

## Analysis of Parental Perception towards Mid-Day Meal Scheme in Government Schools of Coochbehar District, West Bengal

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### ABSTRACT

The Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) functions to boost child nutrition while supporting national education in India. An investigation into Parental views about the Mid-Day Meal Scheme exists in government schools across Coochbehar District within West Bengal. A combined approach utilized this research that consisted of both parental survey data and interviews conducted with 300 parents. The survey results show that a majority of parents (75%) view the MDMS positively because they agree that the program enhances pupil school performance and focus on studies. Thirty percent of all respondents indicated concerns about the MDMS food quality as well as its nutritional value. The research establishes that parents accept the MDMS although they express the need for tastier food alongside parent involvement. The paper proposes strategies to improve MDMS execution in order to achieve higher health and educational achievements for children.

**Keywords-** mid-day meal scheme, parental perception, coochbehar, government schools, nutrition, education.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) began in India during 1995 to deliver nutritious meals to all students throughout the nation. The program emerged as a solution to combat widespread child malnutrition problems mostly affecting children from poor communities. The MDMS provides at least one nutritious meal per day to students for dual purposes which include better nutritional needs and improved learning conditions. Through this scheme the government seeks to address hunger and malnutrition because these conditions normally limit educational achievement and life outcomes. The MDMS functions as an essential connection that makes sure children obtain essential dietary elements needed for their physical advancement. Attending school has bettered through offering mid-day meals by providing families with additional incentive to enroll their children. Parents will choose school enrollment for their children after first receiving confirmation about lunchtime nutritional provisions which enhances both school accessibility and educational fairness. Through its operations the MDMS helps create social fairness through its ability to unite children irrespective of their background differences. The scheme serves two functions by providing food for students while creating opportunities for them to socialize with each other through group dining in educational spaces. The social element of shared meals promotes better inter-community relations by decreasing the ethnic prejudices commonly found in rural communities.

## II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

### *To Analyze Parental Perceptions of the MDMS*

This research implements the first objective by performing an extensive evaluation of parental beliefs about the MDMS. The research gathers both quantitative and qualitative data which explores parental perspectives regarding how effective the scheme is in meeting nutritional requirements and helping students attend classes and maintain their general health. The research investigation probes multiple aspects of MDMS-related parental views. The evaluation will measure

parental contentment with the size and quality of food supplied through the MDMS. The assessment will evaluate parental comprehension about MDMS goals together with their knowledge of nutritional guidelines that affect meal preparation. The study analyzes parent beliefs about how MDMS affects educational outcomes of schoolchildren including their educational success and their habitual school attendance. The study investigates parental trust toward local authorities who execute the scheme alongside their opinions on food preparation safety and distribution hygiene standards. The research analyzes diverse aspects to present a complete understanding of home perceptions regarding the MDMS so it can reveal their encounters along with their program expectations.

### **III. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Research studies must include a literature review because this section both reviews existing understanding and shows where current work wants to intervene. The following section examines the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) through an exploration of three vital aspects including its significance together with parental practices and their role as well as the barriers in its implementation.

#### **3.1 Importance of Mid-Day Meal Schemes**

Studies have substantially shown how Mid-Day Meal Schemes help resolve two essential educational problems which include better school attendance rates and enhanced child nutrition. The Indian government established the MDMS as a program to eliminate child malnutrition while also targeting educational involvement among low-income students. The research work of Jha and Jhingran (2005) proves that government schools received increased enrollment after implementing mid-day meal distribution. The authors discovered that effective MDMS implementation boosted student attendance rates mostly among disadvantaged groups such as girls and those belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The MDMS plays an exceptionally important role in providing food nourishment. Research conducted by Dey and Ghosh (2018) showed that children involved in the MDMS program showed better results for their height and weight-for-age ratios than children who did not receive mid-day meals. The increased nutrition status proves essential because poor nutrition interferes with both mental development and academic performance. Research indicates that consistent access to healthy food leads to improved health results together with better learning abilities for children. The MDMS leads to enhanced educational outcomes in addition to its benefits for improving student attendance rates and nutritional status. The academic performance of students who participate in the mid-day meal program surpasses those who do not participate according to the findings of Khera (2011). The MDMS program delivers food that reduces hunger and establishes learnable classrooms since students focus better in classes when their nutritional needs are met. Data shows that the MDMS creates a positive learning performance connection which demonstrates that the program delivers advantages that range from food provision to classroom success.

