

# A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF THE MID-DAY MEAL ON THE ATTENDANCE OF THE SCHOOL STUDENTS

**Dr. Ruby John, Department of Education**

*Jain (Deemed-to-be University), Ramnagar District, Karnataka – 562112*

*Email Id- dr.rubyjohn@gmail.com*

## **Abstract**

*In order to achieve the objective of education for all, four important areas are identified. These include access to education, children's enrolment and retention of enrolled children, as well as academic results. To achieve and facilitate these goals, the Mid Day Meal scheme is an initiative. The goal of this study is to assess the effect of mid-day meals on the registration, attendance and retention of Uttar Pradesh primary school children. The cluster random sampling approach selects MDM and non-MDM schools. The result revealed that the MDM system demonstrates a substantial means of comparatively improving enrolment and attendance. Some attempts should be made to improve student retention by increasing the variety and consistency of the Mid-Day Meal and by introducing interesting teaching methods.*

**Keywords:** *Attendance, Enrolment, Mid-Day Meal, Primary schools children, Retention.*

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

By introducing different schemes to enroll and maintain the maximum number of students and minimize the dropout rate, the government has left no stone unturned to achieve the goal of universalization of elementary education. One such scheme introduced by the government was the Mid-day meal scheme that aims to improve the nutritional status of children at the primary and upper primary levels, to enable poor children, to belong to deprived groups, to attend school more frequently and to help them focus on activities in the classroom [1]. The success of this scheme is demonstrated by the enormous rise in Tamil Nadu's school attendance and enrolment rates [2]. Various research on the mid-day meal system and the achievement of students in schools have been performed in India. Most studies have shown a positive relationship between the mid-day meal program and student participation and attendance. In the growth of human potential, education plays a crucial role. Free and compulsory schooling up to 14 years of age is a statutory commitment and it is estimated that about 20% of the total population is made up of elementary school children (6-14 years)[6]. The main thing to take into account is that the

investment on this initiative has been immense [3]. For example, the expenditure in 2003-04 was Rs. 1400 crores and the central government budget for 2007-2008 allocated around Rs. 7324 crores to the MDM scheme. Performance audit (2011) on food security schemes in Orissa and Uttar Pradesh by the Centre for Environment and Food Security. A sample survey was carried out in 130 villages spread over 12 districts of Orissa and Uttar Pradesh (Bundelkhand) and recorded that, compared to Uttar Pradesh, the performance of the MDM system is much better in Orissa [4]. A significant 86.7% of Orissa's children received second best MDM group (daily but insufficient and unsatisfactory meal), with just 51.8% of UP children receiving regular but inadequate and unsatisfactory meal in their schools. It is necessary, in view of the above, to evaluate the effect of mid-day meals on primary school children's registration, attendance and retention.

## II. TECHNIQUE AND FINDINGS

To collect samples for this analysis, the cluster random sampling method was used. Bidhuna Tehsil and Ajeetmal Community Development Block were randomly selected from two Tehsils and seven Community Development Blocks in Auraiya (Uttar Pradesh) district. A total of 12 schools have been chosen [5]. From the rural area of Bidhuna tehsil, three government primary schools (with MDM scheme) and three non-governmental primary schools (without MDM scheme) from the same geographical area were randomly chosen. Similarly, three government primary schools (with the MDM scheme) and three non-governmental primary schools (without the MDM scheme) in the same geographical area were randomly chosen from the Ajeetmal block. As a method for gathering information for each parameter, a predesigned and pretested proforma was used. Information was obtained from school records on the registration, attendance and retention of children [6].

The number of children admitted to that class or school for that particular academic year is defined by the enrollment of children in a class or school. It is evident from Fig.1 that in MDM schools, enrollment of both boys and girls was greater than in non-MDM schools [7]. In both MDM and non-MDM schools, the enrollment of boys was substantially higher than that of girls. Positive Mid Day Meal intervention was recorded in the universalization of primary education through increased enrolment and attendance. It was reported that the implementation of Mid Day Meal based on the menu had a positive effect on children's enrollment and attendance [8]. A comparative review of government and private schools in Gorakhpur and Saharanpur districts in UP is the nearest to this literature study. This study found that the rate of enrolment in government was higher than in private schools. Most of the experiments

