

Mid-Day Meal Scheme

1. BACKGROUND

With a view to enhancing enrollment, retention and attendance and simultaneously improving nutritional levels among children, the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) was launched as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on **15th August 1995**, initially in 2408 blocks in the country. By the year 1997-98 the NP-NSPE was introduced in all blocks of the country. It was further extended in 2002 to cover not only children in classes I -V of government, government aided and local body schools, but also children studying in EGS and AIE centres. Central Assistance under the scheme consisted of free supply of food grains @ 100 grams per child per school day, and subsidy for transportation of food grains up to a maximum of Rs 50 per quintal.

2. In **September 2004** the scheme was revised to provide cooked mid day meal with 300 calories and 8-12 grams of protein to all children studying in classes I – V in Government and aided schools and EGS/ AIE centres. In addition to free supply of food grains, the revised scheme provided Central Assistance for (a) Cooking cost @ Re 1 per child per school day, (b) Transport subsidy was raised from the earlier maximum of Rs 50 per quintal to Rs. 100 per quintal for special category states, and Rs 75 per quintal for other states, (c) Management, monitoring and evaluation costs @ 2% of the cost of foodgrains, transport subsidy and cooking assistance, (d) Provision of mid day meal during summer vacation in drought affected areas.

3. In **July 2006** the scheme was further revised to provide assistance for cooking cost at the rate of (a) Rs 1.80 per child/school day for States in the North Eastern Region, provided the NER states contribute Rs 0.20 per child/school day, and (b) Rs 1.50 per child/ school day for other States and UTs, provided that these States and UTs contribute Rs 0.50 per child/school day.

4. In **October 2007**, the scheme has been further revised to cover children in upper primary (classes VI to VIII) initially in 3479 Educationally Backwards Blocks (EBBs). Around 1.7 crore upper primary children are expected to be included by this expansion of the scheme. The programme will be extended to all areas across the country from 2008-09. The calorific value of a mid-day meal at upper primary stage has been fixed at a minimum of 700 calories and 20 grams of protein by providing 150 grams of food grains (rice/wheat) per child/school day.

5. Objectives:

The objectives of the mid day meal scheme are:

- (i) Improving the nutritional status of children in classes I – VIII in Government, Local Body and Government aided schools, and EGS and AIE centres.
- (ii) Encouraging poor children, belonging to disadvantaged sections, to attend school more regularly and help them concentrate on classroom activities.
- (iii) Providing nutritional support to children of primary stage in drought-affected areas during summer vacation.

6. Rationale

- **Promoting school participation:** Mid day meals have big effects on school participation, not just in terms of getting more children enrolled in the registers but also in terms of regular pupil attendance on a daily basis.
- **Preventing classroom hunger:** Many children reach school on an empty stomach. Even children who have a meal before they leave for school get hungry by the afternoon and are not able to concentrate - especially children from families who cannot give them a lunch box or are staying a long distance away from the school. Mid day meal can help to overcome this problem by preventing “classroom hunger”.
- **Facilitating the healthy growth of children:** Mid day meal can also act as a regular source of “supplementary nutrition” for children, and facilitate their healthy growth.
- **Intrinsic educational value:** A well-organised mid day meal can be used as an opportunity to impart various good habits to children (such as washing one’s hands before and after eating), and to educate them about the importance of clean water, good hygiene and other related matters.
- **Fostering social equality:** Mid day meal can help spread egalitarian values, as children from various social backgrounds learn to sit together and share a common meal. In particular, mid day meal can help to break the barriers of caste and class among school. Appointing cooks from Dalit communities is another way of teaching children to overcome caste prejudices.
- **Enhancing gender equity:** The gender gap in school participation tends to narrow, as the Mid Day Meal Scheme helps erode the barriers that prevent girls from going to school. Mid Day Meal Scheme also provide a useful source of employment for women, and helps liberate workingwomen from the burden of cooking at home during the day. In these and other ways, women and girl children have a special stake in Mid Day Meal Scheme.
- **Psychological Benefits:** Physiological deprivation leads to low self-esteem, consequent insecurity, anxiety and stress. The Mid Day Meal Scheme can help address this and facilitate cognitive, emotional and social development.

7. Nutritional content:

To achieve the above objectives a cooked mid day meal with the following nutritional content is provided to all eligible children.

