Chapter One
(Introduction)

1.1 Introduction

The primary education is to build up a responsible personality capable at functioning as a useful citizen. The contribution of Education to development in all Socio-Economic development spheres- is very significant. Not only that the economic returns to primary education are higher than returns to secondary and higher Education, returns to Primary Education of weaker Sections (e.g., backward castes and girls) are also found to be sizeable and, in fact, higher than returns to their respective counterparts (viz. Non-backward castes and boys), and returns to upper-primary level of Education are higher in rural than in urban areas. It is not restricted to economic returns only. Its significant effect on reduction in poverty and improvement in income distribution, improvement in health and nutritional status of the population, its negative relationship with fertility and population growth and positive association with adoption of family planning methods, and its positive relationship with general social, political and economic development and overall quality of life are well recognized. (Tilak, 1994).

Article 45 under Directive Principle of State Policy of Indian Constitution visualized that free compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years would be provided by 1960. But after 62 years of Independence this constitutional Directive has not been fulfilled. Recently, the 86th constitution amendment added clause 21 A to the right to life, and guaranteed every child between the ages of 6 – 14 years, education up to the elementary stage as a fundamental right. Our Ex President Hon’able Shrimati Prativa Devisingh Patil has also emphasized on the importance of Mid-day meal Programme. In 15th Loksabha, addressed by the Hon’able President of India, Shrimati Prativa Devisingh Patil, to Joint Session of Parliament on 4th June, 2009, said “Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has been able to provide access to children to elementary schools and retention has increased on account of the universal mid-day meal programme. The focus will be on making quality education a right through the enactment of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Bill now under consideration of Parliament.” This valued speech is soon followed, on June 25th, a press brief by our Ex Hon’ble Minister for Human Resource Development Mr. Kapil
Sibal. He said the government would try to enact the Rights of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill, and so would see that the Bill was passed in the coming Budget session. According to the Gazette of India (August 27, 2009) The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education is now an Act, (No. 35 of 2009, Ministry of Law and Justice, Govt. of India).

In March 1990, the world conference on Education for all, in Jomtien, Thailand, adopted the World Declaration on Education for all, which stated that everyone has a right to education, recognized the setbacks suffered by the education systems of many developing countries during the 1980’s, and proclaimed a commitment to meeting the basic learning needs of every citizen in every society. This concept of ‘Education for All’ meant much more than the expansion of existing formal school system to foster economic growth through the spread of basic cognitive skills. By late 1990’s it was felt that, despite the emphasis on basic education repeated at many international conferences that followed Jomtien, the EFA agenda had essentially been neglected. In April 2000, at the world Education forum in Dakar, 164 country governments, together with representations of regional groups, international Organization agencies, non-government Organizations and civil society, reaffirmed the Jomtien perspective on EFA and adopted a framework for action designed to deliver on the commitments made since 1990, with the aim of achieving ‘Education for All’ within a generation and sustaining it thereafter. Paragraph 7 of the Dakar Framework for Action defines the EFA goals the government, organizations, agencies, groups and associations represented at the world Education Forum pledged them to achieve:

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early child hood care and Education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;
4. Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for adults;
5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;
6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills (EFA Global monitoring Report 2008).

The problems that the Primary Education in India plagued with are mainly enrolment, irregular daily attendance, retention, repetition, dropout and low learning achievement. The Government of India has taken some initiative to overcome those problems. Sarva Shiksha Mission and mid-day meal programme is worth mentioning projects taken by Indian Government. The National Programme of Nutritional support to Primary Education (NPNSPE), popularly known as the Mid-day Meal Scheme, was formally launched on 15th August 1995. The objective of the programme is to give a boost to universalisation of primary education by increasing enrolment, attendance and retention, and also improving nutritional status of children in primary classes studying in Government, local body and Government aided Schools. From October 2002, the programme has been extended to children studying in Education Guarantee scheme (EGS) and other Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) Learning Centers also. (India 2006). On November 28, 2001 Supreme Court ordered directing all State Governments to introduce cooked mid-day meals in primary schools within six months. Once again most of the State Governments missed the deadline. Nevertheless, the coverage of Mid-day Meal programme has steadily expanded during last few years, and cooked lunches are rapidly becoming part of the daily school routine across the country. (Dreze, J, Goyal. A – 2003)

Essential quality norms for Mid-day Meal programme are:
1. Nutritious hot cooked meal should be served to students.
2. All mid-day meal programmes should include a “Micronutrient supplementation” component (as well as mass de-worming if needed), to address common micronutrient deficiencies among children.
3. Every school should have trained staff to provide mid – day meals with no interference to the normal school routine. Each school should have a trained cook and helper.
4. Each school should have the necessary utensils including vessels for cooking, water and plates.
5. Each school should have a reliable supply of clean drinking water within the premises.
6. Each school should have adequate infrastructure for mid day meals, including a kitchen and separate storage space.

