

Mid-Day Meal service in schools a pilot analysis

RIGHT TO FOOD—akin to Right to education or like Right to information, it's been categorized under the proviso of Human Rights. The right has a quantity of variations. As an intact Right to Food and its variations was outfitted most conspicuously to shelter the right for people to nourish themselves in poise. Also, Right to food was primed to make sure that agreeable food is obtainable, common populace have as much as crucial means to entree it and it amply meets the individual's dietetic rations.

Universal, providing beneficial and nourishing Mid-Day meals to the children in schools would be an imperative stride towards the opposite implementation of 'Right to Food'. The MID DAY MEAL conception, prevalently tagged as MDM, is an admired outset in school programme. The design of Mid-Day meal consists of stipulation of liberated lunch to the students on working days. The apex endeavor of the program is to conserve the kids from classroom appetite. It is fundamentally anticipated to augment the figure of enrollments alongside the presence and attendance of students to a particular school, to advance socialization amid children pending from assorted casts and creeds, addressing undernourishment and malnutrition and to craft societal empowerment.

Let's perceive how the integral deliberation of Mid-Day Meal got on trial, projected and ventured. The city Madras is one of the pioneers of the tender so as to seize enterprise of distributing fit to be eaten cooked meals to children in corporation schools in the city in 1923. Afterwards in the 1960s the programme was proposed on an outsized extent underneath the Chief Minister ship of K. Kamaraj. The MDM graph was truthfully introduced past the visit of Chief Minister to Sourashtra Higher Secondary School, Madurai, where this format had been implemented by the linguistic minority natives since 1922. In the year 1982 Dr. M. G. Ramachandran, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, willed to universalize this pitch for all children up to 10th standard. Tamil Nadu's MDM programme is amongst the preeminent known in the country.

The programme in Tamil Nadu at former was termed as a maneuver of 'Populism'. The triumph of the stratagem made the mission massively admired and acknowledged. The hit was so magnificent and extravagant that in 1995, the then Indian Prime Minister P. V. Narsimha Rao hailed the sensation and stir of the venture and recommended that the scheme should be implemented all over the country. Thus began the "National Programme for Nutrition Support to Primary Education". The National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) was inaugurated as a Centrally Sponsored Mid-Day Meal Scheme on 15th August 1995, at the outset of 2408 blocks in India. By the year 1997-98 the NP-NSPE was introduced in all blocks of the country.

On 28 November 2001, the Supreme Court of India approved an order which directs all state governments to commence cooked mid-day meals in primary schools. Subsequently, compatible and attuned citizens and organizations around the country have been confronting and campaigning for the rider of nutritious mid-day meals to all school children. Today, 50 million children are by now roofed under school meal

programmes, and with ample public anxiety, another 50 million are liable to dig up on slat in the near prospect.

The Government of West Bengal took a little instant to prevail over the preliminary hiccups and had finally draw closer to rally the provisos of the Supreme Court guiding principles to put into practice of the programme in every primary schooling society. The launch was through with a quantity of 1,100 primary schools in five districts (Murshidabad, Birbhum, Bankura, Paschim



Midnapore, and Jalpaiguri) and unmitigated to a few other districts.

The opening bang of the cooked Mid-day Meal programme in the chosen primary schools was found to be salient. The boss blow as recorded in a range of studies was with contemplation to the enrichment of attendance of the children in schools. For example, in Murshidabad the velocity of attendance went up by 8% after the debut of the programme. Domino effects from the other districts, like West Midnapore, Birbhum, Bankura and Jalpaiguri were also

positive

But with every profitable fixation comes the off-putting region. Quite a lot of scams pertaining to MDM scheme have been unearthed from the time when it was started. Delhi Police unearthed a scam of the MDM scheme in January 2006. In December 2005, the police had seized eight truckloads (2,760 sacks) of rice meant for primary school children being passed from Food Corporation of India (FCI) storage in Bulandshahr District of UP. In November 2006, the inhabitants of Pembong village (around 30 km from Darjeeling), accused a faction of teachers of embezzling mid-day meals. In a written grumble, the residents claimed that students at the primary school had not got midday meal for the past 18 months. A Times of India testimony says



about a scam involving Government schools that siphon off food grains of mid-day meals by exaggerating the digit of students enrolled in the class.

As an upshot of all these deeds the state of the system of Mid-day meal, which is a compulsory service via Right to Education Act, 2009 , in West Bengal and in other states has fallen downhill like anything. In case of MDM, the eminence of food matters the most. From establishment the graph implicated allotment of fine quality and nourishing foodstuff to the

students so that obligatory malnutrition can be addressed. But at current the class of food provided for MDM has decreased very shoddily.