#### **3.2 Parental Perception and Engagement**

Parental perspectives about educational initiatives serve as the key determining factor that influences the success of educational programs like the MDMS. The level of involvement parents have in their children's academic development influences the way educational programs both receive and execute their efforts. Positive viewpoints about school feeding programs from parents tend to increase stakeholder backing of these nutrition initiatives. Desai and Alok (2018) demonstrated through their research that parents tend to motivate school attendance in their children as they become knowledgeable about MDMS benefits and develop positive perceptions. Parental involvement becomes essential because their backing strengthens the MDMS by showing families how important it is to integrate it into their daily routines. Parental involvement in the MDMS includes more than just backing their children since they actively monitor the initiative and provide feedback for its evaluation. The research by Gupta and Sinha (2019) demonstrates that MDMS effectiveness increases when parents gain participation in school decisions as well as involvement in school activities. Parents give essential feedback about the quality of the food, cleanliness of facilities and food nutritional value provided in the school cafeteria. Such feedback mechanisms play a vital role in developing the MDMS and resolving potential issues discovered throughout its operation. When parents perceive negatively about the MDMS their success rates get jeopardized. Parents who believe they receive insufficient meals of poor quality will develop mistrust of the program which causes them to enroll and participate less frequently. For the continued success of the MDMS it is essential to grasp and handle how parents view this program.

### **IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A research study needs a literature review to examine established knowledge and show its planned focus. This section studies MDMS by looking into its value alongside parental actions and responsibilities plus the challenges that limit its success.

#### **4.1 Importance of Mid-Day Meal Schemes**

Research proves that Mid-Day Meal Schemes promote better education by improving student attendance and improving nutritional status of children. The Indian government launched MDMS to end child hunger while getting poor

young people engaged with education. Jha and Jhingran (2005) demonstrated that government schools attracted more students following the implementation of the mid-day meal distribution. Through their research the authors saw that students from poor families and girls gained most from quality MDMS implementation in terms of better attendance. MDMS stands out as a vital system for providing healthy food to students. Dey and Ghosh (2018) reported that students who participated in the MDMS program achieved stronger height and weight improvement than those without the mid-day meals program. Good nutritional support helps children learn better while gaining mental skills because poor diet affects both academic results and mental development. Studies show healthy food availability every day makes students healthier in body and mind. Educational outcomes improve directly from the MDMS system despite its benefits for attendance and nutrition. The research by Khera (2011) demonstrates that students with mid-day meal participation achieve better academic results than students without program involvement. MDMS provides proper nutrition that reduces hunger and lets students become better learners in the classroom because food helps them focus during lessons. MDMS analysis reveals that students do better in school and enhance their educational achievements while getting meals under the program.

#### **4.2 Parental Perception and Engagement**

Parental views on educational programs mostly control the success rate of MDMS programs and other similar initiatives. Level of parent interest in kids education guides both program operators and parents in what to do next. Parents who support school feeding programs create more interest in nutrition projects from community members. Desai and Alok (2018) revealed through their research that parents drive their children to go to school after they learn about MDMS advantages and develop favorable ideas. Parent engagement with the MDMS grows more effective because families support what they see the program does for their everyday life. When parents join MDMS they must do more than simply show support because they must regularly inspect the program and supply updates for its assessment process. According to Gupta and Sinha (2019) schools achieve better MDMS results when parents assist with school management and join schools events. Parents evaluate how well their children receive quality food and assess the cleanliness of the school cafeteria area and food nutrition basics. The feedback system helps improve the MDMS and solves problems found while the program operates. The MDMS fails to deliver positive outcomes when parents have a bad impression of the program. When parents receive small inadequate food portions of poor quality they develop distrust in the program that makes them join and attend less often. The MDMS needs effective ways to understand and deal with how parents see this program.