7. Reliable arrangements for timely delivery of grain and other supplies should be in place everywhere.

8. Effective arrangements should be made for close supervision and monitoring of mid – day meal programmes, and prompt action in the event of lapses such as food poisoning, disruption in food supply, social discrimination, etc.

9. All cooking staffs should be women and preference should be given to dalits. There should be no discrimination in the mid day meal process based on social background of children or cooking staff.

10. The mid-day meal programme should be dinked with an active school health programme. (Recommendations on Mid-day Meals – National Advisory Council on 28 August 2004).

Experience has shown that the Mid-day meal scheme can help increase attendance and improve the child’s nutritional status. It also helps in removing caste barriers as all children sit together for their meals. (Planning Commission 9th December 2006)

1.2 Suggestions of Various Commissions’ Reports and Policy Documents

The Kothari commission (1966) has envisaged “what is expected is that primary education should lay the foundation for a child to grow in to a responsible and useful citizen of country” (P.151). The report of the Indian education commission constituted in 1964 was a landmark in Indian education and history. This commission examined the role and goals of education in the process of national development. While dealing with educational factors responsible for wastage in school education, it included the following: (i) the dull character of most of the schools and their poor capacity to attract students and retain them; (ii) the absence of auxiliary services like school meals and school health; and (iii) the failure of the average parent of child to see the advantage of attendance at school.

The commission recommended organization of a nationwide programme of ‘School improvement while it commended the very good work done in this respect in the Madras state where ‘school improvement conferences’ have been organized for some years and, large-scale assistance from the local community has been obtained for improving school facilities.
The commission further recommended that there should be a school Committee to look after every government or local authority school in a given area. Half the members of these committees should be elected by the local authority in charge of the area, Village Panchayat or Municipality, and the remaining should be persons interested in education, nominated by the District School Board. This committee would operate the school fund and will be responsible for arranging various facilities inclusive of the supply of mid-day meals, besides performing functions relating to school management.

The resolution on National Policy on Education (NPE) 1968 declared, “Strenuous efforts should be made for the early fulfilment of the Directive Principles under Article 45 of the constitution seeking to provide free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14. Suitable programmes should be developed to reduce the prevailing wastage and stagnation in schools and to ensure that every child who is enrolled in school, successfully complete the prescribed course”.

The NPE (1968) emphasized equalization of educational opportunity through several measures such as correcting regional imbalances in providing facilities to rural and backward areas, girls, and children of backward classes and tribal people, the physically and mentally challenged children.

The NPE (1968), suggested a nationwide programme of school improvement commending the good work of Madras states in this regard. The provision of school health services, inclusive of school meals was viewed important. The policy accepted the recommendations of the school health committee under the chairmanship of Smt. Renuka Ray. The policy endorsed the Education Commission (1964-66) recommendation in the matter of constituting the school committee for every area and entrusting various functions relating to school education exclusive of management of school fund. Therefore, the school committee would organize and manage the mid-day meal programme and enlist local support for its activities.

The challenge of Education- A policy perspective’ 1985 the document of the Ministry of Human Resource Development served as the basis for a nationwide debate for facilitating the formulation of National Policy on Education 1986. It stressed the crucial role of UEE in reconfirming the importance of Article 45 under Directive Principles of State Policy in the constitution and, the resolution on NPE 1968 in this respect. It is observed that measures such as MDM, free uniforms and textbooks and
even central assistance to the nine educationally backward states for the appointment of women teachers in single-teacher schools, had not yield significant results as yet.

The National Policy of Education (1986), emphasized the importance of UEE. The programme of Action 1986 mentioned that a comprehensive system of incentives and support services would be arranged for girls, SC, ST and children of weaker sections of society. Only in the case of girls, it has mentioned explicitly that the incentive of MDM would be made available for increasing enrolment and retention of girls in schools.

Dealing with education of SC, ST and Other Backward sections, it had mentioned, the scheme of incentives would be worked out in consultation with the state government. In this regard incentives such as free uniform, textbooks and stationery and scholarships were included. However, MDM was not so explicitly mentioned.

