in Assam, disworming happens to the food-grains or insects and rats destroy the preserved ration. Sometimes the monitoring of the scheme becomes a difficult task because ultimately the report of the mid day meal served is reported to the headmistress who has made all the calculations of the total money spent on each child according to the norm of the mid day meal scheme. Any problem confronted by the Committee directly or indirectly includes the involvement of the teachers for which the teachers want a separate body to be organized so that the duties are beautifully distributed amongst them and they wouldn't have any say. With the constitution of the Mother's Committee who is keeping an eye on the proper implementation of the scheme since 2009, there had been a drastic change in both the quality and satisfaction. Till the later years, the teachers would associate do the whole implementation of the plan ranging from buying vegetables to the bringing of ration from the Block Office. But when the responsibility was owned by them all these things had been taken care of properly.

The parents of the students are also very happy to have a scheme likewise implemented in their village. According to them their children are very enthusiastic about going to school every day. At the very outset when the scheme started full-fledged in their village, they were very apprehensive about its sustenance and thought would fail like the other scheme but relentlessly this scheme has been doing well in the decades. Moreover, they say that the scheme had been instrumental in bringing the people into one platform where they exchange views and hold meetings for electing every month the members of the Mother's Committee. On the other hand, the parents were not satisfied with the quality of the meal provided and at the same time they were also aware of the fact that any expectation on their part will remain on paper depending on the place of the concentration. Regarding the nutritional impetus of the children, a satisfactory answer was not received from the parents. All desired their children to be fed well

with more supplement added to their meal and also they have appealed to the government to increase the allotment of money per child. They said that if the prime aim of the scheme is to eradicate classroom hunger then the scheme has been able to achieve because the child after coming from school does not complain for food.

The Mother's Committee members play active role in the functioning of the scheme in the school. Their major roles are to see the hygiene, preparation of the menu, regularity and wholesomeness of the food, distribution, etc. when asked about the literacy rate in the village, 60 percent of the people in the village were under the shadow of illiteracy which left the other 40percent to take an active role in the implementation of the scheme. Further response regarding the meal was good.

OBSERVATION

Concerning the performance of the mid day meal scheme, it was very official and running very smoothly in the school. The taste, appearance, smell and texture of the food as observed was average as it were cooked on firewood. All children were observed eating the meal very eagerly and delightfully. Overall the teachers were very concerned about the meal as seen asking about the menu and how the meal is to the students after they are done.

ENCOUNTERING LOOPHOLES

- Comprehensive, periodical, and systematic orientation is mandatory to sensitize all stakeholders including the policymakers, implementers, teachers, center level officials and community people to make them understand this scheme well. This would help them to become more efficient and be active partners in the programme that will certainly enhance its performance.
- It appeared from the study that teachers consider MDM as a distraction to teaching and learning. We should strive to correct this apprehension and make persuasive efforts to sensitize the teachers by explaining to them the advantages of providing meal in the school as a means of improving school attendance, retention and learning abilities of the children. Teachers must appreciate MDM as being a part of education, requiring their full cooperation. The slight increase in responsibilities that MDM may impose will be rewarded by better returns in terms of improved performances for their teaching efforts.

Every effort must be made to enlist the cooperation of teachers. They should become enthusiastic participants rather than sullen by bystanders.

- The State government needs to strengthen the internal controls as well as the inspection and monitoring mechanism at all levels. Accountability for maintenance of records at various levels should be prescribed and monitored while limiting only to the school authorities.
- The State should ensure that adequate infrastructure viz. provisions of kitchen sheds, kitchen devices and facilities of drinking water are available in all schools.
- It should put in place a system to ensure that the teaching time of the teachers is not lost in connection with the midday meal and there is no adverse impact of the scheme on the primary objective of education.
- It is recommended to limit teachers' involvement in the programme to supervision activities.
- Uniform implementing mechanisms for delivery of ration at doorsteps of schools should be suggested.
- Having sensed the genuine problem of in managing supply in time in schools, it is suggested that funds should be provided in advance to the implementing agencies through the state nodal officer for the transportation of food grains.