## **V. FINDINGS**

The major content of this section explores the research results from "Analysis of Parental Perception towards Mid-Day Meal Scheme in Government Schools of Coochbehar District, West Bengal". Our examination includes five main sections that show who participated and what information they supplied about the MDMS and food along with students coming to classes while also showing what prevents parents from using the program.

#### **5.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Through surveys 300 parents from Coochbehar District explored the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS). The research participants are parents whose children study in public schools. The people taking the survey appeared in diverse groups sharing societal and school-standing positions with home situations. Next parts of this report demonstrate study findings about parental perspectives on the West Bengal Mid-Day Meals Scheme in Coochbehar District government schools.

#### **5.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Three hundred parents from all secondary government schools in Coochbehar District joined the research study. Although 38% were men the 62% parent group consisted of women since mothers normally guide school activities. Research revealed that 41% of parents achieved secondary education while 28% had completed primary school and 19% received college degrees. Our survey groups featured 120 adults of whom 14 had not completed any school education. A large part 47% of participants had monthly household income below ₹10,000 whereas 35% fell within the ₹10,000 to ₹20,000 range when the remaining 18% brought home above ₹20,000 per month. The observed data shows that many residents face financial problems because poverty affects numerous people in this region. Each household contained 5.2 people who sent two to three government school students to Mid-Day Meal Scheme programs.

#### **5.3 Awareness of the MDMS**

Research proves that parents with 82 percent of them demonstrated understanding about the MDMS and its intended goals.

The study found that 58% of participants effectively understood MDMS nutritional rules while other learner groups demonstrated different understanding levels of the program. People with higher education and more money generally understood MDMS content better than others. The research shows parents understand the scheme better based on their social and financial position.

#### **5.4 Perceptions of Food Quality and Nutritional Value**

Survey respondents gave distinct feedback about their thoughts towards MDMS eating options and nutritional balance. Our data reveals that 65% of parent respondents liked the meals while 42% raised nutritional issues due to small amounts of fruits and vegetables plus a simple diet without protein. Most participants noticed their kids attended school more regularly after people received their meals through the program. Parents from disadvantaged homes found the MDMS food better than cooking at home because their expectations for quality were low.

High-income parents analyzed nutrition details of the school meals because they set stronger standards. The MDMS program helped students go to school more often since 78% of parent survey respondents agreed. People who participate in MDMS report that their children show up to school more often and miss fewer classes plus receive better study results because the program gives them free healthy meals. MDMS created better behavior in students at school because its food plan provided important dietary ingredients that conquered hunger.

#### **5.5 Challenges and Areas for Improvement**

Parents acknowledged the MDMS program benefits yet they detailed what needed to be fixed within it. Parents mostly worried about both food safety practices and kitchen hygiene standards at the schools. 52% of interviewed parents feared about unsanitary school kitchens and faulty food handling during meal preparation. Parents told authorities that schools must have better control methods to enforce enhanced hygiene standards in their MDMS assessment. Parents emphasized that their children regularly received different amounts of food from one meal to another. The data reveals that food delivery issues and portion imbalances happened 38% of the time to students. The parents stopped trusting the MDMS but at the same time they manifested their concerns about the program. Participants felt regular feedback from officials plus parent-teacher meetups would let them solve MDMS problems. The evaluation shows both positive and negative findings that can be better addressed through quality food improvements and better hygiene plus parental involvement to help children more fully benefit from the MDMS both healthwise and educationally.

## **VI. DISCUSSION**

The Coochbehar District local government school parents display mixed feelings about Mid-Day Meals because they think positively about it yet worry about food quality combined with operational burden and strong concern for children's involvement. This discussion looks into specific elements that help us understand the MDMS performance problems and gives possible solutions.

#### **6.1 Positive Perceptions**

The study results show that 78% of parents support MDMS because it helps makes school attendance better and improves the quality of life for children. Because it helps fight child nutrition problems and supports school attendance the program receives strong support throughout the community. Parents think providing food through MDMS supports school attendance because it makes clear how the program helps students in their education. These positive learning experience generate multiple valuable results. Positive community views about the MDMS lets this program raise more resources that ensures its smooth performance. Positive parental views about the program boost their support for the program by helping them work with school administrators to solve issues. The connection between care-oriented learning activities brings students to engage better with school work. Low-income parents whom the MDMS supports cannot make their children eat nutritious food at home. The MDMS system helps young students succeed on multiple fronts by giving them educational support and emotional nurturing in one program.