The National policy of Education was adopted once against in 1992 with certain modifications and endorsed by parliament. The POA 1992 emphasized the significance of UEE and IPE. For encouraging participation, it said, adequate incentives would be made available for the children of SC, ST and Other Backward Sections and especially for girls in the form of scholarships, uniforms, textbooks and stationery and MDM.

In 2002 the Constitution of India was amended (86th amendment) to alter the provision of Article 45 of the Constitution (Rampal, 2005). This makes the provision of free and compulsory education a fundamental right and affirmed the old commitment of the state towards education of the citizens. The 86th amendment inserted a new Article-21A which reads: ‘The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age group of 6 to 14 years, in the manner as the state may, by law, determine’.

The Tenth Plan has laid adequate emphasis on Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) with a view to ensuring completion of five years of primary schooling for children by 2007. The Tenth Plan is guided by five parameters in providing elementary education.

**Universal Access:** All children in 6-14 age groups have access to primary school, upper primary schools or their alternative with in a walking distance of 1 and 3 km. respectively.
Universal Enrolment: Enrolment of all children including girls, disabled children and children belonging to SCs and STs etc. in primary classes and provision of upper primary education for them.

Universal Retention: Universal retention in primary stage by 2007 and dropout rates to be reduced to less than 10 percent for grade VI-VIII by 2007.

Universal Achievement: Emphasizes the importance of quality aspects in all respects (content and process) to ensure reasonable outcomes at the elementary level.

Equity: Bridge all gender and social gaps in enrolment, retention and learning achievement.

The major schemes of elementary education sector during the Tenth Plan included SSA, District Primary Education Programmes (DPEP) National Programmes of Nutritional Support to Primary Education commonly known as Mid Day Meal Scheme (MDMS), Teacher Education Scheme and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme (KGBVS). The schemes of Lok Jumbish and Shiksha Karmi were completed but DPEP would extend up to November 2008. KGBV has now been subsumed within SSA.

12th five year plan outlay for 2015-16 reflects that with the success achieved at primary stage mid day meal scheme, it has been extended to the upper primary stage in 3,479 educationally backward blocks from 1st October, 2007. From 2008-09, the programme covers children up to upper primary level (from Classes I to VIII) in all areas across the country. An outlay of Rs. 9236.40 crore has been provided for this scheme, which is inclusive of Rs. 907.00 crore for NER and Sikkim.

1.3 Conceptual Background of Mid Day Meal

India is the seventh largest country geographically, second most populated and twelfth largest economy in the world. India is now largely recognized as a fast developing economy. The decadal growth rate is 21.34%. Average literacy rate is 65.38%. Despite the higher growth rate, over the decades the problems of malnutrition, anaemia, vitamin-A and Iodine deficiency are very common among children in India. Approximately ninety four percent of children in the age group of 6 to 9 are mildly, moderately, or severely underweight. About 67.5 percent of children less than 5 years and 69 percent of adolescent girls suffer from anaemia due to iron and folic acid deficiency. As India marches ahead with policy and programmatic interventions for achieving the millennium Development Goals, there is increasing reorganisation of achieving a truly “Food Secure India”. However, India is a poignant example of how
Food sufficiency at the aggregate level has not translated into nutrition security at the household level (Ramchandran, 2008). Hunger Report (Menon 2008) is another grim reminder of India’s failure to combat hunger and malnutrition. India has added more people to the ‘newly hungry’ in the planet than the rest of the world together and has achieved the 65th rank in the Global Hunger Index out of 118 countries (IFPRI 2009). According to the National Sample Survey (2001) people who did not have two square meal a day in India constituted 19 percent of the population in 1983 and was reduced to 7 percent in 1993. India shares a place with countries like Yemen and Timor in having the highest prevalence of underweight children. According to NFHS-3 data, close to 80 percent of India’s children in the age group 6-12 month are anaemic. The consequences of early malnutrition include mental and physical impairment that severely affect a child’s growth and development.

Recognizing that children’s well being is crucial to India’s well being, the Constitution of India states, “The State shall direct its policy towards ensuring that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom, dignity and that children and youth are protected against abandonment” (Directive Principle of State Policy). Article 47 embodied the commitment that “the state shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among the primary duties.”

To ameliorate hunger and under nutrition, the Government of India (GoI), has undertaken several initiatives one approach is through price control is Public Distribution System, second is through Food for Work Programmes and the third is the large scale feeding programmes such as the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) for children in 0-6 year age group and pregnant and lactating mothers and the Mid Day Meal Programme (MDMS) for school going children.

