

Impact of mid-day meal programme on educational and nutritional status of school children in Srinagar with specific reference to district Pulwama

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■ **ABSTRACT :** This paper is an endeavor to scrutinize midday meal (MDM) schemes operational in Srinagar with specific reference to district Pulwama, which is one of the largest child development programmes consecutively all through and is considered as a triumphant programme all over India. Introduction of mid-day meal occurred almost centuries ago. The MDM programme is also identified as "School lunch programme. The core intention of this programme is to magnetize more children for admission to schools, to retain them so that literacy augmentation of children could be brought about and it was seen that a child who is physically and mentally weak cannot be expected to obtain full advantage of schooling. The diet of the school child should, therefore, receive first consideration. The diet should contain all the nutrients in proper proportion, passable for optimum health. In order to combat malnutrition and improve the health of school children, the School Health Committee (1961) recommended that school children should be assured of at least one nourishing meal. The programme envisaged the stipulation of cooked meals / possessed foods of caloric value equivalent to 100 g of wheat / rice for children studying in classes I – VIII in all Government, local body and Government aided Primary Schools free of cost. However, it was about 50 years later that such schemes were given grim attention. The main purpose of the study was to assess the effect of MDM programme on enrolment attendance, dropouts and its impact on nutritional status as well as to evaluate the overall role of MDM programme in the government schools of the particular district. The study found that the MDMs have brought an affirmative collision in case of attendance, dropout rate and nutritional status of the students.

■ **KEY WORDS :** MDM programme, Nutritional status

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