#### **6.2 Importance of Food Quality and Nutrition**

The research showed overall parent support yet showed concern about student meal quality in school meal programs (42%). The study demonstrates that better food quality determines both students' health and their academic achievements at school due to the essential need for nutritional balance during brain development in kids. Scientific findings show that pupils perform better in school when they eat well and have enhanced attention plus superiority in both academic work and physical health. Maintaining high-quality food for MDMS children is mandatory beyond personal preferences since vital minerals and vitamins ensure proper brain development through preventing lack of nutrients. The problems created by poor food quality can undo the entire point of the MDMS program and harm students' health at the same time. Organizations need to handle these issues first because child health progress and better classroom achievements depend on these systems directly.

#### **6.3 Role of Parental Engagement**

The research confirms that parent involvement is necessary for making MDMS programs work properly. When parents obtain proper information about school programs they adopt positive opinions about those initiatives. When parents take part in the MDMS they take ownership which makes them responsible for better child results. Parents help by creating food schedules and supervising food quality checks followed by hygiene standards execution. Parents act as stakeholders who share how their children need specific diets plus follow cultural food traditions to ensure meals meet proper nutrition rules while matching cultural needs. The involvement of parents helps schools better perform their responsibility duties. Parent involvement makes schools work harder to maintain excellent food handling procedures. Through regular



communication parents and school staff resolve food quality issues and delivery concerns at the same time. Parent participation strengthens the MDMS by creating more connection between education programs and community members. Schools need to organize meetings for parents to understand how MDMS operates and why it benefits them as well as their role in the program. When parents and schools work together the program succeeds better and creates a positive school atmosphere.

#### **6.4 Addressing Implementation Challenges**

The study identified three main parent problems that affected the MDMS program including concerns over food safety and inconsistent meal deliveries plus poor school-parent communication. The needed solution comes with multiple actions to tackle these specific issues. Step one depends on improving food handling protocols. Educational facilities must create safe environments to cook and prepare food with proper food processing standards for all meals. Outcomes on food hygiene quality are safeguarded through kitchen staff training and health authority examination of cleanliness standards. Schools need parents to join hygiene inspections because it builds trust between them and provides the community control. Separate contact channels between schools and local authorities plus parent groups help the team fix delivery problems faster. Regular parent comments at meetings show the school about delivery issues so they can take fast solutions while parent training becomes a priority to build strong school-family partnership. Schools should use mobile tools to send weekly MDMS platform updates to parents and receive their feedback through text or phone messages. The proactive features of the system connect parents more effectively to the program so they can participate better. Research shows most parents of Coochbehar District back the MDMS but also points out what requires better handling. The MDMS program can do better at educating kids and boosting their health when parent involvement gets stronger and nutrition services get improved while resolving operational challenges. Shared participation by educational groups and municipalities will make the MDMS work better to benefit the youth and their neighborhoods.

## **VII. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The presented study demonstrates that multiple useful suggestions should drive better quality in the Mid-Day Meal Scheme MDMS operations in Coochbehar District government schools of West Bengal. These recommended actions would help parents and achieve better performance throughout Mid-Day Meal Scheme programs.

### **1. Enhancing Nutritional Quality of Meals**

Parents from this research believed that the nutritional quality of MDMS meals strongly affects the program. To meet goals of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme we need to work with diet experts who will plan nutritionally balanced diets for children. The guidelines should offer food plans that combine different food kinds including whole grains plus fruits and vegetables while adding vitamins and minerals plus enough protein. The establishment needs to switch its food menu regularly to provide children new dining options. A wide range of high-quality food items will keep children more interested in school dining options. The evaluation approach requires school officials to hear parent and child feedback about their meal options. Using local produce improves meal freshness and makes the daily menu better for students. The local Farmer support plan lets authorities sustain children's preferred meals while boosting Farmer income. Schools and local agriculture groups partner together to bring reliable fresh produce supply services.

