

Research Paper :

## Impact of mid day meal programme on health status of children

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### ABSTRACT

The present investigation was taken to assess the Impact of Mid day Meal Programme on health status of children. Research had been conducted for collection of Data From Govt. school from Ghaziabad District (U.P). Sample size had been chosen n=150 a range of data was collected from male and female students of Govt. School. Anthropometric measurement had been used to analyse the impact of Mid Day Meal on health status of male and female students of Govt. school.

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**M**id Day Meal Programme is the basic Programme especially for children. The Programme covers children studying in Primary and Upper Primary Government, Local Bodies, Aided, Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative Innovative Education Centers and Madrassas. A Part From rice and sambar, schools children enjoy vegetable pulao, pongal, lemon rice, tamarid rice, khichidi and curd rice with egg/banana twice a week.

Mid day meals can also be a tool of reinforcement of prevailing social inequalities. For instance, during the pilot survey in Rajasthan, we found one village (Joz in Rajasamand district) where Dalit children had to drink from separate pitchers. This is an abominable instance of caste discrimination in the class room, which defeats the socialization role of mid-day meals. How common is caste discrimination in the context of mid day meals? The survey evidence suggests that open discrimination is rare. For instance, we did not find any cases of separate sitting arrangements or of preferential treatment for upper-caste children. Pupils of all social backgrounds seem to be quite happy to sit together and share the same food. Parents, too claim to welcome the arrangement in most cases. Teachers confirmed that parents rarely objected to their children sharing a meal with children of other castes. And among disadvantaged casts, very few parents felt that their children had ever experienced caste discrimination in the context of the mid day meal.

Mid Day Meal facilitate the abolition of classroom hunger. Many Indian children reach school on an empty

stomach in the morning as early morning breakfast is not part of the household routine. In the absence of a mid day meal pupils often go hungry after a few hours and find it hard to concentrate. This problem is now large resolved.

The Mid Day Meal is also a protection against hunger in general. This year for instance, mid day meals have helped to avert an intensification of child under nutrition in many drought- affected areas. Similarly poor households such as those headed by widows or landless laborers value the assurance of a free lunch for their children. The contribution of mid-day meals to food security seems to be particularly crucial in tribal areas, where hunger is endemic.

Mid day meal also contribute to gender equality by creating employment opportunities for poor women. In the sample schools, a large majority (68 per) of the cooks are women and most of them come from underprivileged backgrounds. This cooks are surprising, since the work is fairly demanding and salaries are low. In addition, the scheme guidelines often state that priority should be given to disadvantage persons when cooks are appointed. In Karnataka, for instance the guidelines clearly specify that all cooks should be women and that preference should be given to widows. There is another important way in which mid day meals contribute to the liberation of working women: when children get a hot meal at school, mothers are free from the burden of having to feed them at noon. This feature is especially relevant for widowed mothers,