

# Impact of Early Child Care Education through Mid Day Meal (MDM) Anganwadis on Over All School Environments

Sanju Sharma<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Savita Sharma<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Asst. Prof., Sect College of Professional Education, Bhopal (M.P.) India

<sup>2</sup> Professor, Rabindranath Tagore University, Bhopal (M.P.) India

## ABSTRACT

*This article is focusing on Mid Day Meal (MDM) programme launched by Government for the overall development of children from their mother womb to developing stages up to 8 years. Health's, hygienic and education with environment, required for overall development of the children are also critically examined from the point of views of researchers, policy makers and Government. The global views and issues related in USA about health care of children and National Curriculum Frame Work by NCERT 2005 focused on Mid Day Meal (MDM) is also quoted for better understanding of the article made issues. Global events and the needs emerging from various social, economic and demographic changes in the last few decades have also influenced Mid Day Meal (MDM) in India. Five of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the UN Millennium Declaration relate to the health, nutrition and education of the young child. India's poor progress towards the realization of MDG in relation to other developing countries indicates that we have already neglected our young children for too long. Research around the world has shown that in order to maximize impact, the planning and provision of early childhood and primary education programmes need to take into account some important principles of child development.*

**Key Words**-Mid Day Meal (MDM), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Education for All (EFA)

## I INTRODUCTION

Developments of human beings are critically advocated by Developmental psychology of human being critically focused on age, cognitive, effective and psycho-motored development of individuals. It was focused by the NCERT study and evaluation with future prospect of Mid Day Meal (MDM) in Indian context represented as in the form in-depth analysis. The first 6 to 8 years of a child's life are globally acknowledged to be the most critical years for lifelong development since the pace of development in these years is extremely rapid. Recent research in the field of neuroscience, particularly on the brain, has provided convincing evidence of the "critical periods" located within these early years for the forming of synaptic connections in the brain and for the full development of the brain's potential. Research has also indicated that if these early years are not supported by, or embedded in, a stimulating and enriching physical and psychosocial environment, the chances of the child's brain developing to its full potential are considerably, and often irreversibly, reduced. This stage in life is also important as a foundation for the inculcation of social values and personal habits, which are known to last a lifetime. What follows logically is the crucial importance of investing in these early years to ensure an enabling environment for every child, and there by a sound foundation for life, which is not only the right of every child but which will also impact, in the long term, the quality of human capital available to a country. Early Childhood Care and Education with Mid Day Meal (MDM) (Mid Day Meal (MDM)) derive its importance from this rationale. Global events and the needs emerging from various social, economic, and demographic changes in the last few decades have also influenced Mid Day Meal (MDM)

in India. Five of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the UN Millennium Declaration relate to the health, nutrition, and education of the young child. India's poor progress towards the realization of MDGs in relation to other developing countries indicates that we have already neglected our young children for too long. Research around the world has shown that in order to maximize impact, the planning and provision of early childhood and primary education programmes need to take into account three important principles of child development: (a) Child development is a continuous and cumulative process, so that what proceeds influences what follows. Therefore, in terms of programmatic interventions, it is important to address the entire childhood continuum, from the prenatal stage to the end of the primary stage, as opposed to intervening during any one sub stage exclusively; (b) Health, nutrition, and educational/psychosocial development are all synergistically interrelated, which makes a case for the importance of addressing all the needs of children through a holistic approach; and (c) the child's development will be optimized if the programmes address not only the child but also the child's over all context.

## II THE INDIAN CONTEXT: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS AND APPRAISAL

The situational analysis of the current scenario includes an overview of the relevant constitutional provisions, the policies and legal provisions relating to children developed over the years, the evolution of the planning process, the various programmatic interventions, the responsibilities of various ministries, and abroad quantitative assessment of the

present situation. The critical appraisal notes that the public sector covers only 22 percent of children in the age group 0–6 years. There are no figures available for the private sector, which is estimated to be possibly as large as the public sector. The 86<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002, which effectively releases the State from its obligation to provide care and education for children below 6 years, is noted as a negative development. The problem cites a fragmented approach and divided responsibilities as some of the main reasons for this grim situation. It concludes that Mid-Day Meal (MDM) must be brought firmly within the framework of EFA and UEE, with responsibility and accountability for all programmes for children above 3 years lying with DEE&L, while programmes for children below 3 years will be the responsibility of DWCD.