### **2. Strengthening Monitoring Mechanisms**

The MDMS achieves better food safety and hygiene standards when managers set up strong monitoring systems to make implementation work properly. Recommendations include:

- A proper inspection program should inspect kitchen areas and eating procedures on a regular basis. Trained health staff and staff members need to monitor hygiene standards through regular inspection of facilities and processes. Parents must have visibility to the test results.
- The school needs to create a feedback system that enables parents teachers and students to report all food quality problems such as cleanliness issues and meal delivery issues. Regular feedback evaluations help us take necessary steps to solve parents' and students' reported issues.
- The school's nutrition program teaches kitchen staff about safe food handling practices and environmental cleanliness as well as correct nutritional methods. The training program needs to show staff how reaching high preparation standards builds responsible practices that improve overall quality at work.

### **3. Increasing Parental Involvement**

Parent participation is essential to MDMS because it builds better learning spaces for children that produce stronger program success. This program can reach higher parental involvement with these steps:

- School officials need to set up educational programs to show parents how their input supports the MDMS system. Through program-related workshops and meetings parents receive support to understand how the program works while sharing their program ideas.
- Education facilities should organize parent teams to link directly with authorities and parents to provide needed oversight to MDMS. Food quality inspections and hygiene standards of kitchen services are managed by established committees that bridge the connection between parents and the school system's support of MDMS. School groups

should use digital technology to send updates to parents about school events through mobile devices. Through these communication tools parents gain regular access to details about the MDMS including menus and reaction forms that help them participate actively.

#### 4. Addressing Supply Chain Issues

- Supply chain issues directly impact MDMS meal delivery because they slow package transport and reduce the quality of foods the parents prepare. These specific steps need to be put into practice to address these issues.
- Food supply acquisition should be handled faster and better through simple procurement evaluations. Organizations need control systems to help suppliers whose goal is to deliver best quality supplies to providers.
- The MDMS must partner with regional farmers and food producers to build a network for reliable supplies of this scheme. Local suppliers help the food supply maintain its quality ingredients while helping to boost the local economy.
- Establish software tools that track your available food items and how students use them plus track food waste. Innovative resource monitoring systems allow schools to maintain enough food supplies and minimize waste which increases the overall efficiency of their facilities.

Our suggestions aim to resolve the key problems revealed by the Mid-Day Meal Scheme research at Coochbehar District. Organizations backing the MDMS will boost its results by setting better nutrition criteria and running strict monitoring processes as they partner with parents and create better meal supply networks. Our new approach will improve how parents view the situation and lead to better student health and educational outcomes in the area. Stakeholders from government agencies and schools must unite with parents and community members to help children through better educational and nutritive experiences.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

This research paper "Analysis of Parental Perception towards Mid-Day Meal Scheme in Government Schools of Coochbehar District, West Bengal" gives essential information about what parents think about the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS). Parents display favorable views about the MDMS as they observe positive effects from this program which improve student attendance while benefiting their health outcomes. Most parents treated the MDMS as essential because it serves two purposes by reducing hunger while keeping children active in learning. Parents displayed worry about the both quality and diversity of meals under the program because they recognized that proper nutrition shapes their children's learning abilities and health. Public institutions together with school administrations should enact revised nutritional guidelines which focus on enhancing meal quality under the MDMS program. The evaluations show that parental involvement determines successful MDMS delivery. Parents demonstrating active educational involvement alongside their knowledge of programs develop more positive perspectives about the chosen program. The MDMS requires an environment where parents actively participate since such cooperation determines its achievement rate. The success of the program depends on effective solutions to solve existing problems that threaten parental trust. Enhancing monitoring procedures together with better parent-school communication systems and dependable supply networks forms the basis for better MDMS performance. Regardless of all concerns described in this research project the MDMS will perform better when it adopts recommended implementation approaches for delivering nutritious meals coupled with educational success achievement. A thorough implementation of the MDMS system will benefit the health and academic performance of children which creates improved opportunities for community growth.

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