

MID DAY MEAL PROGRAMME AND RURAL SCHOOL CHILDREN: AN OVERVIEW OF STRENGTHS

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ABSTRACT

Education is a process through which an individual is made capable, to attain the necessary competencies and skills, to face the challenges in life, to survive and to make the struggle for existence. The need for any change in the society is reflected in the educational system, and it is through education, that the societal needs are realized. In India, this need was recognized long back, and the first and foremost education demand after independence, was that of universal elementary education. Thus, the midday meal program was launched as a centrally sponsored program, on 15th August, 1995, by the Government of India. The mid day meal program is an effort to achieve and facilitate all the four objectives of education. The mid day meal program was started with two major objectives: firstly to enhance the child's nutrition level and secondly to provide the basic education. The present study was conducted in the rural schools of Garag village and the Yettingudda village of Dharwad district in Karnataka state and Simaraddha village and Bhojla village of Jhansi district in Uttar Pradesh state. A total of 120 rural school children (30 from each village), 120 parents, 40 school committee members and few teachers (based on availability), were selected randomly. Personal observation method and personal interview method were used for their opinions and to record the strengths of the mid day meal program. To know the strengths of the mid day meal program, the headcount of total children (N=120) present, at the post lunch session was taken and recorded, for assessing to the regularity of attendance. Many strengths of mid day meal program, was observed and recorded such as good quality and quantity of meal, increased attendance, enrollment and retention rate, positive attitude of teachers, parents, children and school committee members, towards mid day meal program, demand for continuation of mid day meal program, reduced stress of working mothers such as farmwomen, timely supply of food grains and cooked food, innovative model public private partnership, for implementing mid day meal programmes and many more. The Mid Day Meal program is a one such innovative program, started by GOI for betterment of the child's future. As everything have a good or bad impact, the mid day meal program may also have some bad impacts, but positive impacts or its strengths are more important, over bad impact and the weaknesses of the program may convert into strengths, by applying innovative approaches, ideas.

KEYWORDS: program, Attendance, Strengths, Education, Public Private Partnership, Children