Components	Primary	Upper Primary
Calories	450	700
Protein	12 gms.	20 gms.
Micro-nutrients	Adequate quantities of micro-nutrients like Iron, Folic Acid and Vitamin-A.	

8 **Components of Central Assistance:**

Mid Day Meal Scheme provides the following assistance to State Governments/UT Administrations:

- (i) Supply of free food grains (wheat/rice) @100 grams per child per School Day from the nearest FCI go-down for primary classes (I-V).
- (ii) Supply of free food grains (wheat/rice) @150 grams per child per School Day from the nearest FCI go-down for upper primary classes (VI-VIII)
- (iii) Reimbursement of the actual cost incurred in transportation of food grains from nearest FCI godown to the Primary School subject to the following ceiling:
 - (a) Rs.100 per Quintal up to 30.9.2007 and Rs.125 per Quintal with effect from 1.10.2007 for 11 special category States viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim, J&K, Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal.
 - (b) Rs.75 per quintal for all other States and UTs.
- (iv) Assistance for cooking cost at the following rates:-

Primary stage (classes I – V)

- (a) States in North-Eastern Region :- @Rs. 1.80 per child per school day, provided the State Govt. contributes a minimum of 20 paise
- (b) For Other States & UTs :- @Rs. 1.50 per child per school day provided the State Govt./UT Admn. Contributes a minimum of 50 paise

Upper Primary stage (classes VI – VIII)

- (a) States in North-Eastern Region :- @Rs. 2.30 per child per school day, provided the State Govt. contributes a minimum of 20 paise
- (b) For Other States & UTs :- @Rs. 2.00 per child per school day provided the State Govt./UT Admn. Contributes a minimum of 50 paise

- (iv) Assistance for cooked Mid-Day Meal during summer vacations to school children in areas declared by State Governments as “drought-affected”.
- (v) Assistance to construct kitchen-cum-store in a phased manner up to a maximum of Rs. 60,000 per unit. However, as allocations under MDMS for construction of kitchen-cum-store for all schools in next 2-3 years may not be adequate, States would be expected to proactively pursue convergence with other development programmes for this purpose.

- (vi) Assistance in a phased manner for provisioning and replacement of kitchen devices at an average cost of Rs. 5,000 per school. States/ UT Administration will have the flexibility to incur expenditure on the items listed below on the basis of the actual requirements of the school (provided that the overall average for the State/ UT Administration remains Rs 5000 per school):
- (a) Cooking devices (Stove, Chulha, etc)
 - (b) Containers for storage of food grains and other ingredients
 - (c) Utensils for cooking and serving.
- (vii) Assistance for Management, Monitoring & Evaluation (MME) at the rate of 1.8% of total assistance on (a) free food grains, (b) transport cost and (c) cooking cost. Another 0.2% of the above amount will be utilized at the Central Government for management, monitoring and evaluation. Programme Intervention and Coverage:

9. **Monitoring Mechanism:**

The Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development has prescribed a comprehensive and elaborate mechanism for monitoring and supervision of the Mid Day Meal Scheme. The monitoring mechanism includes the following:

- a Arrangements for local level monitoring: Representatives of Gram Panchayats/ Gram Sabhas, members of VECs, PTAs, SDMCs as well as Mothers' Committees are required to monitor the (i) regularity and wholesomeness of the mid day meal served to children, (ii) cleanliness in cooking and serving of the mid day meal, (iii) timeliness in procurement of good quality ingredients, fuel, etc, (iv) implementation of varied menu, (v) social and gender equity. This is required to be done on a daily basis.
- b Display of Information under Right to Information Act: In order to ensure that there is transparency and accountability, all schools and centres where the programme is being implemented are required to display information on a suo-moto basis. This includes information on:
 - i. Quantity of food grains received, date of receipt.
 - ii. Quantity of food grains utilized
 - iii. Other ingredients purchased, utilized
 - iv. Number of children given mid day meal.
 - v. Daily Menu
 - vi. Roster of Community Members involved in the programme
- c Inspections by State Government Officers: Officers of the State Government/ UTs belonging to the Departments of Revenue, Rural Development, Education and other related sectors, such as Women and Child Development, Food, Health are also required to inspect schools and centres where the programme is being implemented. It has been recommended that 25% of primary schools/ EGS & AIE centres are visited

every quarter.