### **III EARLY CHILD CARE EDUCATION AND GLOBAL VIEW ON OVERALL CHILD DEVELOPMENT**

Pre-school and Mid-Day Meal (MDM) facilities for preparation of disabled children for education being essential, preference should be given to the blocks where the schemes of Integrated Child Development (ICD) and Early Childhood Centres of Education (Mid-Day Meal (MDM)) exist while selecting blocks for implementation of the scheme. Support for services for disabled children will be available and instructional materials for disabled children will be available for training teachers. Procedure for Grants to State Governments / UT Administrations: The State Government / UT Administrations should formulate their programmes, make assessment of their financial requirements and submit detailed proposals for the next financial year to the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Department of Education, Government of India) by the end of December every year. The proposals should be accompanied by utilization certificates for grants released in the previous year and implementation report in respect of the previous year indicating, inter alia, detailed information regarding areas covered, the number of disabled children covered school-wise, teachers training programmes conducted etc. The proposal should specify clearly whether for the purpose of various allowances to the disabled children the State Government rates have been adopted. The proposals will be examined in the Ministry and 50 per cent of the approved grant for the year will be released as the first installment. The remaining and 50 per cent of the grant will be sanctioned as soon as the State/UT Administration reports utilization of at least 75 percent of the grant sanctioned earlier. The request for the release of the second installment should be accompanied by an implementation report and a detailed of expenditure. Procedure for Grant to Voluntary Organisations: The

voluntary organisations desirous of implementing the scheme should send their applications through the concerned State Government / UT Administration (with a copy endorsed directly to the Ministry). The State Government should give its views within a period of three months regarding the organisation eligibility, suitability, relevance of the proposal and the capacity of the agency to implement it. Comments should be sent by the State Government even if the proposal is not recommended giving reasons therefore. In order to be eligible for financial assistance under these scheme voluntary organisations, public trusts and non-profit making companies should (i) Have proper constitution of articles of association; (ii) Have a properly constituted managing body with its powers and duties clearly defined in the constitutions; (iii) Be in a position to secure the involvement, on voluntary basis, of knowledgeable persons for furtherance of their programmes; (iv) Not discriminate against any person or group of persons ground of sex, religion, caste or creed; (v) Not be run for the profit of any individual or a body of individuals; (vi) Not directly function for the furtherance of the interests of political party and (vii) Not in any manner incite communal disharmony. Only those eligible agencies which have been in existence for three years would be considered for assistance under this scheme. This requirement may be waived in respect of agencies with specially qualified workers or which can otherwise justify a special consideration. If any agency receiving or expecting to receive grant from some other official source for a project for which application is made under this scheme, assistance under this scheme will be made after taking into consideration the grant received, or likely to be received from such other official source. It should also be ensured that an agency already in receipt of a grant from any other official source, Central or a State, should not transfer any part of that liability to a grant to be sanctioned under this scheme. Conditions of Grant to Voluntary Organisations (i) The grant-receiving agency will be required to execute a bond on a prescribed form. The bond should be supported by two sureties if the agency is not a legal entity. (ii) An agency in receipt of financial assistance shall be open to inspection by an officer deputed by the Government of India or the State Government. They shall also be open to test-check by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India at this discretion. (iii) The accounts of the project shall be maintained properly and separately and submitted as and when required. They should be open to check by an officer deputed by the Government of India or the State Government. They shall also be open to a test-check by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India at his discretion. (iv) The audited accounts together with the utilization certificate in the prescribed form duly countersigned by the Chartered Accountant are required to be furnished within six months in respect of a preceding year or after expiry of the duration for

with grant is approved. (v) The agency shall maintain a record of all assets acquired wholly or partially out of government grant and maintain a register of such assets in the prescribed Performa. Such assets shall not be disposed of, encumbered or utilized for the purposes other than those for which the grant will be given, without prior sanction of the Government of India. Should the agency cease to exist at any time, such properties shall revert to the Government of India. (vi) When the State Government of India has reasons to believe that the sanctioned money is not being utilized for the approved purpose or the payment of rent may be stopped and the earlier grants recovered. (vii) The institution must exercise reasonable economy in the working of the approved project. (viii) The grantee agency shall furnish to the Ministry of Human Resource Development reports as may be prescribed. (ix) The decisions of the Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Education, on the question whether there has been breach of violation of any of the terms and conditions mentioned in the sanction letter shall be final, and binding on the grantee.

#### **IV CRITICAL ISSUES, SOCIAL REALITIES, AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The problem offers an analysis of critical issues and social realities, and also points out the policy implications. It argues that most of the problems derive from the still “unrecognized” status of Mid-Day Meal (MDM) as a part of the main stream education system; it draws attention to the multiplicity of overlapping social divides that affect the quality of Mid-Day Meal (MDM) available to different segments of the population, discrimination against certain social groups, and the polarization of services. The deep gender bias and pervasive patriarchal values in Indian society are held responsible for the failure to realize the need for crèches and day care, especially for children of poor rural and urban working women; this neglect also has an adverse impact on the education of girl siblings. The child’s development will be optimized if the programmes address not only the child but also the child’s overall context. Addressing the issue of ensuring quality for all and emphasizing the need for norms and standards, the problem outlines the five major dimensions of quality: appropriate curriculum; trained, motivated, and suitably rewarded teachers; appropriate teacher–child ratio and group size; a supervisory mechanism; and child-friendly infrastructure.

