



Research Paper

Perspectives of school children, teachers and parents towards school lunch programme

Priyanka Jalal* and Dr. Neena Sareen**

*PhD scholar, Dept of Agricultural Communication, College of Agriculture, GBPUA&T, Pantnagar

** HOD and Professor, Dept of EECM, College of Home Science, S.K.R.A.U. Bikaner, Rajasthan, India.
e-mail: priyankajalal256@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Government of India had taken an effective decision to combat the hunger and to grow the healthy children by providing them nutritious lunch in their schools. Therefore, School lunch programme i.e. Mid Day Meal was launched on 15th August, 1995, nationwide. It is perceived as a major means to impart positive habits among the children and also in educating them on the importance of health, sanitation, and socialization. Hence, the perception of schoolchildren, parents, and instructors is critical to the scheme's steady improvement and effective performance. The Present study was conducted in Lunkaransar block of Bikaner district, which was selected by lottery method. Ten upper primary government schools were selected to get the sample of 200 students studying in 6th, 7th and 8th classes, 50 parents and 30 teachers which were selected randomly. Thus, the overall sample constituted 280 respondents. Interview schedule was used to collect the data. The data was analyzed by using suitable statistical parameters such as frequencies, percentages, rank and standard deviation. The present study revealed that most of the school children (78.5%), parents (72%) and teachers (80%) had favorable perception towards Mid Day Meal Scheme whereas maximum numbers of respondents were not satisfied with the quantity of meal served. As per the perception of respondents, the programme needs to be continued in all schools of Bikaner district because it improves attendance, good habits and social interaction among children.

Key words: Perception, Health, MDM scheme, Attendance.

Received 08 Dec., 2022; Revised 20 Dec., 2022; Accepted 22 Dec., 2022 © The author(s) 2022.

Published with open access at www.questjournals.org

“Without healthy body, the mind does not develop.”

In 1982, Tamil Nadu government introduced state-wide initiative “Nutritious Meal Programme”, even before MDM program because it is critical to provide adequate and healthy food to our growing children, the MDM program (1955) was established primarily to ensure children's nutritional and educational rights. This program is also considered as a means of providing financial assistance to disadvantaged parents and educating them about the importance of education rather than sending their children to work for minimal daily wages. More importantly, it was aimed to facilitate and increase the school participation among the underprivileged children. Further, the Mid Day Meal Programme promises to provide each child one third of the daily nutrient requirement in the form of cooked meal to combat his/her food and nutritional deficiencies. Moreover, cultural traditions and social structures often mean that girls are much more affected by hunger than boys. Thus the mid-day meal programme also reduces the gender gap in education, since it enhances the attendance of female children. Similarly, a participatory MDMS, where parents are involved in monitoring the programme, can play an indirect role in improving basic knowledge about nutrition and elementary education among the parents of school going children. Therefore, present study was trying to explore perspectives of children, parents and teachers involved in this programme which might be helpful for further improvements.

I. Literature Review:

Samson *et al.* (2007) revealed that a higher proportion of the parents were unhappy and dissatisfied with the quality and quantity of meal served at school. Raju (2009) studied the best practices in the implementation of Mid-Day Meal Scheme and revealed that School Management Committee members were taking keen interest in school activities and conducting monthly meetings. Mother's group is very active and

dedicated for the development of the school. It was also highlighted that Head teacher of schools was maintaining all the records regarding MDM.

Wizarat (2009) revealed from study that Children and parents were satisfied with the quantity and quality of the food served under the MDM scheme.

Singh and Mishra (2010) revealed that the school members committee was more or less satisfied with the scheme but they were dissatisfied with the functioning of MDM programme in the state.

Nambiar and Desai (2010) reported in their study that the 69 percent of parents felt that their children had gained weight because of mid day meal and 65 % of parents felt that their children suffered less from common ailments.