- d Responsibility of Food Corporation of India (FCI): The FCI is responsible for the continuous availability of adequate food grains in its Depots and in Principal Distribution Centres in the case of North East Region]. It allows lifting of food grains for any month/quarter upto one month in advance so that supply chain of food grains remains uninterrupted.

For the NP-NSPE, 2006, FCI is mandated to issue food grains of best available quality, which will in any case be at least of Fair Average Quality (FAQ). FCI appoints a Nodal Officer for each State to take care of various problems in supply of food grains under the MDM Programme.

The District Collector/CEO of Zila Panchayat ensures that food grains of at least FAQ are issued by FCI after joint inspection by a team consisting of FCI and the nominee of the Collector and/or Chief Executive Officer, District Panchayat, and confirmation by them that the grain conforms to at least FAQ norms.

- e Periodic Returns: The State Government/ UT is also required to submit periodic returns to the Department of School Education and Literacy, GoI to provide information on (i) coverage of children and institutions, (ii) Progress in utilisation of central assistance, including cooking costs, transportation, construction of kitchen sheds and procurement of kitchen devices.
- f Monitoring by Institutions of Social Science Research: Forty One Institutions of Social Science Research, identified for monitoring the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, are also entrusted with the task of monitoring the mid day meal scheme.
- g. Grievance Redressal: States and Union Territories are required to develop a dedicated mechanism for public grievance redressal, which should be widely publicized and made easily accessible.

10. Evaluation studies conducted by Independent agencies:-

Independent evaluation studies on the Mid-Day Meal have been conducted by different agencies in various parts of the country, which find inter alia enhancement in enrollment and attendance. The studies include:

- (a) “Cooked Mid-Day meal programme in West Bengal - A study of Birbhum district”. Professor Amartya Sen’s Praticchi Research Team (2005). The study shows that Mid Day Meal has made positive intervention in universalisation of primary education by increasing enrollment and attendance. The increase has been more marked with respect to girls and children belonging to SC/ST categories. The study also points out that Mid Day Meal scheme has contributed to reduction in teacher absenteeism and a narrowing of social distances.
- (b) “Situation Analysis of Mid- Day Meal Programme in Rajasthan”. University of Rajasthan and UNICEF (2005): states that the introduction of menu based mid day meal has positively impacted enrollment and attendance of children. It has contributed to social

equity, as children sit together and share a common meal irrespective of caste and class. It has further contributed to gender equity in that it has provided employment to women.

- (c) “Mid day Meal in Madhya Pradesh”: Samaj Pragati Sahyog, 2005: Undertook a survey in 70 most backward villages. The findings show that there was a 15% increase in enrollment, which was more marked in the case of SC and ST children (43%)
- (d) “Mid Day Meals: A Comparison of the Financial and Institutional Organization of the Programme in Two States,” Farzana Afridi; April EPW (2005): The implementation of the programme is improving, but a lot more needs to be done. The new initiative of ‘Suruchi Bhojan’ is more attractive than the earlier ‘Daliya’ programme.
- (e) “Mid-Day Meal Scheme in Delhi – A functioning programme” Anuradha De, Claire Noronha and Meera Samson ; CORD; (2005). Surveyed 12 MCD schools – school children in all schools were receiving food; impact of attendance more likely on girls, who often come to school without breakfast.
- (f) “Report on Akshara Dasoha scheme of Karnataka”, Dr. Rama Naik; University of Dharwad (2005). Has reported sharp rise in enrollment, particularly in rural areas. The programme has had an impact on teacher absenteeism: 64% schools stated that teacher absenteeism has been reduced.
- (g) National Council of Educational Research & Training’s latest Report (2005) - Learning Achievement of Students at the End of Class-V has inferred that children covered under mid day meal have higher achievement level than those who were not covered under it.
- (h) “Mid Day Meal Scheme in Karnataka – A study” by National Institute of Public Cooperation & Child Development, Annual Report 2005-06:- Mid Day Meal improved the school attendance in majority of the schools and reduced absenteeism. It has fostered a sense of sharing and fraternity and paved the way for social equity.
- (i) “Mid Day Meal Scheme in Madhya Pradesh – A study - 2007” by National Institute of Public Cooperation & Child Development, Indore:- School enrollment indicated marked improvement in enrollment pattern of children in primary school. Mid Day Meal Scheme undoubtedly resulted in increased school attendance and facilitated in retention of children in school for a longer period. The Scheme has played a crucial role in reducing drop out, especially among girls. Parents viewed that the mid day meal had reduced the burden of providing one time meal to their children and considered it as a great support to their families. Teachers opined that mid day meal aided in active learning of children, which indirectly improved their academic performance. The Scheme has played a significant role in bringing social equity.

