

Mid Day Meal

In 1962-63, Tamil Nadu government initiated a noon meal programme for children in primary schools. It became the first state to do so. The Chief Minister, Shri. K Kamaraj introduced it in Chennai and later extended it to all districts of Tamil Nadu. Later in 1995, in order to enhance enrollment, attendance and retention in schools along with improving the nutritional status of children National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education was launched as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on the 15th of August. In October 2007 the name of the Scheme was changed to 'National Programme of Mid Day Meal in Schools'.

Extent of the problem

- 129.26% is the Gross Intake Ratio in the first grade of primary education, however persistence to grade 5 was only 65.79% (UNESCO, 2005-06).
- 1.7 million children were out-of-school in India (UNESCO, 2010).
- 74.04% is India's literacy rate, 65.46% amongst females (Census- 2011).
- 3, 48% of children under age five years are stunted (too short for their age) which indicates that about half of the country's children are chronically malnourished (National Family Health survey-3).
- 69% children (6-59 months) were suffering from anemia (National Family Health survey-3).

Objective

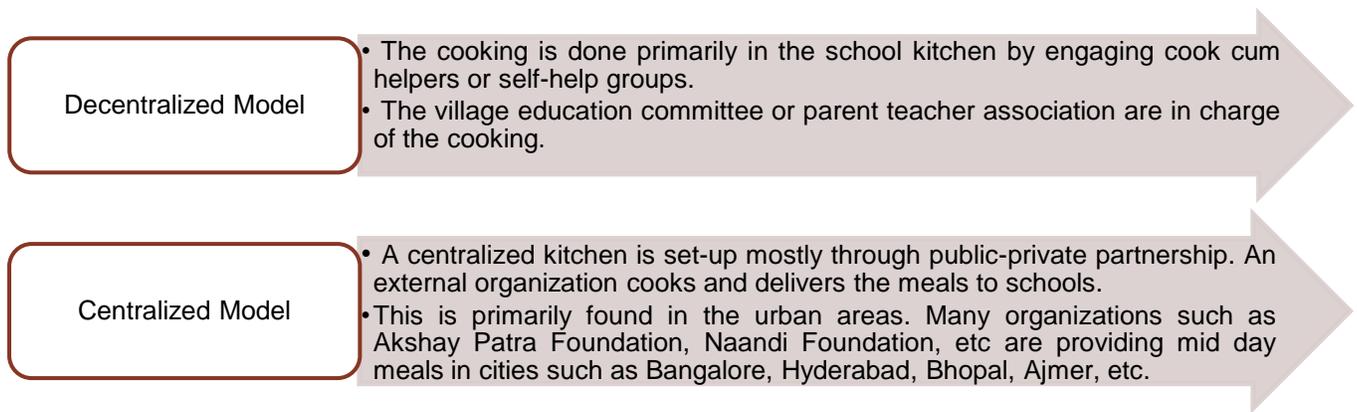
The MDMS is the world's largest school meal programme and reaches an estimated 12 crore children across 12 lakh schools in India. The objectives & nutritional targets of the scheme are given below

- To address hunger in schools by serving hot cooked meals & improve nutritional status of children
- To improve enrolment, retention and attendance rates of children belonging to disadvantaged sections
- To focus on intrinsic educational values such as importance of clean water, good hygiene by imparting good habits(such as washing hands before & after meals) through a well-organized Mid Day Meal.
- To foster social equality as children from varied social backgrounds learn to sit together and share a meal which helps to break barriers of caste & class in a school.
- To provide 450 calories & 12 gms of protein at primary level per child per meal.
- To provide 700 calories & 20 gms of protein at upper primary level per child per meal.
- To provide adequate quantities of micro-nutrients like Iron, Folic Acid & Vitamin A

Framework for Implementation

- A National **Steering-cum-Monitoring Committee (SMC)** serves as the nodal agency for the program. It monitors the programme, assess its impact, and coordinate among concerned departments and agencies and provides policy advice to Central and State Governments. After submission of annual work plan by States/UTs, the **Programme Approval Board (PAB)** releases central assistance bi-annually. Both the SMC & PAB are under the chairmanship of Secretary, Dept. of School Education & Literacy.

