

## IMPLEMENTATION OF MID-DAY MEAL SCHEME: A STUDY ON GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL OF TINSUKIA

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### Abstract

**Purpose of the study:** The research aims to study the implementation of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in Government primary schools of the Tinsukia district of Assam.

**Methodology:** For the purpose study descriptive methodology is used. Data are randomly collected through a self-structured questionnaire. Tables and figures are used to analyze the collected raw data.

**Main Findings:** Results showed that Mid-Day Meal Scheme is playing an important role in reducing classroom hunger of students. But the functioning of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in many surveyed schools is not by the guidelines of the scheme provided by the government particularly in respect of the timely supply of grains, storage facility of grains and plates for distribution of meal to the children.

**Applications of this study:** This research can be used by policymakers, teachers, parents and also social welfare activities.

**Novelty/Originality of this study:** For the first time, implementation of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme has been studied in the Tinsukia district of Assam.

**Keywords:** Classroom Hunger, India, Implementation, Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Primary Schools, Tinsukia.

### INTRODUCTION

Mid-day Meal Programme is the popular name for the primary school meal program in India. P.V. Narasimha Rao former Prime Minister of India on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1995 launched the Mid-day Meal Scheme (MDM) for the first time in India to address classroom hunger and to improve the nutritional status of children of primary schools (Saini, S. K. 2016). The Program involves the provision of lunch free of cost to children of the age group of 4 to 14 years of primary schools on all working days. The key objective of the scheme is to increase the enrolment and attendance of primary school children by reducing classroom hunger and by improving socialization among children belonging to all castes and religion and addressing malnutrition (Nangia, A & Poonam, 2011). The scheme has attracted young children to school especially those who were otherwise irregular to school because they are forced by their parents to work to earn a paltry rupee or two a day as child labor (Moses, 1983). Mid-Day Meal Scheme had successfully achieved its objectives in enhancing enrolment and attendance of children in government primary schools of India since after its implementation (Jain & Shah, 2005). The cooked hot meal provided in the school premises is successful in reducing primary school dropouts and eliminating classroom hunger, especially among those children belonging to the underprivileged section of the society. The scheme is successful in establishing social equality among the children of different communities where they come together and share the cooked hot meal provided by the school authorities under the school premises (Shatrugna, M, 1985).

Mid-Day Meal Scheme in India is playing a major role in improving primary school attendance, eliminating classroom hunger and fostering social equality. The scheme is not only successful in raising the intake of calories and protein by the children of primary schools but it is also successful in providing nutritional supplements such as iron and iodine along with the cooked hot meal, which needs to be injected over some time in a small dose. The scheme is successful in reducing dropouts at the elementary level in all government primary schools of India to a certain level (Dreze & Goyal, 2003). Foodgrains and funds required for the program are released in an economic way which leads to restricting unnecessary wastages of food grains as well as funds required to run the MDM Program. The MDM program has increased the attention span of students as their classroom hunger gets satisfied now (Ravi, 2016).

The effect of the MDM Programme was more pronounced for those with the least educated parents and with the lowest economic statuses. The scheme improved the enrolment and the retention of children in the school and it has also checked dropout rates. But the scheme still requires a long way to standardize in basic infrastructures, management, ingredients and grains, fuel, utensils, kitchen stores, serving place, health, and hygiene, security and safety to be more successful in (Tarananum (2014). The Scheme faces gaps in its implementation because of poor school infrastructure, lack of water supply, toilet facility, kitchen area, adequate personnel for cooking and serving MDM (Baru V.R. et al, 2008). In some regions, children are facing the problem of malnutrition, especially the one belonging from a poor socio-economic background even after the years of implementation of the scheme. Despite different issues, Mid-Day Meal Programme is successful in achieving its primary objectives (Si. R. A., Sharma. K. N. 2008).

The entire Northeastern region of India faces a deficit in food production every year. The plains of Brahmaputra valley and Barak valley of Assam every year face the problem of perennial flooding and riverbank erosion but because of lack of good governance and strong civil society these people do not get the attention that they deserve. These people do not get food during the crises, floods not only destroy the standing crops but also the food grains that are stored get fragile, as a result of these leads to the emergence of starvation in the region. Malnutrition is a common problem among children of different age groups. Implementation of the Mid-Day Meal Programme in all the government schools of Assam is the only solution to save the children of the region from starvation and from getting malnourished ([Hussain. M, 2004](#)). The school meal program was implemented for the first time in 2005 in Assam. Mid-Day Meal Program is a massive social welfare program attracting children for mainstream education and also providing them with the much needed supplementary nutrition. The scheme is successful in eliminating hunger and reducing primary school dropouts of Assam. But the scheme is not able to function according to its set objectives in Assam because of poor school infrastructure. The schools lack proper storage bins to store food grains for the smooth and regular functioning of the program. The improvement in the program is much needed in terms of supply of dry food and fruits, proper water facilities, hygiene and sanitation conditions, proper infrastructure, etc. ([Khera. R, 2006](#))([Khasnabis. R, Chatterjee. T, 2007](#)).