1.3.1 Historical Perspective of Mid Day Meal Programme

The Midday Meal Scheme is a school meal programme of the government of India designed to improve the nutritional status of school-age children nationwide. The programme supplies free lunches on working days for children in primary and upper primary classes in government, government aided, local body, Education Guarantee Scheme, and alternate innovative education centres, Madarsa and Maqtabas supported under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, and National Child Labour Project schools run by the
ministry of labour. Serving 120,000,000 children in over 1,265,000 schools and Education Guarantee Scheme centres, it is the largest such programme in the world.

1.3.1(a) Pre-Independence Initiative

Mid day meals, as a public welfare concept in India, dates back to 1925 when such a project was launched for the underprivileged children in the then Madras Corporation area. One of the pioneers, Madras Corporation started providing cooked meals to children in Corporation schools in the Madras city; the programme was later introduced on a larger scale in 1960s. Tamil Nadu’s midday meal programme is among the best known in the country. The programme was introduced at a national level by the government of India in the late 50s and early 60s and later in the 80s as a centrally sponsored programme.

Besides Madras, several other states/cities of India too have had the mid-day meal programme prior to the Government of India’s initiative. In 1928, Keshav Academy of Calcutta introduced compulsory Mid-Day Tiffin for school boys on payment basis at the rate of four annas per child per month. A school lunch programme was started in parts of Kerala in 1941; followed by Bombay implementing a free mid-day meal scheme in 1942, who with UNICEF assistance distributed skimmed milk powder to children aged between 6-13 years. Another project was launched in Bangalore city in 1946 where the scheme provided cooked rice with curds to the children.

1.3.1(b) Post-independence Initiative

In 1953, Uttar Pradesh Government introduced a scheme, on voluntary basis, to provide meals consisting of boiled or roasted or sprouted grams, ground-nut, puffed rice, boiled potatoes or seasonal fruits. Several states introduced such schemes during 1950s, with the aid of international agencies like the UNICEF, FAO and WHO. An Expanded Nutrition Programme was launched jointly by the Government of India and the FAO, WHO, UNICEF during 1958-59, which subsequently developed, into the Applied Nutrition Programme (ANP). Under this, demonstration feeding programmes for the school children wherein nutritious food was cooked by the women groups and fed to the children under the nutrition education component.

The idea of a National Mid-Day Meal Programme had been considered again and again for over a decade. In 1982, the idea of 'Food for Learning' with FAO commodity
assistance was mooted. Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) girls were to be covered under this programme.

In 1983, the Department of Education of the Central Government after inter-ministerial consultations, prepared a scheme as per the guidelines of the World Food Programme (WFP). According to this scheme 13.6 million SC children and 10.09 million ST girls in classes I-V were to be covered in 15 states and 3 Union Territories, where the enrolment of SC /ST girls was less than 79 percent. The proposal was circulated among states and Union Territories (UTs). While many states expressed their willingness to implement the programme, others reported that there were some practical difficulties in implementing a mid day meal programme meant exclusively for SC and ST children particularly continuing when WFP assistance was withdrawn.

A programme with Central Government assistance for mid day meal for the benefit of children enrolled in primary schools throughout the country was considered during 1984-85, the rationale for the programme were:

- The Mid Day Meal Programme for primary schools could form the basis of an anti-poverty educational programme.
- Implementation of this programme for the children aged between 6-11 years may maximize enrolment and reduce school dropout rates, which were important from the viewpoint of Universalisation of elementary education as well as achievement of higher literacy rates in the country.

This programme would also help in providing nutrition to the under-fed and under nourished children in rural areas.

The broad features of the programme were:-

- Supplying of food items providing 300 calories per day and 12-15 g protein per child with coverage of primary school children in a phased manner.
- Expenditure per child per day including expenses on administration to be 60paisa.
- No elaborate administrative infrastructure to be built up.
- Funds required for the programme to come from provisions marked for poverty alleviation scheme.
- States should evolve suitable logistics and make arrangements for cooks, helpers, administration, supervision and monitoring.

It was recognized that the scheme had some inherent problems such as possibilities of leakage, inadequacy of buildings, non-attendance of teachers, and participation by non
school-going children and misuse by those in charge of the programme. It was hoped that these problems would get addressed with time. However the programme was not approved as part of the subsequent annual plans, apparently due to resource constraints.

