ABSTRACT

Childhood undernourishment and deprived health are two of the greatest barriers to Education for All. Poor enrollment and high school dropout rate are credited to the poor nutritional status of the children amalgamated by poor socio-economic conditions, child labour and lack of enthusiasm. The health condition of the children has a considerable impact on their growth and on their education prospects. India recognized that the problem of malnutrition is multi-dimensional, multi-sectoral and inter-generational in nature. So, Mid-day Meal Scheme (MDM Scheme) has been initiated by central government to attain the objective of providing free and compulsory universal primary education of satisfactory quality along with good health to all the children below the age of 14. To evaluate whether mid-day meal scheme is addressing the problems of malnutrition and poor education or not, the present study has been undertaken. The present study is an attempt to know the implementation status of the scheme in terms of institutional and infrastructural arrangements for the smooth running. And the next purpose of the study is to measure performance of the scheme in terms of its impact on enrolment, attendance & retention and health status of the children, in the state of Punjab. The study throws some lights on the problems faced by the teachers for the execution of the scheme. It also pinpoints the weak areas such as irregularities in releasing of funds for mid-day meal, non-availability of proper utensils and inappropriate sitting arrangements for having lunch, insufficiency of funds for construction of kitchen shed, irregularity in doctors’ visits for health checkups of the student. These weaken areas require the attention of the authorities for better implementation. The present study will be useful for government and the policy makers for further improvement in the scheme. So, these problems need to be firmly resolved for greater success of “Mid-day Meal Scheme”.