Existing kinds of literature are like a mirror that reflects the past researcher's views and which presents the future prospective of a study. After carefully reviewing the existing literature on Mid-Day Meal Scheme at national and state levels it was observed that the previous studies cover almost all the variables of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme such and enrollment, retention and attendance of government primary schools. However, despite relevant literature on different aspects of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme across the country, there was very few literature on the implementation of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in Assam particularly, Tinsukia district. Therefore the present research focuses on the implementation and the working of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in Tinsukia

### **The objective of the study**

The present study aims to examine the implementation of the Mid-Day Scheme in the Government Primary schools of Tinsukia district, Assam.

### **Research Question**

Whether the implementation of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in the study area is by the provision laid down under the guidelines of the scheme?

### **METHODOLOGY**

Assam is divided into three divisions: Upper Assam, Lower Assam, and Central Assam. Upper Assam division consisting of 9 districts includes Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Dhemaji, Golaghat, Lakhimpur, Sivasagar, Tinsukia, Charaideo and Majuli. As per Census 2011, Tinsukia district (3790 sq.km.) despite the largest area, the literacy rate is lowest 69.66% compared to all other districts. Therefore, for the purpose study on the implementation of the Mid-day Meal Scheme, Tinsukia district has been selected as a study area.

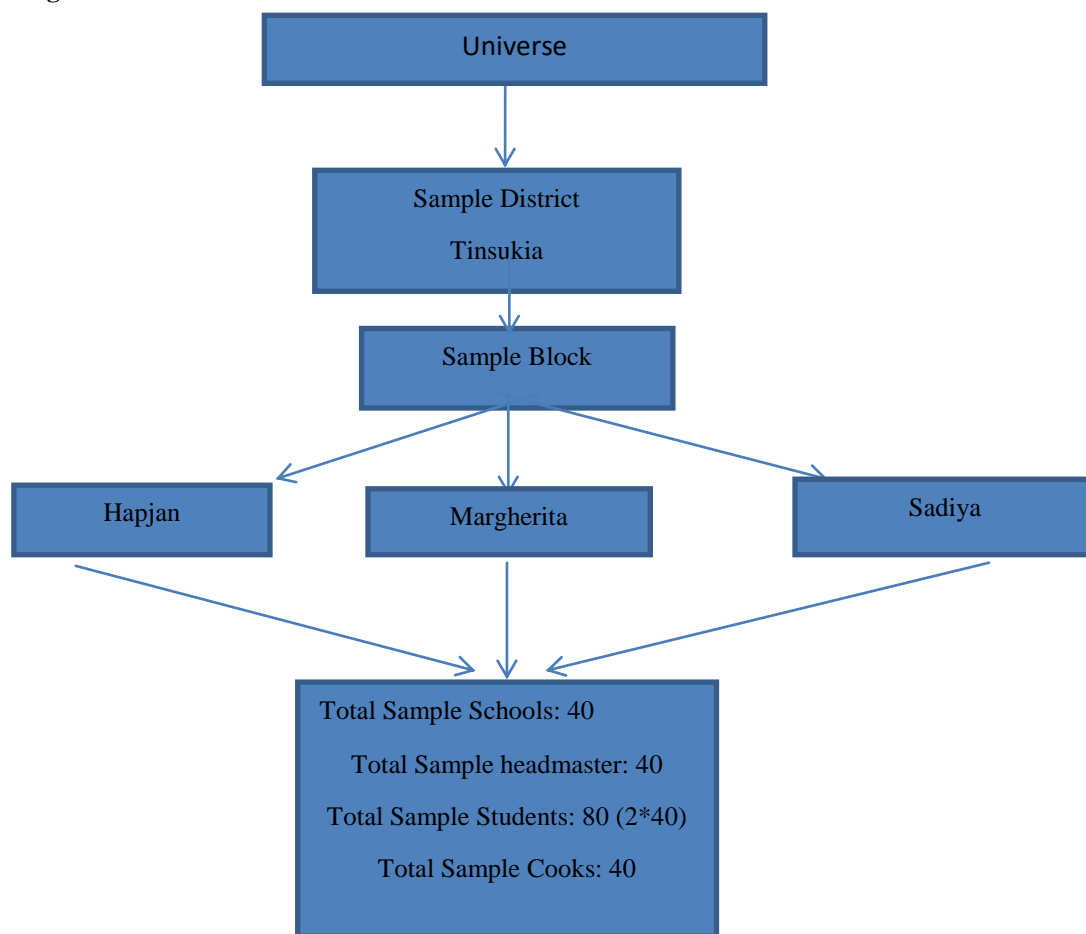
For the present study, both primary data and secondary data sources are undertaken. Headmaster, students, and cooks of the Government primary schools of Tinsukia district of Assam have personally interviewed with the help self-structured questionnaire regarding the implementation, performances, and working of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in the school. Tinsukia district consists of 5 educational blocks out of which 3 blocks were purposively selected for the study consisting of both rural and urban schools. A total of 40 schools were selected from 3 sample educational blocks through a random sampling method. Out of these 40 sample schools, 40 head teachers and 40 cooks from each school were investigated regarding the MDM. 80 students (two students from one school) were randomly selected and interviewed for the purpose study.