CONCLUSION

Mid May Meal strengthened as it could be a means for not only promoting school enrolment but also better learning in schools. With children from all castes and communities eating together, it is also instrumental in bringing about better social integration. With MDM, it will be easier for parents to persuade their children to go to school and for teachers to retain children in the classrooms. It could foster sound social behavior among children and dispel feelings of difference between various castes. The success of the programme will depend on continued public participation and vigilance as well as sustained political interest in the scheme. The tremendous popularity of the scheme, especially amongst the under privileged is perhaps the best guarantee of continued debate and initiative in this field.

REFERENCES:

Afridi, F. 2007; "The Impact of School Meals on School Participation: Evidence from Rural India." Syracuse University.

Bobonis, G., Miguel, E. and Sharma, C.P.; (2006). "Anemia and School Participation." *Journal of Human Resources*, 41(4): 692-721.

Bonds, S., 2012; *Food for Thought: Evaluating the Impact of India's Mid-Day Meal Program on Educational Attainment*; Undergraduate Honors Thesis, Department of Economics, University of California.

Canagarajah, S. and Coulombe, H. (1997). "Child Labor and Schooling in Ghana." Human Development Tech. Report (Africa Region). Washington, DC: World Bank.

Deodhar S., Mahandiratta S., Ramani K.V., Mavalankar D., Ghosh S., Braganza V. An evaluation of mid day meal scheme, *Journal of Indian school of political economy*.

D'Souza, V. S., 1990; *Development Planning and Structural Inequalities: The Response of the Underprivileged*; New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Dreze, J. and Geeta Gandhi Kingdon, G. G., 2001; School Participation in Rural India, *Review of Development Economics*, 5(1): 1-24.

Emerson, P. M. and Souza A.P. (2003). "Is There a Child Labor Trap? Inter-Generational Persistence of Child Labor in Brazil." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 51(2): 375-398.

Friedman, W., Kremer, M, Miguel, E. and Thornton, R. (2011); "Education as Liberation?", NBER working paper.

Garg, M. & Mandal, K.S. 2013; Mid-Day Meal for the Poor, Privatized Education for the Non-Poor; *Economic & Political Weekly*, July 27, 2013 vol. xlvii I no 30.

Govinda, R. and Bandyopadhyay, M. (2010): "Social Exclusion and School Participation in India: Expanding Access with Equity", *Prospects* (internet edition), 40: 337-54.

Khera R. (2006). Mid-Day Meals in Primary Schools: Achievements and Challenges. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 41, No. 46 pp. 4742-4750.

Miguel, E. and Michael Kremer, M., 2004; "Worms: Identifying Impacts on Education and Health in the Presence of Treatment Externalities." *Econometrica*, 72(1), 159-217.

Nangia P.A.; Impact of Mid Day Meal Scheme on Enrolment of Elementary School Students. *International Referred Research Journal*, VOL- III * ISSUE 27.

PROBE (1999): *Public Report on Basic Education in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press).

Ravallion, M. and Quentin T. Wodon, Q. T., 2000; "Does Child Labor Displace Schooling? Evidence on Behavioral Responses to an Enrollment Subsidy." *The Economic Journal*, 110(462): 158-175.

Sedwal, M. and Kamat, S. (2008): "Education and Social Equity: With a Special Focus on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Elementary Education", *Pathways to Access Research Monograph*, No 19, viewed on 15 November 2012 (http://www.create-rpc.org/pdf_documents/PTA19.pdf).

Schultz, P. T., 2004; "School Subsidies for the Poor: Evaluating the Mexican Progresa Poverty Program." *Journal of Development Economics*, 74(1): 199-250.

Singh M. ,Mishra N.(2010), Mid Day Meal Programme in Meghalaya.

United Nations. (2010, June 20-22). *High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly*. New York, NY. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG_FS_2_EN.pdf.

World Bank. (2008, September 16). *Press Release: New Data Shows 1.4 Billion Live on Less than U.S. \$1.25 A Day, But Progress Against Poverty Remains Strong*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/2008/09/16/new-data-show-14-billion-live-less-us125-day-progress-against-poverty-remains-strong>.

.....