Bellary et.al (2011) concluded that Beneficiaries were satisfied with the functioning of mid day meal programme, quality of food, menu and thus suggested for its continuation with addition of newer recipes.

Lal (2013) found that the parents of 73.33 per cent of the students were in a favor of the 'MID DAY MEAL' programme with some of modifications. Forty per cent of the students and their parents have pointed out as 'poor quality of meal is served to the students' in schools. On the basis of responses, 68 percent found that the programme has failed to provide required 'vitamins and proteins' to the students.

Kantawala et.al (2013) reported in his study that children liked MDM as the food was fresh, hygienic and nutritious. Sukhadi (79.5%), Dal (70.3%) and Rice (63.8%) were the most liked items. Few recipes suggested were laddu, idli, and masala dosa. Teachers were satisfied with the quantity (96.4%) and quality (88.7%) of the MDM provided.

Mohanty (2014) revealed that most of the children were found to accept the Mid Day Meal willingly. The children irrespective of their background were found to enjoy the sharing of food. The poor parents had a very positive view on the Scheme. Some parents wanted the Scheme to be continued variety of menu. Insufficient food provided to the students created dissatisfaction among the parents and students. Rice and Pulses is not of high quality, so that the protein and calorie is a question mark.

Nath and Nath (2015) found that parents were more interested to send their children. The rural teachers and headman had unanimously positive attitude towards this mid-day meals scheme. It is found that rural head teachers were having favorable attitude towards introduction of mid-day meals programme at primary level.

Pinisetty (2015) in his study concluded that the widespread views among parents and teachers were that the MDM (Mid Day Meal) programme had led to increased attendance and enrollment. All the active stakeholders in the participation of MDM (Mid Day Meal) programme in schools were satisfied with the quality and quantity of cooked MDM (Mid Day Meal). The problem of food material storage and quality deterioration in schools is major challenge. In schools where kitchen gardens were grown, the meal becomes enriched with locally available vegetables and fruits.

Singh (2016) found that 81.34 percent of the elementary school teachers had a moderate level of attitude towards Mid-day meal scheme. Only 16.81 percent of the teachers had high level of attitude.

Singh N. and Badiger C.(2016) in their study showed that most of (92.50%) the rural school children had most favorable opinion about mid day meal programme and also most of (89.20%) the parents had most favorable opinion about mid day meal programme. Moreover, large majority of (78.30%) the teachers and the community leaders (92.50%) had most favorable opinion towards MDM. In study, it was suggested that this programme should be continued.

II. METHODOLOGY:

The study was conducted in Lunkaransar block of Bikaner district of Rajasthan which was selected by lottery method. A total of 10 schools from Lunkaransar block were selected through random sampling technique. The sample of the study comprised of 200 school children studying in 6th, 7th and 8th standards (20 school children from each school), 30 teachers (3 teachers from each upper primary school) and 50 parents (5 parents per village) of Lunkaransar block of Bikaner district. The final sample constituted 280 respondents and interview schedule was used for data collection. Questions were asked by using '3-point scale' (most favorable, favorable and unfavorable). The data was analyzed by using suitable statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, mean score, rank and Standard Deviation.

III. RESULTS:

1. Perception of school children towards Mid Day Meal Scheme- Findings from Table 1 highlights that most of school children (95.5%) preferred to eat Mid Day Meal daily in school followed by the convenient serving time (93.5%), continuation of MDM programme (92.0%) with mean score 2.95, 2.93, 2.92 respectively. It can also be seen that majority of children (72.5%, 71.5%, 70.5% and 61.5%) showed most favorable attitude towards changing in menu, their concentration in classes, adequate supply of food and water as well as they also showed liking to eat meal on holiday.