Secondary data has been collected from, journals and books, the Statistical handbook of Assam, Census reports, Department of Elementary Education, Educational Blocks and Government official websites.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

Data entry is done in MS Excel to analyze the collected raw data from the government primary school of Tinsukia district, Assam. For statistical analysis SPSS 20 and descriptive analysis tables, bar diagrams and pie diagrams are being used. A field survey is conducted between June to October 2019.

## Sampling Design



**Figure 1:** Sample design

## DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS

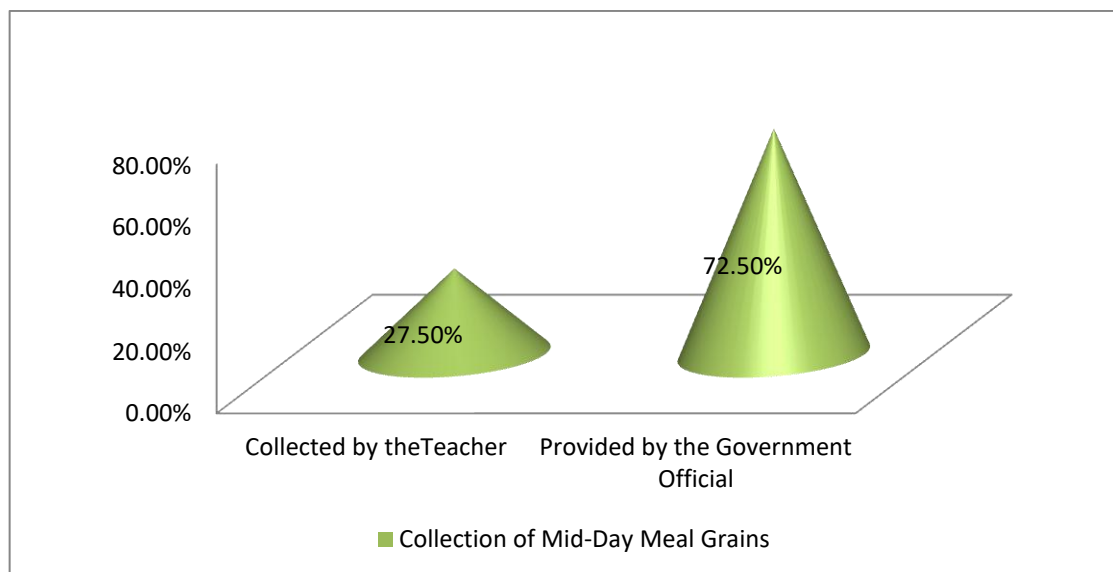
To analyze the implementation of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in Government primary schools of Tinsukia district of Assam various parameters have been identified. During the field survey, it was observed that all the sample schools follow the weekly suggested menu to prepare Mid-Day Meal. It was also observed that in a few schools, schools provide meat instead of egg curry. The headteacher of these schools reported that a continuous rise in the price of the egg is the main reason for adding meat on the menu. As per the revised guidelines provided by the Mid-Day Meal scheme cooked hot meal should be provided on all working days of school, but during the field survey in Government primary school of Tinsukia district it was observed that few schools do not provide a meal on Saturday since they save the money of that particular day to provide per child one egg on Wednesday. The teachers and cooks have been interviewed to assess the implementation of cooked meal regarding the following parameters:

1. Supply of Mid-Day Meal grains
2. Fund for Cooking Cost
3. Construction of kitchen cum storage
4. Utensils for cooking and serving Mid-Day Meal
5. Water facility and Space used for distribution of MDM
6. Fuel used for the preparation of MDM
7. Engagement of Mother Groups
8. The regularity of remuneration of Cook.