- States and UTs are also required to set up Steering-cum-Monitoring Committees (SMC) at the State/District/Block levels to monitor implementation of the programme. Every State Government/UTs has to authorize one of its departments as the **Nodal Department** to take overall responsibility for implementation of the programme.
- The Panchayat/Urban Local Bodies are to be in charge of the implementation of the programme in states where primary education is entrusted to them. Gram Panchayat/Municipality may assign the supervision of the programme at school level to the **Village Education Committee (VEC)/School Management and Development Committee (SMDC) or Parent Teacher Association (PTA)**, as the case may be, to be accountable to the Gram Panchayat/Municipality.
- There are two models being followed as far as the cooking and distribution of food is concerned.



Funding

Under the scheme the Central Government provides for supply of 100 grams of free food grains (wheat/rice) per child per school day from the nearest FCI (Food Corporation of India) godown. The Central Government also reimburses the actual cost of transportation of food grains from nearest FCI godown subject to a ceiling of **Rs. 100 per quintal** for 11 special category states (N.E states along with J&K, H.P, Uttaranchal & Sikkim) and **Rs 75 per quintal** for other states & U.Ts.

The Centre also provides assistance for cooking cost at **Rs 1.80** per child per school day provided the State Government contributes a minimum of 20 paise (for N.E States) and at **Rs 1.5** per child per school day provided the State Government contributes a minimum of 50 paise (for other states/U.Ts).

Centre also provides assistance to construct kitchen-cum-store at **Rs 60,000** per unit and for provisioning and replacement of kitchen devices at **Rs 5000** per school.

Convergence

The efficient implementation of the MDMS requires convergence with several other development programmes (which provide for MDMS needs) in order to meet all the requirements of the scheme.

Construction of Kitchen-cum-Store

- Ministry of Rural Development-**Sampurna Grameen Rozgar Yojana(SGRY)** as a useful public asset in rural areas.
- Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation -**Urban Wage Employment Programme**(as useful public asset), a component of **Swarna Jayanti Shahri Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY)** for urban areas outside slums.
- Ministry of Human Resource Development - **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)** for new school construction.

Water Supply

- Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation -**National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP)** for drinking water supply in schools. **Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan(NBA)** - for sanitation facilities in schools.

Kitchen Devices

- Ministry of Human Resource Development- Funds available under **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan(SSA)**- Annual school grant of Rs 2000/- per annum per school and, grant of Rs 1000/- per annum for EGS Centers (Under **Education Guarantee Scheme(EGS)** centers. They are set up in un-served habitations where no school exists within a radius of 1km and at least 15 children in age group of 6-14 & not going to school are available)

Public Private Partnership and the use of Ultra Rice in Andhra Pradesh

The Centralized Model of implementation of Mid Day Meal scheme was adopted in Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh in 2008. PATH and Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) partnered with Naandi foundation to provide iron-fortified lunches everyday to 61,000 school children, that comes in the form of Ultra Rice. The National Institute of Nutrition conducted a study from 2007-2008 to assess the impact of Ultra Rice on the iron status of school children participating in the Mid Day Meal programme. The study showed a significant increase in the iron stores (measured by serum ferritin levels) of the children. The children also experienced significant reduction in incidence of morbidity in comparison to the control group.

In Centralized kitchens, the incremental cost of adding Ultra Rice to rice-based meals is nominal because the fortified grains are easily blended with traditional rice either during or right before cooking. The incremental cost per day per child comes out to be Rs 0.1. Given the proven benefits of Ultra Rice on child health, this is an intervention which deserves attention and can be implemented in other regions for better results. The Mid Day Meal programme can thus be utilized to achieve the goals of greater student attendance as well as making focused interventions in the field of child health and nutrition.

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