However, the worth of mid-day meal programmes needs sweeping and radical improvement in most states.

We, the Civilian Welfare Foundation sought to spot the vital and factual problems in the rear of the corrupting stipulation of the Mid-day Meal services. A sample survey was conducted by the members (Dhrubojyoti saha, Adeesh Shrivastav, Annesha Das) of Civilian Welfare Foundation in the government schools of Kolkata on the mid-day meal services. This survey was proved to be a good erudition experience for the surveying members. But according to them, at the same instance it was inadequate and disappointing to see the debasing and undignified circumstance of the Mid-day Meal Service. Negligence of elevated authorities is the cause of different sufferings of the students. There is an added concern regarding the surveys. A risk factor exists during these kinds of surveys on Mid-day Meals. As there are various kinds of scams, these surveys may divulge many secrets and unfamiliar details which can put the lives of the survey conducting members in danger. We wish to run the Pilot survey for the next two weeks and then indulge into a more comprehensive and in-detail survey for Mid Day Meal service.

Instances in the Pilot survey: (The original names of the schools are withheld)

South Calcutta High School:

Location: Lands Down Road

No of students: 178

No of teachers: 8

Mid-Day Meal: provided for all classes

6 days a week

Non-vegetarian and vegetarian (both)

Egg is provided 2 days a week

No sick children because of MDM

The School has taken the enterprise of having its individual kitchen funded by the government. The food is cooked in their kitchen only with six cooks in total out of which three works in morning shift and others works in day shift. The separate kitchen is equipped with proper aquagaurd for purified water to be used. Utensils are also washed in the kitchen, three to four

times a day. The wellbeing of the students is also ensured by enabling fire extinguisher in all kitchens.

The ration of the School is received from DUTTAPUKUR SCHOOL; ANWARSHAH. The quantity of rice received is about 53 bags each containing 50kgs of rice has been received in the last fourteen months. The ration is being obtained three to four times a year.

The meal menu is being decided by the school Head Master with six different menus for the six different days. The preparation of the food is assumed to be done in hygienic condition as no student ever has suffered illness eating the food. The Chairman of the Mid-day Meal Committee has visited the school three to four times.

There were several grievances about the quality of ration received and poor funding by the government. The Head Master had complained about the fact that though the bags are supposed to be of 50kg of rice they get only 20-25 and even 10 kg which is not sufficient. Also the quality of rice is below the mark having stones and insects present in them. He further said that 4.65 rupees per student is not enough to provide proper nutrition: its 3.30 rupees for primary section. He pleaded to do something for this condition.

Thus in this condition it is seen that the school has taken all the required shots to endow with good nutrition to the students. But it is the Higher Authority who is slipshod about the nutrition of the students. They're doing nothing for the betterment of the ration and not even escalating the funds for each student which makes the site worst.

SEVA HIGH SCHOOL:

Location: Bhawanipore

No of students: 480

No of teachers: 22

Mid-Day meal : Only for the primary section, 6 days a week

Â This school however does not have any self kitchen but they manage for cooked food from the retailer, (Sabyasachi Bagchi, the retailer). Food is being brought to school and distributed by six teachers in the school ground. The utensils are not provided by the school. They are brought by the school students. The cooked food served is basically vegetarian but only Friday non veg is provided. Food provided is of sufficient quantity for the student. Head Master said that no students fell ill out of eating food.

Many similar grievances were also found in this school. The Head Master said the rice with insects and stones is not up to the mark desirable.

As contrary to the Head Master the peon told us that kids have got stomach aches from the food and the rice is full of stones and insects. He further said the ‘dal’ tastes like it is made with the stock of rice and is not very desirable. The attitude of the supplier is careless he said -” Ami ki korbo”, was his reply when asked about the improvement of the quality of food.

EVALUATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE SURVEY CONDUCTING MEMBERS:

The sanitation and hygiene of these schools is very pitiable and so is the cleanliness along with sullied toilets. The members got the bona fide anecdote from the peon and helpers. Also it is not vindicated on the part of the Higher Authority to provide Mid-day meal only to the primary students and therefore depriving the secondary students from their Right to Food. Mid-Day Meal is more indispensable for the students of higher classes as the strain and stress of studies is more than the lower classes. In this context the seizing of providing Mid-Day Meal to the students without any correct grounds should be of a punishable offense.



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