### Supply of Mid-Day Meal grain

District Nodal Officer, Deputy Commissioner, MDMS is responsible for the supply of Mid-Day Meal grains from the FCI to the primary schools on time. As per the revised guidelines of NP-NSPE 2006 FCI is held responsible to keep an adequate amount of food grains in its Principal Distribution Centers and food grains should be supplied in advance at the

doorstep of the school for any month/quarter so that the supply chain of food grains do not get disturbed (Kumar A., 2017). (Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2013). The figure below shows the collection of Mid-Day Meal grains in the Government Primary schools of the Tinsukia district.



**Figure 2:** Collection of Mid-Day Meal grains Source: Field Survey

From the field survey, it was observed that in 72.50% of schools food grains for Mid-Day Meal are provided at the doorstep of the school by the Government Officials while 27.50% of schools Headteacher of schools have to collect grains from the nearest godown/ration dealers.

The table below shows the percentage distribution of schools in the Tinsukia district regarding the timely supply of food grains.

**Table 1:** Percentage Distribution of Schools regarding Timely supply of MDM grains

Block	Supply of Mid-Day Meal Grain on time		Total
	Yes	No	
Hapjan	5(26.31%)	14(73.68%)	19(47.5%)
Margherita	6(42.85)	8(57.14%)	14(35%)
Sadiya	1(14.28%)	6(65.71%)	7(17.5%)
Total	12(30%)	28(70%)	40(100%)

Source: Field Survey

From the field survey, it was observed that in 30% of sample schools there is a regular supply of Mid-Day Meal grains, while in 70% of sample schools there is a delay in supply of Mid-Day Meal grains. Headteachers of these schools opined that they face disruption in serving a cooked hot meal regularly to the children.

### Funds for Cooking Cost

The cooking cost covers the expenditure of pulses, vegetables, cooking oil, condiments, etc. As per the revised guidelines of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Central Government along with state government will provide Rs.4.18 and Rs.6.13 per child per day to the Lower Primary school and Upper Primary respectively. Funds are sanctioned and released by the central authorities to state authorities and thereby to the District Authorities. Further district authorities release funds to the educational blocks and block transfer funds to the implementing agencies i.e. the headteachers of the schools (Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2013).

**Table 2:** Percentage Distribution of Schools regarding Availability of Funds from authorities on time for MDM Program

Block	Availability of Funds from authorities on time		Total
	Yes	No	
Hapjan	8(42.10%)	11(57.89%)	19(47.5%)
Margherita	10(71.42%)	4(28.57%)	14(35%)
Sadiya	4(57.14%)	3(42.85%)	7(17.5%)
Total	22(55%)	18(45%)	40(100%)

Source: Field Survey

The table above reveals that 22 sample schools (55%) responded that they receive funds (Cooking Cost) for MDM Program on time, while remaining 18 (45%) schools complain of not receiving funds for MDM on time.

### Construction of kitchen shed in the school

Central Government of India as per the revised NP-NSPE 2006 has approved the sanction of Rs.60, 000 per school for the construction of kitchen-cum storage across the country ([Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2013](#)). The table below shows the percentage distribution of primary schools in Tinsukia district regarding cooking facilities for the performance of Mid-Day Meal

**Table 3:** Percentage Distribution of Schools regarding Cooking Facility for MDM

Blocks	Cooking Facility for MDM				Total
	Constructed Kitchen	Temporary Shed	Outside the School Premises	the Teachers House	
Hapjan	14(73.68%)	4(21.05%)	1(5.26%)	0(0%)	19(47.5%)
Margherita	10(71.42%)	2(14.28%)	0(0%)	2(14.28%)	14(35%)
Sadiya	6(85.71%)	1(14.28%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	7(17.5%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>30(75%)</b>	<b>7(17.5%)</b>	<b>1(2.5%)</b>	<b>2(5%)</b>	<b>40(100%)</b>

Source: Field Survey

During the field survey, it was observed that 30 (75%) sample schools responded to having constructed kitchen within the school premises for the preparation of the Mid-Day Meal. 7 (17.5%) schools responded of using temporary sheds within the school premises for the preparation of MDM. 1 (2.5%) school responded that they prepare Mid-Day Meal outside the School Premises (neighbor's house) and 2 (5%) school responded that they use teacher's house to prepare MDM.

