

Education plays a vital and important role in fulfilling the basic needs of a common man viz. food, shelter and clothing. The main aim of Education is to prepare and develop the child physically, mentally and spiritually to lead a quality life. Education is a process through which a child is made capable to attain the necessary competencies and skills to face the challenges in life to survive, and to make struggle for existence. Four important factors are identified for achieving the goal of Education for all.

These are **Access to Education**, **Enrolment of children**, and **Retention of the enrolled children** and **Achievement**.

Mid Day Meal scheme is an effort to achieve and facilitate all the four above said objectives.

Various schemes were implemented in the primary education sector by the Government to reach the disadvantaged population. Access to Primary Education was universalized through flagship programmes of Govt. like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, however, despite this, a few children are still deprived of Primary Education due to inability of their parents to send them to schools because of their poor economical status. For, these parents, sending their children to school means not only incurring extra financial burden but also depriving them of some money which their children would have earned otherwise by doing labour. That being the attitude of these economically backward parents, one may, perhaps, to motivate the parents and children was to bring their children to school by providing food and nutritional needs.

Government of India, on Oct 2nd 1995, launched the scheme of National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education also known as Mid-Day-Meal Programme. Under this scheme, students of Primary classes were to be provided wheat @ 3 kg per student per month (for 10 months in a year) subject to 80% attendance. Meanwhile, the apex court also intervened and vide its orders dated 28th November, 2001 the Supreme Court directed to the State Government/Union Territories to implement the Mid-Day-Meal scheme by providing every child in every Government and Government Assisted primary schools with a prepared Mid-Day-Meal with minimum contents of 300 calories of energy and 8-12 grams of protein each day of school for a minimum of 200 days.

Objectives of the Programme

The main objectives of the programme are:

- To increase enrolment, retention and to tone up the learning abilities of the beneficiaries, especially of children belonging to poor and down trodden sections of the society;
- To provide nutritious meal to the school going children to achieve the goal of Healthy mind in Healthy body;
- To promote friendship and feelings of common brotherhood among the children belonging to different caste, colour and creed by providing meals to them together and also to increase their retention in schools.

Programme Intervention & Coverage

To achieve the above objectives, a cooked Mid Day Meal with minimum 300 calories and 8-12 grams of Protein content, are provided to all children studying in classes I-V in:

- Government Local Bodies
- Government Aided schools
- EGS & AIE centres

Components:

- Supply of food grains, Wheat/rice at 100 grams per child per school.

- Cooking cost at Re 1.00 per child per school per day w.e.f.01-09-2004.
- Actual cost in transportation @ Rs.100 per quintal.
- Construction of Kitchen Shed in rural areas for which funds are made available under SGRY and in urban areas for which funds are available under NSDP and UWEP component of SJSRY. Proposal to be reflected in the Annual Action Plan.
- Creation of drinking water facility for which funds are available under SSA and ARWSP.
- Purchase of utensils for which funds are available under SSA from annual school grant of Rs.2000 per annum per school

Achievements:

Under Mid Day Meal Scheme some 5.12 lakh children were covered during 2006-07 and an amount of Rs.1335.48 lacs were incurred during the same year under the scheme, consisting of central assistance of Rs.990.10 lacs and state share of Rs.345.38 lacs. Against 1,07,349.16 qtls of food grains allotted during 2006-07 as many as 66,190.90 qtls of food grains were lifted during the year under report and 62,984.97 qtls.of food grains utilized.