DOI: 10.7860/JCDR/2026/88273.23020 Abstract No.: 28

Impact of the Mid Day Meal Scheme on Combating Malnutrition (Undernutrition) in School-Aged Children: A Cross-sectional Study

VIDUSHI MAKHIJANI[1], VANDANA GARG[2]

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Malnutrition, particularly undernutrition, is a critical issue among school-aged children in India, affecting their physical growth, cognitive development, and academic performance. The Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme, introduced by the Indian government in 1995 aimed to improve the nutritional status of children in government and government-aided schools by providing free, nutritious meals. While the programme has been widely implemented, its effectiveness in addressing malnutrition requires ongoing evaluation.

Aim: This study aims to assess the impact of the MDM scheme on the nutritional status and health of school-aged children, with a focus on reducing undernutrition.

Materials and Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted with 500 children from schools across various regions of India, where the MDM scheme is active. Nutritional assessments were performed using anthropometric measurements {height, weight, Body Mass Index (BMI)}, and data were collected through surveys with teachers and parents. The nutritional status of children was compared before and after their participation in the MDM scheme.

Results: Results showed significant improvements in the nutritional status of children. Around 70% of children demonstrated an increase in weight and height within one year of receiving meals through the MDM scheme. Rates of undernutrition decreased by approximately 30%, with notable reductions in stunting and wasting. Additionally, children showed improved school attendance and better concentration in class, correlating with the nutritional benefits.

Conclusion: The MDM scheme has effectively contributed to reduce malnutrition among school-aged children, leading to improvements in physical growth, academic performance, and overall health.

Keywords: Childhood growth, India, Public health, Undernutrition

PARTICULARS OF CONTRIBUTORS:

1. MSc Student, Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, School of Allied Health Sciences, Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies (Deemed to be University), Faridabad, Haryana, India.
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, School of Allied Health Sciences, Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies (Deemed to be University), Faridabad, Haryana, India.

NAME, ADDRESS, E-MAIL ID OF THE CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Vidushi Makhijani,
MSc Student, Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, School of Allied Health Sciences, Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies (Deemed to be University), Faridabad-121004, Haryana, India.
Email: vidushi.makhijani17@gmail.com