The table 3 also shows that in Hapjan Block 73.68% responded availability of Constructed kitchen within the School Premises to prepare MDM, while 4 (21.05%) Schools responded of using temporary sheds within the school premises and 1 (5.26%) school opined of using neighbor's house to prepare MDM. In Margherita Block 10 (71.42%) schools have a positive response of availability of constructed kitchen within the school premises to prepare Mid-Day Meal. While 2 (14.28%) schools responded of using temporary sheds and another 2 (5%) schools responded of using teachers' houses to prepare MDM. In Sadiya Block out of 7 sample schools, 6 (85.71%) schools responded of availability of constructed kitchen within the school premises and 1 (14.28%) school responded of using the temporary shed to prepare MDM.

Table 4 below shows the storage of Mid-Day Meal grains in Government primary schools of Tinsukia district.

**Table 4:** Percentage Distribution of Schools regarding Storage of Grains

Blocks	Storage of Grains					Total
	School (classroom, veranda)	Premise office,	Kitchen storage in School Premises	Storage elsewhere the village	Shed in Teacher's House	
Hapjan	12 (63.15%)		6(31.57%)	1(5.26%)	0(0%)	19(47.5%)
Margherita	4(28.57%)		7(50%)	0(0%)	3(21.42%)	14(35%)
Sadiya	3(42.85%)		4(57.14%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	7(17.5%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>19(47.5%)</b>		<b>17(42.5%)</b>	<b>1(2.5%)</b>	<b>3(7.5%)</b>	<b>40(100%)</b>

Source: Field Survey

Regarding the storage of grains for the MDM Program, from the field survey it was found that only 17 (42.5%) sample schools have kitchen storage in school premises to keep grains for MDM as shown in table 4. 19 (47.5%) schools had responded to using either classrooms, office or verandas to keep the grains for MDM. The table above indicates that 1 (2.5%) schools use neighbor's house to keep grains for MDM and 3 (21.42%) schools responded of keeping grains for MDM in the headteacher's house.

### Sufficient utensils for distribution of cooked meal

For the preparation and distribution of Mid-Day Meal, the Government of India along with State Government had provided Rs.5000 to the primary schools across the country for the purchase of utensils ([Kanchan. R., 2016](#)). During the

field survey in the Tinsukia district, it was found that all the sample schools have sufficient utensils for the preparation of Mid-Day Meal, but only a few schools had sufficient plates for the distribution of cooked hot meal to the children's. Our findings reveal that 73.68% of schools in Hapjan Block, 64.28% schools in Margherita Block and 85.71% schools in Sadiya Block do not have the required number of plates for the distribution of meals to the school. The majority of the students of these schools have to carry plates from home to have the meal.

### Water facility in the School and Space Available for Distribution of MDM

The availability of safe and secure drinking water is one of the major prerequisites for the Mid-Day Meal Scheme. The table below shows the availability of drinking water facilities within the premises of the school of Tinsukia district.

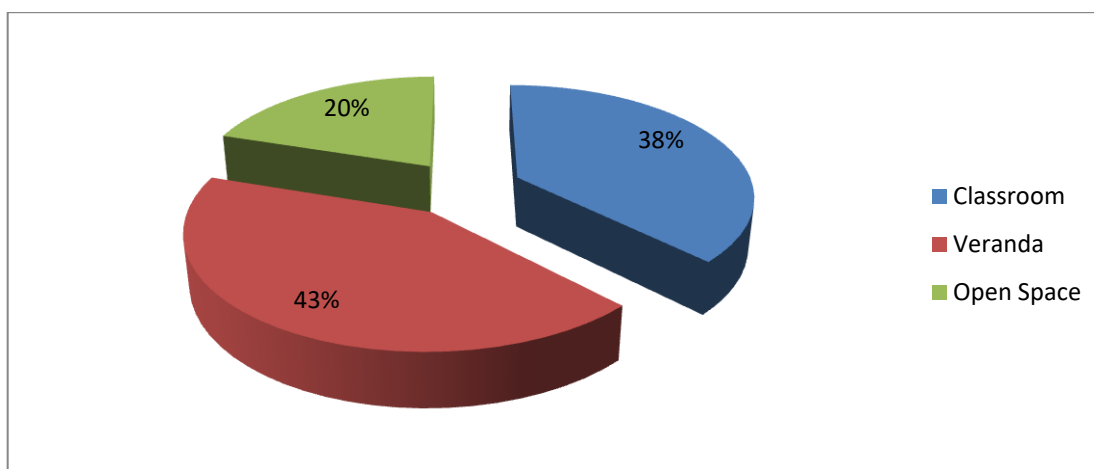
**Table 5:** Percentage Distribution of Schools by Availability of Drinking Water Facility in the School Premises

