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## Constraints Faced by Teachers in Implementation of Mid-Day Meal Programme at School Level

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### Abstract:

Mid-day meal programme was launched as a centrally sponsored programme on 15th August 1995. The mid day meal programme was introduced primarily to protect the nutritional as well as the educational rights of the children. Teachers play a key role in the successful implementation of mid day meal programme at school level. Present study focuses on the constraints faced by them in the implementation of mid day meal programme. The present study (2015) was conducted in the purposively selected two villages Bhojla and Simarddha of Jhansi taluk, Jhansi district of Uttar Pradesh; Garag village and Yettingudda village from Dharwad taluk, Dharwad district of Karnataka. The sample size comprised of 200 teachers from the schools of selected villages of Dharwad (Karnataka) and Jhansi (Uttar Pradesh), where mid day meal is served (50 teachers from each village). Structured interview schedule was used to collect the primary data. Results showed that 97.00 per cent teachers had low mass media participation level. The study showed that most of (60.00 %) teachers are performing helper/cooks roles other than teaching such as cooking, cleaning and other arrangements due to lacking, irregularity and absenteeism of helpers/cook followed by more than (54.00%) of the teachers having complaints of improper toilet facility for school children as well as for them also and half (51.50%) of the teachers did not received any training regarding better implementation of mid day meal programme at school level. Related to other aspects such as adulteration, drinking water facility, teaching time, storage area, timely supply of foodgrains/cooked food and filling of mid day meal registers have shown positive result by the teachers under the programme.

**Keywords:** Mid day meal, universalization, constraints, implementation, teachers, adulteration

### 1. Introduction

Mid-day meal programme was launched as a centrally sponsored programme on 15th August 1995. Its objective was to boost universalization of primary education; to increase childrens' enrolment and attendance; protection of children from classroom hunger; to develop socialization among children of all the castes and to improve the nutritional status of children by the food being given to them at the school. The mid-day meal programme was introduced primarily to protect the nutritional as well as the educational rights of the children. This is due to the fact that children are not able to concentrate in their studies with empty stomach and there is a need to focus upon the mid-day meal programme, to overcome child's short term hunger. Thus, initiating this kind of meal programme, Government of India aimed at helping the children especially belong to the poor socio-economic background to attend school and to have at least Mid-day Meal through which their education as well as food related issues could be tackled. In India, however, the history of mid-day meal programme goes back to the much before the initiation that has come from the United Kingdom in 1945. Interestingly, the food was distributed in the form of snacks to the children who attended the schools in rural areas so that they will not go with hungry. It has been stated, in Tamil Nadu, the scheme worked efficiently in rural areas in the age group of seven to nine-year old. The food was distributed without any gender discrimination and it was well targeted among the needy households. In Eastern India, the Keshav Academy of Calcutta introduced compulsory Tiffin (a kind of snacks) item for the boys on payment basis in 1928. Consequently, in the state of Kerala similar kind of programme was started in 1941 providing meals to the school-going children. This was followed by Bombay in 1942, Bangalore in 1943, Uttar Pradesh in 1953, and Orissa in 1962. Since 1950, food in some form or the other was distributed to the children in few states. In the year 1950 many Indian states started mid-day meal programme with the assistance from different international donor agencies like: the UNICEF (United Nation International Children's' Emergency Fund), FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), CARE (Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere), WHO (World Health Organization), etc. The CARE (Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere) has supported in particular the mid-day meal programme in many states in India from 1950 to early 1980. With the assistance from international co-operation, the Indian government introduced the mid-day meal programme for the age group of 6-11 in 1962-63 where food was provided to the children for 200 days in an academic year with an input of 300 calories and 8-12 grams of protein per child per day. It was in the Madras state which was distributing cooked meal to the children in the schools since 1957. In 1956, Madras Government set up a feeding programme to distribute food to the poor children from the rural areas. In 1982, Tamil Nadu Government set up a state wide scheme called the *Nutritious Meal Programme* even before the introduction of mid-day meal programme at national level in 1995. This was a major attempt taken by the government of India to protect the child from gross hunger.

Thus the idea of mid-day meal programme has been the serious interest of the Government of India since early 1980's. But the scheme got attention in nationwide only in 1995 with the aim of "the universalization of primary education by increasing enrolment, retention and attendance and simultaneously impacting on nutrition of students in primary classes". After November 28, 2001, in its historic judgment the Supreme Court of India in the *right to food* case directed all states to provide *cooked meals* to all primary school children. Thus, the mid-day meal programme has become a part of the daily routine across the country providing food to 120 million school children in their respective schools. Teachers play a key role in the successful implementation of mid-day meal programme at school level. Teachers along with helpers/cooks are able to perform their duties regarding mid-day meal programme towards school children. Present study focuses on the constraints faced by them in the implementation of mid-day meal programme.