In December 1988, the Department of Education formulated a proposal for covering 994 ICDS blocks with concentration of SC/ST children @ Rs.1/- per child per day. The important element of this scheme was:

- The scheme should cover all children in primary classes in government and local body schools.
- Mid day meals should be provided on all working days.
- CARE assistance, if any, should be excluded.
- Cereals and to the extent possible pulses, edible oils and condiments should be supplied to the schools through authorized state agencies.

In 1990-91, seventeen State governments were implementing the programme for primary school children between the age group of 6-11 years with varying degrees of coverage. Twelve states namely Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, and Uttar Pradesh were implementing Mid Day Meal Programme from their own resources. In three states namely Karnataka, Orissa and West Bengal, the programme was implemented partially with assistance from CARE. As reported by Ministry of Human Resource and Development, thirteen States and five Union Territories were administering mid day meal programme as of December 1994.

1.3.2 Recent Developments in Mid Day Meal Programme

MDMP (Mid Day Meal Programme) - ‘Nutrition Support to primary education’ is considered as a means of providing free and compulsory universal primary education of satisfactory quality to all children below the age of 14 years.

A National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education commonly known as MID DAY MEAL PROGRAMME (MDMP) was re-launched by the then Prime Minister of India on 15th August 1995. It was aimed at improving enrolment, attendance and retention, while simultaneously improving the nutritional status of students in primary classes. Universalisation of primary education being our national goal, MDMP was launched with the following objectives:

- Increase enrolment; improve school attendance as well as retention,
- Promote social integration,
- Improve nutritional status of the primary school children and
- Inculcate good food habits in children.

The programme envisaged the provision of cooked meals/ processed food of calorific value equivalent to 100g of wheat /rice for children studying in classes IV in all Government, local body and Government aided primary schools free of cost. This recommendation was based on a study done by NNMB (1990-92) on dietary consumption patterns of rural children using a one-day 24-hour recall method. It was observed that the children had a deficit of the magnitude of 628 kcal and 6-7g protein in the daily diets. From the nutritional angle, the endeavour should be to bridge the average nutritional gap of 600 kcal through a balanced diet of cereals, pulses, fats and vegetables; the cereal component could be to the order of 60-90 percent of the calorie deficit or roughly 100g of food grains / child /day.

The programme which started in August 1995 has seen all India coverage in 1997-98 and the coverage of children under the programme has increased from 3.4 crores in 1995-96 to 10.5 crores in 2003-04 in about the same number of schools. However, there were a lot of variations over the years with regard to implementation. The coverage of more than 12 crore children in rural and urban areas under the scheme makes the mid day meal programme one of the largest nutrition support schemes in the world.

Initially, it was perceived that the mode of delivery of nutritional support could be in the form of hot cooked meal, precooked food or food grains. Only four states viz. Gujarat, Kerala, Orissa and Tamil Nadu and the Union Territory of Pondicherry were providing cooked meals. All other states were providing dry rations supplied by Food Corporation of India (FCI) distributed under Public Distribution System (PDS) @ 3 kg of food grain per child to a family for ten months which would be equivalent to set norms for 100g/day / child for 200 school days (subject to a minimum attendance of 80 percent). Some states like Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir reported that they could not implement the programme due to resource constraints. Chandigarh and Delhi due to logistic problems continued to serve processed foods like fruit bread, biscuits and fruits. Lakshwadeep administration, which has been implementing its own MDMP, has since been exempted from participating in the national programme from 1997-98 as special case.
The MDMP is being implemented remarkably well in some states. The Pondicherry government has employed the state of art technology and has opened a centralized kitchen with latest food production gadgets and sophisticated cooking techniques to ensure that food is cooked and delivered to the children in a safe and hygienic manner. Each central kitchen was catering to about 8,000-10,000 children. Similarly, the Tamil Nadu Government has initiated a locally structured institutional machinery to ensure that meals are delivered to the beneficiaries. Gujarat has an exclusive department overseeing the implementation of the scheme and has also been a pioneer in supplying fortified food to children. In Kerala, some teachers willingly contributed a portion of their salaries to ensure that conversion costs of raw to cooked food are met and the food is served to children regularly.

