

How to make Mid-day Meal more effective in terms of Quality, Quantity, Regularity and Dignity

The Report

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Objectives of the Study

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Objectives of the Study

- To find out the status of Mid-Day Meal at different levels in the district of Hooghly.
- To propose measures to make Mid-Day meal more effective in terms of Quality, Quantity at each level (Primary and Upper primary).
- To propose measures to make Mid-Day meal more effective in terms of Regularity and Dignity at each level (Primary and Upper primary).

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Methodology

The study was taken up in schools of Hooghly district having primary and upper primary classes.

Tools

- Questionnaire for Heads of Institutions of selected primary and upper primary schools.

Procedure

- A questionnaire was developed in Google Form at a workshop held with district level functionaries at SCERT (WB) on 06.09.2021 and 07.09.2021. The purpose of the questionnaire was to collect the opinion of the respondents on administration and effect of mid day meal in primary and upper primary schools. The sample, tool for administration and the modality of the administration of the tool were finalized

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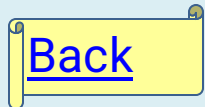
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- In Hooghly district, there are 18 blocks and 13 municipalities. The high schools were selected from 18 blocks and 3 municipalities. The selected primary schools were from 18 blocks and 6 municipalities.
- The data collected were analysed.

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Sample

The Heads of Institutions of 50 primary and 50 upper primary / secondary / higher secondary schools of Hooghly district.



Major Findings

- Out of the 50 schools selected for the upper primary level, 27 schools are upper primary with secondary and 23 schools are higher secondary.
- 98% of the primary schools are coeducational. In case of the secondary schools, 70% are coeducational, 20% are for girls and 10% are for boys.
- For preparing cooked mid-day meal, 96% of the primary and 76% of the secondary schools use constructed kitchen. Temporary sheds are used by 4% primary schools and 20% secondary schools. In case of secondary schools, 2% have centralised kitchen while in 2% schools the food is cooked in open space in school premises.

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- Classrooms are used for serving cooked MDM in 40% and 20% of the primary and secondary schools respectively. Cooked MDM is served in the veranda of 34% primary schools and 26% of the secondary schools. 26% of the primary schools and 42% of the secondary schools use dining hall for serving MDM. 12% of the upper primary schools serve cooked MDM in open spaces.
- 90% of the primary schools and 78% of the secondary schools provide plates to the students for eating cooked MDM. Students of 10% and 22% primary and secondary schools bring plates from home for taking MDM.

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- Water from hand pump or tap on school premises is used for cooking MDM by 98% of both primary and secondary schools. 2% primary school use nearest hand pump and 2% secondary schools use nearest well or tank for cooking MDM.
- When asked about the areas in which cooking personnel require short-term training, all the respondents said that training is needed in cooking healthy food. Almost all (94 – 96%) the respondents agreed on the areas of preserving food grains and vegetables and cleanliness and hygiene. Equal percentage (86%) of respondents at both the levels felt that training was required for serving of food. 58% of primary schools and 82% of secondary schools felt that such a training was necessary in nutritive value of food.

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- Most (96%) of the primary schools say that the cooking personnel wear aprons and clean cotton clothes at the time of preparing food. Synthetic clothes are not generally worn. According to 76% primary schools and 64% secondary schools, cooking personnel wear head caps. Hand gloves are being worn by the cooking personnel, as stated by 48% primary schools and 28% secondary schools.
- Almost all (100% primary and 98% secondary) respondents are of the opinion that the fund allotted per child should be increased.

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- 40% and 52% of the primary schools say that the monitoring of MDM at school level is done by parent-teacher association and teachers respectively. 8% of the primary schools say that this work is done by School Management Committee. As for secondary schools, 16% schools each agree on parent-teacher association and School Management Committee. 68% of the schools say that the monitoring is done by teachers.
- Most schools (56% primary and 74% secondary) state that the weekly menu is prepared according to the government guidelines.