Table 1 Perception of school children towards Mid Day Meal Scheme (n1=200)

Statements				Mean Score
	Most favorable	Favorable	Not favorable	
1.The meal served to students is good in terms of quality of food grains, vegetables etc.	141 (70.50%)	59 (29.50%)	-	2.70
2. You like to eat Mid day Meal daily in school	191 (95.50%)	9 (4.50%)	-	2.95
3.The menu of the mid day meal has to be changed periodically to include seasonal foods	145 (72.50%)	55 (27.50%)	-	2.72
4.The meal serving time is convenient and appropriate	187 (93.50%)	13 (6.50%)	-	2.93
5.The quantity of meal served is sufficient	26 (13.00%)	61 (30.50%)	113 (56.50%)	1.56
6.Children can concentrate on classroom learning after meals	42 (21.00%)	120 (60.00%)	38 (19.00%)	2.02
7.children sit in a clean place while eating Mid Day meal	110 (55.00%)	78 (39.00%)	12 (6.00%)	2.49
8.Proper drinking water is supplied	138 (69.00%)	57 (28.50%)	5 (2.50%)	2.66
9. feeling of satiety aroused in children after having meal	34 (17.00%)	48 (24.00%)	118 (59.00%)	1.58
10.Children can concentrates more during morning classes compared to afternoon classes	143 (71.50%)	55 (27.50%)	2 (1.00%)	2.70
11.Children are interested in meals compared to classroom learning	20 (10.00%)	75 (37.50%)	105 (52.50%)	1.57
12.There is need to continue the mid day meal programme	184 (92.00%)	16 (8.00%)	-	2.92
13. The food given to you is tasty under MDM	116 (58.00%)	80 (40.00%)	4 (2.00%)	2.56
14.Children like to have mid day meal on holiday	63 (31.50%)	123 (61.50%)	14 (7.00%)	2.24

Further, it can be inferred that more than half of the respondents (59.0%, 56.5% and 52.5%) reported that feeling of satiety is not aroused; the quantity of meal is not.

1.1 Overall perception level of school children towards Mid Day Meal Scheme-

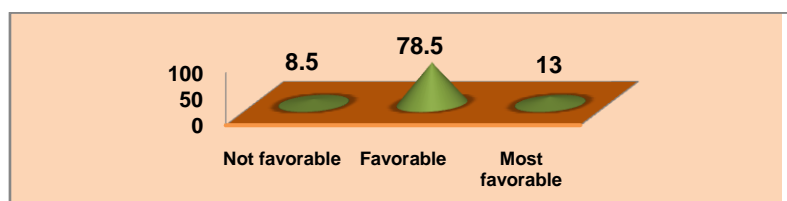
Table 2 and fig. 1 reveals that majority (78.5%) of school children had favorable perception followed by 13.0 per cent of school children were having most favorable perception whereas only 8.5 per cent of school children had not favorable perception towards Mid Day Meal Scheme.

Table 2 Overall Perception level of school children about Mid Day Meal Scheme (n1=200)

Sl. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Not favorable (below 30.24)	17	8.50
2.	Favorable (30.24-37.04)	157	78.50
3.	Most favorable (>37.04)	26	13.0

Mean = 33.64, S.D. = 3.40

Fig. 1 Distribution of School Children according to their Overall Perception towards Mid Day Meal Scheme



2. Perception of parents towards Mid Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) - The data from table 3 depicts that most of parents i.e. 94.0 % preferred to continuation of Mid Day Meal Programme with mean score 2.94. The majority of parents showed most favorable perception with respect to serving time of meal (74.0%) followed by children learns good eating habits from school (72.0%), academic achievement of child is also noticeable (70.0%) with mean score 2.74, 2.72 respectively. Further, It can also be noticed that most of parents (66.0%,

64.0%, 62.0%, 60.0%) reported that proper drinking water is supplied followed by their children feel happy, social interaction has been improved among children and also encouraged them to send their children to school with mean score 2.60,2.64, 2.62 and 2.60 respectively.