A study has also been commissioned by the Planning Commission, which is under progress.

PROGRESS DURING 2007-08:**FOOD GRAINS**

Stage	Allocation	
	Gross (Requirement by States/UTs)	Net(Allocation after adjusting unspent balance as on 31.03.07)
Primary	21,55,807 MTs	19,53,826 MTs
Upper Primary	3,23,120 MTs	3,23,120 MTs

PAYMENT TO FCI : Rs. 785.21 crore as on 31.03.2008

COOKING COST

Stage	Allocation	
	Gross (Requirement by States/UTs)	Net(Allocation after adjusting unspent balance as on 31.03.07)
Primary	Rs. 3269.21 crores	Rs. 2889.59 crores
Upp. Primary	Rs. 433.73 crores	Rs. 433.73crores

CONSTRUCTION OF KITCHEN SHEDS

Year	Sanctions	
	Phy	Fin.
2006-07	2,20,940units	Rs. 1325.63 crores
2007-08*	2,22,849 units	Rs. 1337.092 crores
TOTAL	4,43,789 units	Rs. 2662.722crores

* After this, the requirement for construction of in kitchen sheds will be 1.175 lakh units @ Rs. 60,000 is Rs. 705 crores. This gap is proposed to be filled in phased manner in 2008-09 and 2009-10.

A total expenditure of Rs.5835.44 crore has been incurred under MDM scheme during 2007-08.

PROCUREMENT OF KITCHEN DEVICES

Year	Sanctions	
	Phy	Fin.
2006-07	5,20,817 schools	Rs. 260.41 cr.
2007-08	2,13,521 schools	Rs. 106.78 cr.
TOTAL	7,34,338 schools	Rs. 367.19 cr.

12. Break-up of funds provided for 2008-09

Sl. No	Items	Primary	Upp. Primary	Total
1	Estimated no. of children	9.70 cr.	4.20 cr.	13.90 cr.
2	Estimated no. of working days	230	230	--
3	Food grain entitlement (per child per day)	100 gms	150 gms	--
4	Cooking cost (per child per day)	Rs. 1.58	Rs. 2.10	--
5	Transport assistance (per quintal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rs. 125 for 11 special category states i.e. NER States, J&K, HP, Uttarakhand. ▪ Rs. 75 for other States/UTs. 		
6	Management, Monitoring and Evaluation assistance.	1.8% of the cost of food grains, Transport assistance and cooking cost.		
7	Infrastructure: Construction of Kitchen sheds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presently, the norm is Rs. 60,000 per unit. 		
8	Infrastructure: Procurement of Kitchen devices.	Rs. 5,000 per school.		

13. Requirement of funds for 2008-09

(Rs. in crore)

Component	Primary	Upper Primary	Total
Recurring			
Cost of Foodgrains	1180.24	510.74	1690.98
Cooking Cost	3601.61	2072.70	5674.31
Transport Assistance	182.36	118.44	300.80
MME	100.75	60.11	160.86
Drought Affected	107.19	63.95	171.14
Total	5172.15	2825.94	7998.09
Non Recurring			
Kitchen Sheds	0.00	1.20	1.20
Kitchen Devices	0.00	0.71	0.71
Total	0.00	1.91	1.91
Grand Total	5172.15	2827.85	8000.00

14. New Initiatives in 2007-08:

Salient features of the revised scheme, in addition to extension of the Scheme to upper primary stage, are:-

- (i) Including Inflation Adjusted Index (Consumer Price Index) while assessing annual financial requirements towards Central Assistance for cooking costs every two years beginning 2008-09 for mid day meal both for primary and upper primary stages.
- (ii) Modifying the existing system of payment of transportation subsidy to States/UTs from reimbursement to Grant-in-aid as in the case of other components of Central assistance under the Scheme.
- (iii) Incorporating Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities as a component of Management, Monitoring and Evaluation costs.