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- Of the primary schools, 90% say that all 100% take MDM and 10% schools say that MDM is taken by all students except few. As for secondary schools, 100% students avail the benefit of MDM in 50% of the schools, in 48% of the schools, all students except few ones take MDM. Only 2% of the secondary schools say that very few students eat mid-day meal.
- The major reason for students not taking MDM is seen to be not being allowed by parents (36% primary and 44% secondary schools). The other main reason is nearness of house of students. 20% of secondary schools say that the students consider the food not to be of good quality and 18% secondary schools say that the food becomes boring because same items are repeated every day. Another reason for students not taking MDM is non maintenance of cleanliness.

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- Most (96% primary and 90% secondary) schools say that they never receive any complaints of health problem due to MDM. The complaints received, if any, are few and far between.
- Of the primary schools, 76% say that the quantity of food served is sufficient and 96% say that serving is repeated. As for the secondary schools, 86% say that the quantity of food served is sufficient and 88% say that serving is repeated.
- Respondents of all secondary schools and almost all (92%) respondents of primary schools are of the opinion that the amount of pulses should be increased. Again, all primary schools and nearly all (94%) secondary schools feel that the amount of animal protein should be increased. About 85% respondents feel that there should be an increase in the amount of vegetables. Only about half of the respondents feel that that the amount of

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- Respondents more or less agreed on the positive effects of providing cooked MDM to children in the areas regularity in attendance, improvement in nutrition, increase in enrolment, improvement in concentration, learning to share meals with others including siblings, attending school more happily and learning of good hygiene habits. The areas in which comparatively less percentage of secondary schools agree, are improvement in nutrition, learning about importance of good nutrition and learning to share meals with siblings.
- All (100%) of the primary schools and 94% of the secondary schools say that the cooked MDM food is tasted by teachers before serving. 6% of the secondary teachers say that the food is tasted sometimes.

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- Just more than half (56%) of the primary schools say that the money for MDM is received on time and the rest say that there is delay in receiving the money for MDM. As for secondary schools, 88% schools that the money for MDM is received on time.
- All the respondents (100% of both primary and secondary schools) say that food grains are received on time. 6 – 8% of the respondents say that there was never a gap in providing cooked MDM to students.
- According to 70% primary schools and 36% secondary schools, students are involved in deciding the menu of MDM.

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Recommendations

- To bring variety in menu, schools may grow vegetables in kitchen gardens.
- Seasonal fruits may be provided to the children after the meals.
- Head caps, hand gloves and aprons may be provided in greater numbers.
- Cooking personnel might be given training in different aspects of cooking MDM.
- The amount of animal protein, pulses and vegetables should be increased in the daily diet.

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- Pressure cookers may be provided to all the schools.
- Dining halls may be constructed in all schools where children can sit together and eat their MDM.
- The cost of fuel used for cooking MDM may be provided separately by the government.
- The supply of grains may be done on a monthly basis instead of a quarterly basis. As the grains are kept for a long time, they get damaged. Moreover, this attracts mice and insects. The remuneration of cooking personnel should be increased.

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- The remuneration of cooking personnel should be increased.
- The fund allotted per child should be increased.
- The respondents suggested that allotment may be done according to slab of enrolment because arrangement of MDM is a problem where enrolment is less than 100.

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- Supply of rice grains and fuel should be timely and regular.
- Funds may be placed with the schools at the beginning of each month.
- Provision of dining table and chair may be made for the students.
- Serving of meal should be repeated.
- Students should take part in deciding the menu.

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Conclusion

- It is seen that in general, the teachers recommend increase in the fund allotted per child, increase in the amount of protein provided, provision of dining halls and timely allocation of grains and funds.
- The study was done in a very short time and in only one district. In future, the study may be carried out in the entire state so that a clearer picture of MDM implementation emerges. This would help the policymakers to take appropriate measures to enhance the effect of mid-day meal in terms of quality, quantity, regularity and dignity.

THANK YOU