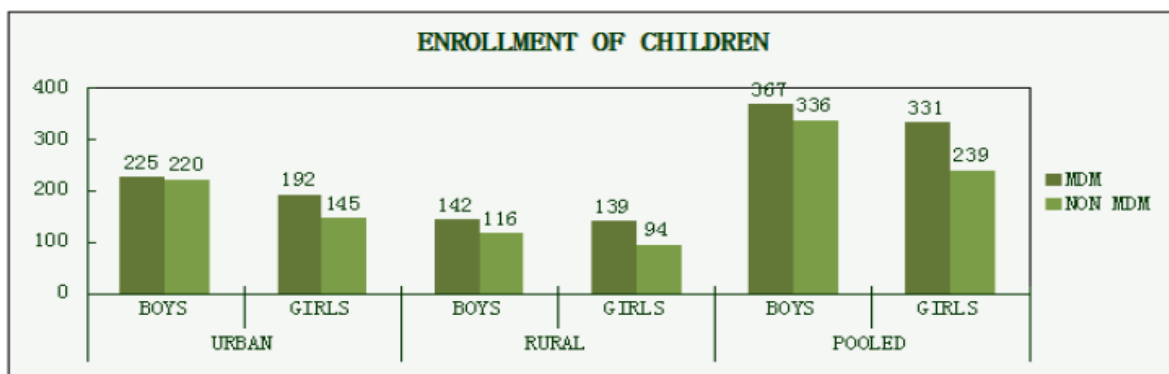


Figure 1: Enrolment of students

#### Roll Call:

Out of the total number of children enrolled in a class or school in the corresponding academic session, this reflects the total number of children who attended the class on total working days in an academic year. The higher enrolment percentage for MDM school children in urban areas is clearly seen in figure 2. A similar gender pattern has been observed in rural areas. Compared to rural areas, the gap in attendance rate between both MDM and non MDM school children was greater in urban areas. It has been shown that a positive relationship exists between the mid-day meal program and school enrolment and attendance of students. The proportion of children with better attendance ( $> 60$  percent of working days) in MDM schools was found to be higher (97.8 percent) than in non-MDM schools (95 percent) ( $p < 0.001$ ) [9].

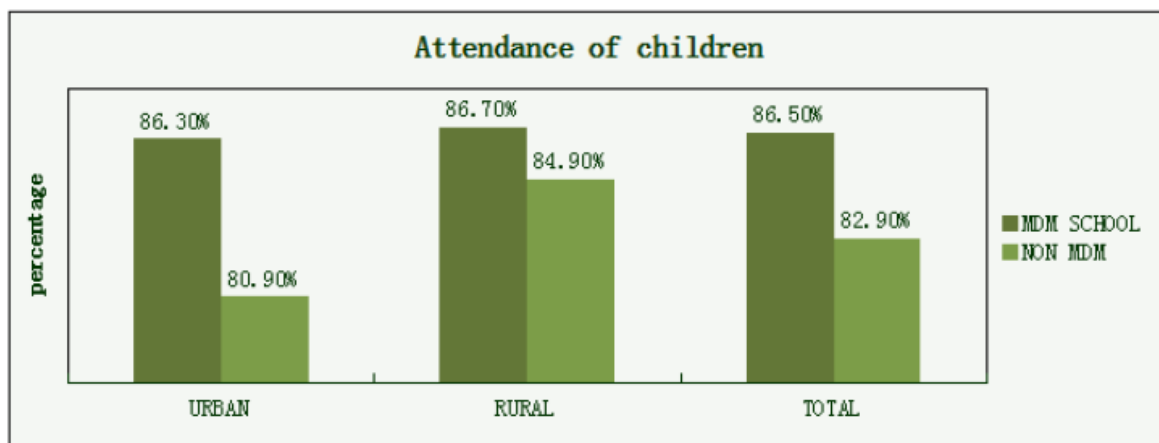


Figure 2: Roll Call of Children

#### Retention:

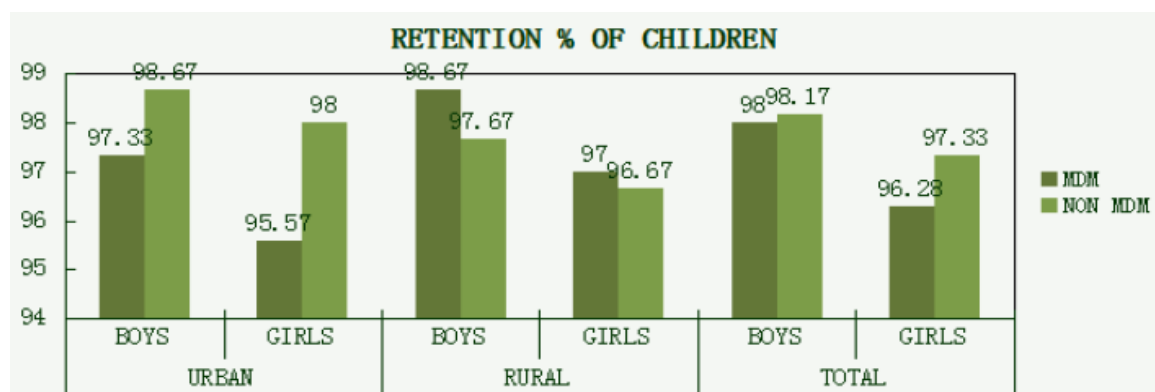


Figure 3: Retention details

Of the total number of children enrolled in a class in an academic year, the total number of children who have continued their studies in the respective class and who have participated in that class for the end-term exams applies to the number of children remaining in the class for that academic year. The percentage of retention was higher in urban non-MDM school boys and girls, 98.67 percent and 98 percent, respectively, where the opposite image was observed across gender as in rural areas (Fig.3). The results of the study on the educational aspect showed improved attendance in Andhra Pradesh, with an increased retention rate[9]. It was recorded that in states such as Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Meghalaya, all the sample schools suggested that retention rates have increased. An rise in retention rates was attributed to most of the sample schools in M.P., Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh [10].

### III. CONCLUSION

It can be inferred in a nutshell that the MDM system can continue in the state as it has a positive effect on children's enrollment and attendance. The retention rate has yet to increase. This will alter the disposition of the masses towards public schools and thus uplift the status of education.

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