Table 3 Perception of Parents about Mid Day Meal Scheme

n2=50

Statement				Mean Score
	Most favorable	Favorable	Not favorable	
1. The meal served to children is good in terms of quality of food grains, vegetables etc.	19 (38.00%)	31 (62.00%)	-	2.10
2. Children feel happy with the mid day meal	32 (64.00%)	18 (36.00%)	-	2.64
3. The menu of the mid day meal has to be changed periodically to include seasonal foods	23 (46.00%)	27 (54.00%)	-	2.46
4. The meal serving time is convenient and appropriate	37 (74.00%)	13 (26.00%)	-	2.74
5. MDM scheme has encouraged people to send their children to school	30 (60.00%)	20 (40.00%)	-	2.60
6. Hygiene is maintained while serving the meal	11 (22.00%)	27 (54.00%)	12 (24.00%)	1.98
7. Child's health status has been improved by MDM programme	15 (30.00%)	35 (75.00%)	-	2.30
8. Proper drinking water is supplied	33 (66.00%)	14 (28.00%)	3 (6.00%)	2.60
9. After the introduction of mid day meal academic achievement is noticeable	35 (70.00%)	15 (30.00%)	-	1.70
10. Feeling of satiety aroused in children after having meal	8 (16.00%)	29 (58.00%)	13 (26.00%)	1.90
11. Children are learning good eating habits from school	36 (72.00%)	14 (28.00%)	-	2.72
12. The social interaction has improved as all the children have their meal together	31 (62.00%)	19 (38.00%)	-	2.62
13. Continuation of mid day meal programme is needed	47 (94.00%)	3 (6.00%)	-	2.94
14. I am satisfied with the mid day meal programme	10 (20.00%)	34 (68.00%)	6 (12.00%)	2.08

2.1 Overall perception of parents towards Mid Day Meal Scheme-

It can be noticed from table 4 that majority (72.0%) of parents had favorable perception whereas an equal percentage (14.0%) of parents has been found in case of highly favorable and less favorable perception towards Mid Day Meal scheme.

Table 4 Overall perception level of parents about Mid Day Meal Scheme (n2=50)

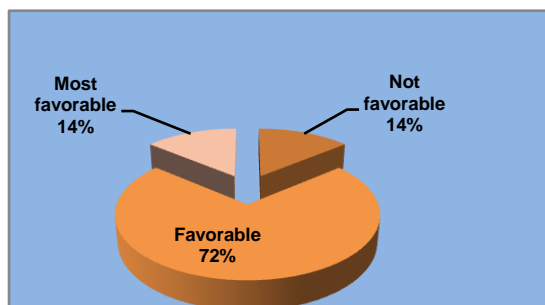


Fig.2

Sl. No.	Category	(F)	(%)
1.	Not Favorable (below 30.85)	7	14.00
2.	Favorable (30.85 - 35.91)	36	72.00
3.	Most Favorable (>35.91)	7	14.00

Mean=33.38, S.D. = 2.53

3. Perception level of teachers towards Mid Day Meal Scheme-

Perusals of table 5 reveal that most (93.3%,) of teachers stated that serving time of meal is convenient followed by Quantity of cooked meal/food grains (76.7%), MDM fulfills the need of children (60.0%) and serving and cooking of food with proper hygiene (56.7%) with mean score 2.93, 2.76, 1.60 and 2.56 respectively. The findings further reveal that majority (86.7%) of teachers had favorable perception towards Child's health status has been improved followed by academic achievement is noticeable (80.0%), timely supply

of food grain/cooked food (73.3%), the menu has been changed periodically (66.6%), toilet facility and hand washing facility is provided (63.3%) with mean score 2.13, 2.20, 2.26, 2.33 and 2.03 respectively.