Block	Availability of drinking water facility in the School Premises		Total
	Yes	No	
Hapjan	18(94.73%)	1(5.26%)	19(47.5%)
Margherita	12(85.71%)	2(14.28%)	14(35%)
Sadiya	7(100%)	0(0%)	7(17.5%)
Total	37(92.5%)	3(7.5%)	40(100%)

Source: Field Survey

Regarding the availability of drinking water facilities for MDM, from the field survey, it was found that 37 (92.5%) schools have proper drinking water facilities (handpump/tap) within the school premises. But 3 (7.5%) schools complain of not having drinking water facility (handpump/tap) within the school premises, as a result, they have to use the nearest handpump/ tap outside the school premises for the preparation Mid-Day Meal.

Another important aspect of the proper execution of the MDM Program is the distribution of cooked hot meals. During the field survey, all the sample schools responded nonavailability of the dining hall in the within the school premises to distribute cooked meal. Figure 2 shows the space used for the distribution of cooked hot meals by the school authorities to the children.



**Figure 2:** Space use for distribution of MDM

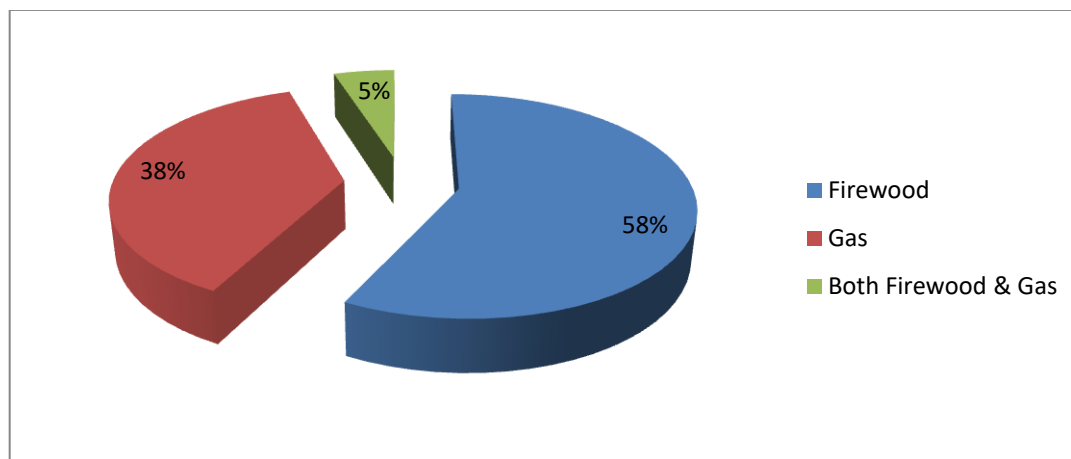
It is observed from the figure 2 that, in 15(37.5%) schools children have cooked hot meal in classrooms, in 17 (42.5%) schools they have the cooked meal in the veranda and in 8(20%) schools the children use the open space (school field) to have the cooked meal. It was observed that place use for having cooked hot meal was either cleaned by the cook-cum helper or by the students themselves.

### Fuel used for the preparation of MDM

NP-NSPE 2006 mentioned that the Headteacher of the school has to make the arrangement of fuels for the preparation of Mid-Day across the country Meal. Fuels include either firewood, gas or both firewood and gas (Kumar A., 2017).

Figure 3 above reveals that 23 (57.5%) sample schools use firewood for the preparation of the Mid-Day Meal. 15 (37.5%) schools use Gas as fuel to prepare MDM and only 2 (5%) of schools use both firewood and gas as fuel to prepare MDM. The cooks of almost all the schools using firewood complained about the use of firewood in the cooking process due to inconvenience arising from smoke pollution and wetness of firewood during the rainy season.





**Figure 3:** Fuel used to prepare MDM

Source: Field Survey

### Engagement of Mother Groups

Engagement of Mother Groups in Government Primary Schools is one of the important aspects of the smooth functioning of the Mid-Day Meal Program at the school level. As per the guidelines provided by the Government for the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, every Government primary school should have the engagement of Mother Groups across the country to look over the MDM Program at the school level. Also, one or two members of mother groups should taste the cooked meal along with the teachers before serving it to children (Biswas. D., 2016). The following table shows the engagement of mother groups in Government primary schools.