This is the issue of regulation and the need to empower parents, families and communities through advocacy. Attention is drawn to the low status and pay of teachers, the poor state of teacher-training

programmes, the lack of recognition and certification of teachers, and the urgent need to address the vast backlog of “untrained” teachers. The problem describes the steps needed to build a quality workforce. These include the provision of training in all sectors for all types and levels of programmes through diverse courses; the adoption of multiple models and flexible strategies; ensuring fair wages for all; capacity building of trainers; provision of learning and instructional materials and accreditation. The problem also addresses the issue of multiple languages in the classroom, as well as the overwhelming pressure from all classes for “English-medium” schools; some innovative suggestions for language teaching are also made.

#### **V MOVING AHEAD: CHANGING POLICY PARADIGMS**

Since many of the current problems in Early Childhood Care and Education with Mid-Day Meal (MDM) are the outcome of earlier policies, to give young children a fair deal now will require major policy shifts before we can speak of curricular reform. Value of Mid-Day Meal (MDM): The first step is the recognition and acceptance that Mid-Day Meal (MDM) is a vital developmental need of all children, and that every child has a right to Mid-Day Meal (MDM) of equitable quality. Mid Day Meal (MDM) must be the first step in the educational ladder and should be a part of EFA. DEE & L must take responsibility for all programmes for children 3+, and DWCD for all programmes for children below 3 years. Resource Allocation: The intention to provide Mid Day Meal (MDM) of equitable quality to all means that there will have to be a vast enhancement in resource allocation. While global research indicates that 85 percent of a child’s core brain structure is already complete in the early years, the actual spending per child on children below 6 years is only one-eighth of the spending on children in the 6–14 age groups. Ensuring Quality for All: The existence of multiple models, diverse sectors and different programme approaches developed that overtime must be accepted but within a common framework. Adherence to some basic norms and standards as well as to the five basic dimensions of quality must be ensured through different strategies, including regulation as needed as well as adaptation to different contextual realities and a meaningful language policy. Advocacy: To sensitize the public at every level, from parents to policy makers, an extensive and sustained campaign for advocacy involving the mass media is needed. This requires that adequate resources be provided and that the government take the lead in preparing the requisite materials in various forms. The advocacy campaign should convey the significance of this period in the life of children, warn against the dangers of neglect, and describe the proper scope, meaning, and purpose of Mid Day Meal (MDM). Capacity Building: The

next important task is to straight away launch a massive and long-term programme of capacity building at all levels, as already described. DEE & L has a key role to play in building on the existing capabilities and institutions (Mahapatra, B.C. 2016).

## VI CURRICULAR FRAMEWORK WITH MID DAY MEAL (MDM)

The three broad objectives of Mid Day Meal (MDM) are:

- (a) Holistic development of the child to enable him/her to realize his/her maximum potential;
- (b) Preparation for schooling; and
- (c) Providing support services for women and girls with the effective health oriented facilities.

Education is the product value of mental and physical health and basic education should be promoted with the sound mind and health of both students and teachers.

The curriculum is defined as age appropriate, all round, play based, integrated, experiential, flexible, and contextual. The guiding principles of the Mid-Day Meal (MDM) curriculum are:

- (i) Play as the basis of learning
- (ii) Art as the basis of education
- (iii) Recognition of the special features of children's thinking
- (iv) Primacy of experience rather than expertise
- (v) Experience of familiarity and challenge in everyday routines
- (vi) Mix of formal and informal interaction
- (vii) Blend of the textual (basic literacy and numeracy) and the cultural
- (viii) Use of local materials, arts, and knowledge
- (ix) Developmentally appropriate practice, flexibility, and plurality
- (x) Health, well-being, and healthy habits

## VII CONCLUSION

Mid day meal schemes through Aganbadi are running throughout the whole country but these schemes are not effectively implemented. The allocated budget does not reach to the specific organization whether the organization is voluntary or not. Sometimes states start their own schemes which are created haphazard. In the short run, this scheme seems to be appealing but in the long run it is not desirable.

A common plan which has to be adhered by all states has to be formed and accepted by all governments. The organizations which have to monitor should be transparent and for that an

online portal giving all details about the distribution should be provided. Medicines distribution, pad distribution etc. for females should be increased at more level. Biometric system can also be installed so that fake attendance system can be avoided and the database can be maintained separately.

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