Table 5 Perception level of teachers about Mid Day Meal Scheme (n3=30)

Statement				Mean Score
	Most favorable	Favorable	Not favorable	
1.Quality of meal served to students is good in terms of quality of food grains, vegetables etc.	12 (40.00%)	18 (60.00%)	-	2.40
2.Quantity of cooked meal/food grains provided to the school is based on the number of school children	23 (76.70%)	7 (23.30%)	-	2.76
3.The menu of the mid day meal has to be changed periodically to include seasonal foods	10 (33.30%)	20 (66.60%)	-	2.33
4.The meal serving time is convenient and appropriate	28 (93.30%)	2 (6.70%)	-	2.93
5.The quantity of meal served is sufficient	-	13 (43.30%)	17 (56.70%)	1.43
6.Children needs for food during afternoon is fulfilled through mid day meal programme	18 (60.00%)	12 (40.00%)	-	1.60
7.Hygiene is maintained while serving and consuming the meal	17 (56.70%)	13 (43.30%)	-	2.56
8.Child's health status has been improved by the mid day meal programme	4 (13.30%)	26 (86.70%)	-	2.13
9.Proper drinking water is supplied	6 (20.00%)	19 (63.30%)	5 (16.70%)	2.03
10.After the introduction of MDM academic achievement is noticeable	6 (20.00%)	24 (80.00%)	-	2.20
11.Food grain/cooked food supplied timely and accurately	8 (26.70%)	22 (73.30%)	-	2.26
12.School has sufficient storage facility for the raw food materials/cooked food	3 (10.00%)	11 (36.70%)	16 (53.30%)	1.56
13.Toilet facility and hand washing facility is provided	6 (20.00%)	19 (63.30%)	5 (16.70%)	2.03
14.Sufficient number of plates and glasses are available for children to have meal	13 (43.30%)	17 (56.70%)	-	2.43
15.The fund provided for the mid day meal programme is sufficient	4 (13.30%)	18 (60.00%)	8 (26.70%)	1.86
16.Quantity of meal provided by the government per child/per day is sufficient	-	12 (40.00%)	18 (60.00%)	1.40

The findings also indicated that more than half of the teachers (60.0%) stated that quantity of meal decided by government is not sufficient followed by insufficient quantity is given (56.7%), no sufficient storage facility at school for the raw food materials/cooked food (53.3%) with mean score 1.40, 1.43 and 1.56 respectively.

3.1 Overall perception level of teachers towards Mid Day Meal Scheme-

The results of table 6 and fig 3 reveal that majority (80.0%) of teachers were having favorable perception whereas 13.3% of teachers were having highly favorable perception while only 6.7 per cent were

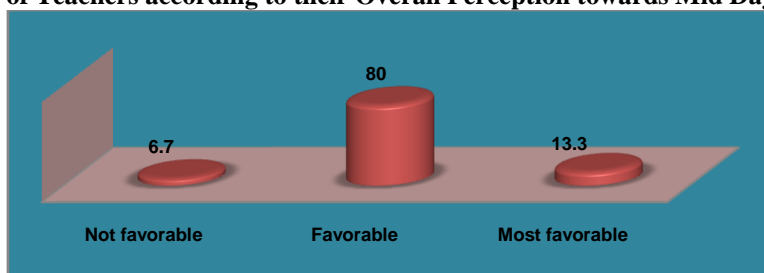
having not favorable perception towards the functioning of Mid Day Meal Programme. Similarly, **Singh (2016)** found that Most of the elementary school teachers (81.3%) have a moderate level of attitude towards MDM Scheme.

Table 6 Overall perception level of teachers about Mid Day Meal Scheme (n3=30)

Sl. No.	Category	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1.	Not Favorable (below 31.20)	2	6.70
2.	Favorable (between 31.20 - 36.60)	24	80.00
3.	Most Favorable (>36.60)	4	13.30

Mean= 33.90, S.D. = 2.70

Fig. 3 Distribution of Teachers according to their Overall Perception towards Mid Day Meal Scheme



IV. Conclusion-

In India, large numbers of children from poor families are dependent on MDM for having their one-two meals a day. Various studies proven, MDM as an effective programme at ground level as it is helpful in reducing the nutritional gap among children and promoting the parents to send their children for education in schools. Similarly, from the findings of present study it was concluded that majority of school children, parents and teachers of upper primary schools were having favorable perception towards MDM scheme. As well as, Most of respondents want to continue this programme because it improves attendance, good habits and social interaction among children whereas maximum number of respondents was somewhat dissatisfied with the insufficiency or quantity of meal. Thus, the quality and quantity of food should be maintained. There is a high need of regular check and audit of this programme at school level and parents, community leaders should be actively involved to provide suggestions.