**Table 8:** Percentage Distribution of Schools regarding Engagement of Mother Groups for the smooth functioning of MDM

Block	Engagement of Mother Groups		Total
	Yes	No	
Hapjan	15(78.94%)	4(21.05%)	19(47.5%)
Margherita	13(92.85%)	1(7.14%)	14(35%)
Sadiya	7(100%)	0(0%)	7(17.5%)
Total	35(87.5%)	5(12.5%)	40(100%)

Source: Field Survey

Our findings reveal that 35 (87.5%) schools engage mother groups in the school to look over the working of the MDM Programme. In Hapjan Block 15 (78.94%) sample schools responded of engagement of mother groups and in the remaining 4 (21.05%) there is no engagement of mother groups. In Margherita Block in 13 (92.85%) schools there is the engagement of the mother group and only in 1 (7.14%) school, there is no mother group to look over the MDM program. In Sadiya Block all the surveyed schools responded to the engagement of mother groups. Mothers come either a daily, weekly basis or monthly basis to supervise the school meal program.

In 5(12.5%) schools it was found that there is no engagement of mother groups, these were mainly the schools near to the tea gardens. Since the mothers of these children go to work in the tea garden during school hours they do not get time to come to school to look after the Mid-Day Meal Programme in the school.

### Regularity in Remuneration of Cook

In the overall execution of daily Mid-Day Meal activities in the school level cook, cum helper is very essential. As per the guidelines provided by the Government of India an honorarium of Rs.1000 is to be provided to cook cum helpers of every school on monthly basis and the norms for the engagement of cooks cum helper is: schools having an enrolment of 1 to 25 students: 1 cook cum helper, schools having an enrolment of above 26 to 100 students: 2 cook cum helpers and every additional enrolment of up to 100 students is 1 additional cook cum helper (Kumar A., 2017). From the field survey, it was observed that all the sample schools have cook cum helpers as per the guidelines provided by the government but the remuneration of cooks is found irregular. The following table shows the percentage distribution of schools regarding the regularity of remunerations of cooks.

From the field survey it was observed that in 29 (72.5%) schools cooks responded of the regularity of remuneration for the preparing Mid-Day Meal and in 11 (27.5%) schools cooks responded of the irregularity of remuneration of cooks on time. Our findings show that cook of 26.31% schools in Hapjan Block, 35.71% of schools in Margherita Block and

14.28% schools in Sadiya Block do not get remuneration regularly. Cooks of some surveyed schools reported that they hadn't received remuneration months.

**Table 9:** Percentage Distribution of Schools regarding Regularity in Remuneration of Cook

Block	Regularity in remuneration		Total
	Yes	No	
Hapjan	14(73.68%)	5(26.31%)	19(47.5%)
Margherita	9(64.28%)	5(35.71%)	14(35%)
Sadiya	6(85.71%)	1(14.28%)	7(17.5%)
Total	29(72.5%)	11(27.5%)	40(100%)

Source: Field Survey

**Table 10:** Ranking of Students Preferences for different Combination of meals provided in the school premises

Combination of Items	Rank
Rice & Daal	4
Rice, Vegetables & Daal	2
Khichdi/ Pulao	3
Rice & Egg curry	1

Source: Field Survey

During the investigation, students were questioned regarding the combination of the meals they prefer most. Maximum of the sample students opined that they prefer to consume rice with egg curry most, although it is provided only on Wednesday as per the weekly suggested menu. Students ranked rice, vegetables, and daal on 2<sup>nd</sup>, followed by khichdi/ pulao on 3<sup>rd</sup> and rice and only daal on 4<sup>th</sup>.

From the above study it can be understood that despite the implementation of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in all the Government primary schools of Tinsukia district, the functioning of the scheme many schools is not following the guidelines provided by the scheme particularly in respect of the timely supply of grains, a storage facility for grains and plates for distribution of meal to children.

## FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

Mid-Day Meal was implemented by the Government of India to provide regularly cooked hot meals to children of government primary schools from class 1 to 8 (Kanchan, R. 2016). In the Government school of Tinsukiait was observed that a hot nutritious meal is served in every sample school according to the fixed menu and calories decided by the government. MDM Program has contributed to social inclusion as children of different castes sit together and share a common meal on the school premises (Khera, R. (2006). Tinsukia at 72.50% of sample schools food grains for Mid-Day Meal is provided at the doorstep of the school by the Government Officials while 27.50% of school headteachers of the school have to collect grains from nearest godown/ration dealers. It was observed during the field survey that in 70% of sample schools there is a delay in supply of Mid-Day Meal grains. Headteachers of these schools opined that they face disruption in serving a cooked hot meal regularly to the children. Funds for the MDM program are sanctioned and released by the central authorities to state authorities and thereby to district authorities. District authorities further release the fund to educational blocks and block transfer funds to headteachers of the school (Rani, N., 2013). It was observed that 22 sample schools (55%) receive funds (Cooking Cost) for MDM Program on time while remaining 18 (45%) schools complain of not receiving funds on time. In 27.5% of sample school plates to have mid-day meals are provided by the school authorities and in 72.5% schools plates were brought by the students from home to have a mid-day meal. It was found that in many sample rural schools and tea management schools, students come to school only to have a meal. During the gap in MDM, these students stop coming to school. From the field survey, it was observed that all the sample schools have filtration facilities within the school campus to filter the drinking water. But 5% of sample school headteachers opined that drinking water provided by the school is not safe because the government has not provided any filter to the school rather they use the traditional filtration process to filter water. The teachers of the primary schools have had to perform the combined role of the purchaser, supervisor, server, accountant and watchman (Moses, 1983). In 27.5% of schools, the headteacher goes to collect grains from the nearest ration shop for the smooth performance of the Mid-Day Meal Program. Headteacher these schools opine that their time is being wasted since they go during the college hours to collect grains. Our findings reveal that schools engage mother groups in the school to look over the working of the MDM Programme. It was observed that in all sample schools MDM is regularly monitored by the School Management Committee. All the sample schools of Tinsukia district maintain cleanliness and hygiene while producing and serving MDM. It was observed during the field survey that MDM is inspected by the Government officials either daily or weekly. In some of the sample, school headteachers opined that the money provided by the Government Rs.4.13 per student for Lower Primary Schools and Rs.6.18 per student for Upper Primary Schools for the performance of Mid-Day Meal Program is insufficient. As per the government order quality of the meal provided to the children needs to be



supervised and tested by the teacher and mother groups (Ravi, 2016). All the sample schools properly maintain registers regularly as prescribed by the Government. Cooks of all the sample schools responded that they regularly follow the weekly menu provided by the Government. And based on each day's attendance they decide how much to cook. Students of all sample schools responded that they get a cooked meal from the school and they have it within the school premises. Scheme has increased the workload of teachers of primary school.

The study suggests that the food grains necessary for the performances of the Mid-Day Meal should be supplied directly to the school authorities without any ration dealer. Schools providing Mid-Day Meal should take appropriate measures to construct the kitchen within the school premises so that the cooking process does not take place in temporary sheds, teacher's houses or outside the school premises (Kumar A. 2017). The government should take measures to provide sufficient plates to all the primary schools performing MDM activities in the district for the distribution of cooked hot meals to the children. Schools should have a proper drinking water facility within the school premises since it is necessary to build a healthy livelihood. Dining Hall should be set up in all the schools so that students do not have to take a meal in the veranda, classroom or open space. Instead of firewood, all the schools should use gas as fuel to prepare Mid-Day Meal since the usage of firewood creates air pollution and harmful for a person's health. Given existing price inflation on food articles, the cost of meals per child per day is inadequate. As a result, more funds should be provided by the Government of India under the scheme (Hamid Y & Hamid. A., 2012). Authorities involved in the implementation of the scheme should have a close watch on the proper utilization of the fund so that unnecessary wastage can be minimized.

## CONCLUSION

The outcome of this study establishes that the Mid-Day Meal Scheme is playing an important role in reducing classroom hunger of students in the surveyed government primary schools of Tinsukia district. But the scheme is not successful in increasing enrolment of students in these schools because of emerging private English medium schools in the locality. It has been observed that parents who can afford the expenses of private institutions are enrolling their children in these schools. The functioning of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in many surveyed schools of the district is not following the guidelines of the scheme particularly in respect of the timely supply of grains, storage facility of grains and plates for distribution of meal to the children. Hence appropriate steps need to be taken to remove these loopholes in the implementation of the scheme so that the objectives of the scheme can be realized in the true sense of the term.

## LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

The study is restricted only to only 3 educational blocks and 40 government primary schools of Tinsukia District of Assam. Shortly attempt will be made to study the performances of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in enhancing enrolment, attendance, and retention in the Government primary schools.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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