## 2. Review of Literature

**Tolimson (2007)** SFP (School Feeding Programme) faces a lot of challenges in spite of its benefits and projected success by stakeholders like WFP (World Feeding Programme). In developing countries, politicians see SFP (School Feeding Programme) as a means of gaining popularity. Furthermore, some SFP (School Feeding Programme) food is sold to generate money to supplement school income or supplement teacher's personal income.

**Prakash et al. (2010)** from their study on mid-day meal programme- a comprehensive analysis of operational constraints and impact of training on the personnel involved in selected schools concluded that though children were getting hot meals under the MDM (Mid-day Meal) programme, the quality of meals can be improved tremendously by making small alterations and quality checks in the infrastructural facilities available for implementing the programme. Observations also indicated that the training had a definite positive impact on the quality of mid-day meal programme in all schools and enhanced the awareness of personnel involved. MDM (Mid-day Meal) can also be a vehicle for distribution of fortified foods to tackle micronutrient malnutrition, though at present not in operation.

**Ganguly (2013)** in his study on method of implementation of socio-technological aspects of mid-day meal programme for school children concluded that in the all schools that are visited in Hooghly district, it was found that, the teachers' participations in the MDM (Mid-day Meal) programme is very good. Despite of the all problems regarding, cooking cost, kitchens etc., they do not stop giving midday meal to their students. Even, in some schools' head teachers and other teachers provide the meal's cost from their own pockets. So, if those problems which affect the total MDM (Mid-day Meal) programme can be removed then, MDM (Mid-day Meal) will become a good practice in schools. Besides of teachers, involvement of some Non-Government Organizations or Self Help Groups is also needed for improvement of this programme. Implementations of technologies and new approaches will help this scheme in future.

**Asiago and Akello (2014)** conducted study on the challenges facing head teacher's role in the implementation of the school feeding programme in public primary schools, in Nairobi province, Kenya and concluded that head teachers face many challenges in implementing SFP (School Feeding Programme) in schools. Stakeholder and donors have a responsibility of minimizing the challenges by apportioning a supportive kitty to the program and offering voluntary service especially in food preparation and recommended that education policies should integrate SFP (School Feeding Programme) in schools addressing regional differences/challenges in a location of a supportive fund for SFP (School Feeding Programme). Parents need sensitization on their role in support of SFP (School Feeding Programme) in order for schools to realize academic excellence. This will free the teachers from preparing and serving SFP (School Feeding Programme) food hence remain focused to teaching only.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Locale of the Study

Dharwad district is situated in northern part of Karnataka state 78° 28° north latitude and 14° 31° eastern latitude. The district comes under northern dry zone and northern transitional zone; Geographical area Dharwad district is 4092 square km. Jhansi is a historic city in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. It lies in the region of Bundelkhand on the banks of the Pahuj River, in the extreme south of Uttar Pradesh. Jhansi is the administrative headquarters of Jhansi district and Jhansi division. Called the Gateway of Bundelkhand, Jhansi is situated between the rivers Pahuj and Betwa at an average elevation of 285 meters (935 feet).

The present study (2015) was conducted in the purposively selected two villages Bhojla and Simarddha of Jhansi taluk, Jhansi district of Uttar Pradesh; Garag village and Yettingudda village from Dharwad taluk, Dharwad district of Karnataka.

### 3.2. Sample for the Study

The sample of the study comprised of 200 teachers from the schools of selected villages of Dharwad (Karnataka) and Jhansi (Uttar Pradesh), where mid-day meal is served. Fifty teachers were selected randomly from the schools of each selected village of both the districts.

### 3.3 Research Tool for Data Collection

A pilot test in a study area was conducted before the start of the actual research to locate any ambiguity in the questions. After the pilot testing, certain modifications were made in the interview schedule by consulting the specialists and the teachers of the school in the selected topics. Finalized interview schedule was used for the data collection. The schedule was consisting of questions based on general information/ characteristics of the teachers. Questions based on constraints faced by the teachers during implementation of mid-day meal programme were asked through 'YES or NO' type of questions. Constraints were asked through a list of 14 statements from teachers were asked.