Limitations and scope: The present study had its own limitations regarding time and resources. As it was conducted only in a particular district with a small sample size thus findings of study cannot be generalized in whole state but these are helpful to give the insights about its functioning in Bikaner district. MDM is highly acceptable and popular among all states therefore there is a need to conduct the researches on yearly basis to see the impact of MDM programme in all aspects and its effectiveness in large scale.

REFERENCES:

- Bellary, N. A., Karkannavar, J. S. and Bharati, P., 2011, Information and opinion of beneficiaries on Akshara Dasoha programme in Hubli city of Karnataka. *Indian J. Nutr. Dietet.*, Vol.48: pp.268-274.
- Kantawala, S., Iyer, U., Dhruv S. and Gandhi, H., 2013, Perceptions Of Municipal School Teachers Of Urban Vadodara On Strengths And Weaknesses Of Mid-Day Meal Programme: Voices From The Ground. *Journal of Community Nutrition & Health*. Vol.2 (2): pp. 26-31.
- Lal, K., 2013, Execution of National 'Mid-Day-Meal' program with special reference to Haryana- an analysis. *American Int. J. Res. in Humanit., Arts Social Sci.*, Vol. 4(2): pp.121-127.
- Mohanty, S.P., 2014, Practice of mid day meal scheme at elementary education Level: a case study of rural elementary school. *Sch. J. Arts. Humanit. Social Sci.*, Vol. 2(3A): pp.402-407.
- Nambiar, S. V. and Desai, K. R. 2010, Positive and negative deviant behaviors affecting the mid day meal programme (MDMP) in Government aided primary schools of an urban Indian city: causes, consequences and solutions. *Int. J. Biomedical Res. Analy.*, Vol. 3 (3): pp.1-10.
- Nath, B. and Nath, I., 2015, A study of the impact of mid-day-meal programme on enrolment and retention of primary school children. *Int. J. App. Res.*, Vol. 1(10): pp.407-413.
- Pinisetty, R., 2015, Community participation in mid day meal scheme: exclusion and inclusion in Andhra Pradesh. *Sch. Res. J. Interdiscip. Studies*, Vol. 3(19): pp.662-670.
- Raju, S.P. V., 2009, Best practices in the implementation of mid-day meal scheme in Assam. Department of Comparative Education and International Cooperation, National Univ. Educational Planning and Administration, pp.1-50.

- [9]. Samson, M., Noronha C. and De2, A., 2007, Towards more benefits from Delhi's midday meal scheme. *School Health Services in India*. Vol. 4 (7): pp.1-32. Singh, M. and Mishra, N., 2010, Evaluation Study on Mid Day Meal Programme in Meghalaya. Available at: www.csdhyderabad.org. Singh, M., 2016, Mid-Day Meal Scheme: As Perceived By the School Teachers in Bihar. *International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social Sciences*. Vol. 3(3): pp. 53-59, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com.
- [10]. Singh, N. and Badiger, C., 2016, Knowledge, Opinion and Nutritional Status Of Rural School Children Participating in Mid Day Meal Programme, Unpublished M.Sc. Thesis, College of Rural Home Science, UAS, Dharwad.
- [11]. Wizarat, K., 2009, Study of best practices adopted in mid-day-meal scheme in Uttar Pradesh. Department of Higher and Professional Education, National Univ. of Educational Planning and Administration, pp.1-57.