## 4. Results and Discussion

Type of media	Listening/viewing/ reading behavior		
		Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Radio	Regularly	35	17.50
	Occasionally	56	28.00
	Never	109	54.50
Television	Regularly	41	20.50
	Occasionally	103	51.50
	Never	56	28.00
Newspaper	Regularly	109	54.50
	Occasionally	56	28.50
	Never	35	17.50
Magazine	Regularly	46	23.00
	Occasionally	61	30.50
	Never	93	46.50
Journal	Regularly	02	1.00
	Occasionally	28	14.00
	Never	170	85.00
Internet/ mobile	Regularly	107	53.50
	Occasionally	90	45.00
	Never	03	1.50

Table 1: Mass media participation of teachers  
(n=200)

Sl. No.	Category	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1.	Low (<10)	194	97.00
2.	Medium (10-14)	06	3.00
3.	High (>14)	0	0.00

Table 1a: Mass media participation level of teachers  
(n=200)

Statement	Yes		No	
	F	%	F	%
1. Teaching time is reduced/affected	61	30.50	139	69.50
2. Less supply/delayed supply of food grains/cooked food	56	28.00	144	72.00
3. Cleaning of dining area after meals is time consuming activity	103	51.50	97	48.50
4. Sometimes, children are not washing their dishes properly, hence it is added work to supervise them	68	34.00	132	66.00
5. Mid-day meal registers and monitoring forms are very difficult to fill/maintain	53	26.50	147	73.50
6. Improper/no storage place for cooked food/food grains	46	23.00	154	77.00
7. Improper kitchen shed (if meal is prepared into the school by the cook)	73	36.50	127	63.50
8. Adulteration complaints into the food grains /cooked food	42	21.00	158	79.00
9. No training received by the teachers for better implementation of mid-day meal programme	86	43.00	114	57.00
10. Improper facility of drinking water	88	44.00	112	56.00
11. Lack of proper hygiene practices/difficulty in maintaining hygiene in store room, kitchen and in other infrastructure facilities	66	33.00	134	67.00
12. Improper toilet facility	108	54.00	92	46.00
13. Less availability of eating utensils	93	46.50	107	53.50
14. Due to lack of helper/cook, also performing their roles other than teaching	120	60.00	80	40.00

Table 2: Constraints faced by teachers during implementation of mid-day meal programme  
(n=200)

Table 1, 1a and showed that 97.00 per cent teachers had low mass media participation level. As they were educated but their mass media participation level was found low. This might be due to that many teachers did not have any subscription and ownership of radio because nowadays, television has replaced the radio as it is both audio and visual aid and those who have subscription did not get much time for listening radio because in morning teachers are in hurry worry to get ready for school and in the evening time they are busy in fulfilling house responsibilities. However, their educational status stimulates them to participate in mass media communication activities such as watching television, reading newspaper and due to daily communicating needs they are using internet/mobile.

A close review of Table 2 showed that most of (60.00 %) teachers are performing helper/cooks roles other than teaching such as cooking, cleaning and other arrangements due to lacking, irregularity and absenteeism of helpers/cook followed by more than (54.00%) of the teachers having complaints of improper toilet facility for school children as well as for them also and half (51.50%) of the teachers did not received any training regarding better implementation of mid-day meal programme at school level. Related to other aspects such as adulteration, drinking water facility, teaching time, storage area, timely supply of food grains/cooked food and filling of mid-day meal registers have shown positive result by the teachers under the programme.

As the updated guidelines of mid-day meal programme by the Ministry of Human Resource Development had provision of providing training to teachers, cooks, community leaders/ school development committee members as they play a major role in the implementation and success of mid-day meal programme. There is need to provide trainings such as training on hand washing campaign, training on recognition of duties need to be performed during programme, training on how to maintain mid-day meal records. Training to the different persons who were involved in the mid-day meal programme should be given for the smooth functioning of the programme. Prakash *et al.* (2010) showed in their study that the training had a definite positive impact on the quality of mid-day meal programme in all schools and enhanced the awareness of personnel involved. Vippala (2015) showed similar result that training programmes were not conducted for HMs on mid-day meal scheme.

## 5. Suggestions

- i. There is need to provide trainings such as training on hand washing campaign, training on recognition of duties need to be performed during programme, training on how to maintain mid-day meal records
- ii. To create awareness for increasing mass media participation which would be helpful for updating knowledge and ideas and these may be used in area of education for its betterment.
- iii. Toilet facilities both for teachers and school children should be in top priority in every school
- iv. Honorarium of helpers/cooks should be increased so that they may encourage themselves for keeping punctuality in their work and burden of teachers can be less.

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