In April 2001, People’s Union for Civil Liberties (Rajasthan) initiated the right to food litigation. This public interest litigation has covered a large range of issues relating to right to food, but the best known intervention by the court is on midday meals. On November 28, 2001 the Supreme Court of India gave directive making it mandatory for the state governments to provide cooked meals instead of ‘dry rations’. In one of its many directions in the litigation the Supreme Court directed the government to fully implement its scheme of providing cooked meals to all children in primary schools. This landmark direction converted the mid-day meal scheme into a legal entitlement, the violation of which can be taken up in the court of law. The direction and further follow-up by the Supreme Court has been a major instrument in universalising the scheme. Excerpts from that Order are:

- We direct the State Governments/ Union Territories to implement the Mid-Day Meal Scheme by providing every child in every Government and Government assisted Primary Schools with a prepared mid day meal with a minimum content of 300 calories and 8-12g of protein each day of school for a minimum of 200 days. Those Governments providing dry rations instead of cooked meals must within three months (February 28, 2002) start providing cooked meals in all Governments and Government aided Primary Schools in all half the Districts of the State (in order of poverty) and
must within a further period of three months (May 28, 2002) extend the provision of cooked meals to the remaining parts of the State.

- We direct the Union of India and the FCI to ensure provision of fair average quality grain for the Scheme on time. The States/Union Territories and the Food Corporation of India (FCI) are directed to do joint inspection of food grains. If the food grain is found, on joint inspection, not to be of fair average quality, it will be replaced by the FCI prior to lifting.

The direction was to be implemented from June 2002, but was violated by most States. But with sustained pressure from the court, media and in particular, from the Right to Food Campaign more and more states started providing cooked meals. In May 2004 a new coalition government was formed at the centre, which promised universal provision of cooked meals fully funded by the centre. This ‘promise’ made in the Common Minimum Programme was followed by enhanced financial support to the states for cooking and building sufficient infrastructure. Given this additional support the scheme has expanded its reach to cover most children in primary schools in India.

The Tenth Plan made certain modifications in the MDMP in order to achieve the goals set in the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme; the modifications would be made in the scheme in the light of feedback received from evaluation studies, the experience gained from the working of the scheme, and the opinions of experts. The modifications would include the following:

- Expanding the programme to cover the children of the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative Innovative Education (AIE).
- Ending the present practice of distributing food grains and providing hot cooked meals or ready-to-eat food based on sound nutritional principles.
- Allowing adequate flexibility in the management of the programme by the local bodies/community through VECs, School Management Committees (SMCs),
- Fostering stronger community participation through Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and such other units of the school system in the implementation of the programme. Encouraging the participation of credible NGOs, wherever possible.
- Decentralizing the management of the programme to enable reduction in leakages and mismanagement.
- Providing funds in advance to the implementing agencies through the state nodal officer for the transportation of food grains.
• Limiting teachers’ involvement in the programme to supervision activities.

• Extensive use of the computerized MIS (CMIS) net for monitoring purposes. External agencies are to be involved in monitoring and supervision to ensure greater accountability. Elected representatives will also be involved in supervision.

• Linkage with poverty alleviation programmes in rural and urban areas, adequate support of the Union Ministry of Health and the state Health Departments for the school health programme and support from the Department of Women and Child Development for nutrition education.

• A memorandum of understanding be entered into with the key stakeholders (state governments, local bodies, etc.) on the key parameters.

The implementation of the SC decision is wrought with trials and tribulations; cash-strapped governments unable to meet the demands of allocating Rs. 2.50-Rs 2.75 per child per meal, inadequate infrastructure for building service units so that the cooked hot meal can be prepared and distributed under hygienic conditions and the lack of trained professionals to man these service units.

1.3.3 National Program of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE)

The National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (commonly known as the Mid-Day Meal Scheme) was launched as a Centrally-Sponsored Scheme in August 1995. The scheme initially focused on children at the primary stage (class I to V) in government, local body and government-aided schools. It was extended in October 2002 to cover children studying in the centres under Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative & Innovative Education (AIE). Central support was provided by way of free supply of food grains through the Food Corporation of India (FCI) at the rate of 100 grams per student day, where cooked meals were served and at the rate of 3 kg per student per month, where food grains were distributed and subsidy for transport of food grains from nearest FCI depot to the primary school subject to a maximum of Rs. 50 per quintal.

In December 2004, the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Elementary Education and Literacy revised the guidelines for the Scheme. These guidelines emphasised providing of cooked meals with minimum 300 calories and 8-12 grams of protein content while simultaneously providing for essential micronutrients and de-worming medicines.
The guidelines provided for special focus on the enrolment, attendance and retention of children belonging to disadvantaged sections. Nutritional support to students was also provided during summer vacations in drought-affected areas. The Ministry also provided financial assistance to the state governments for management, monitoring and evaluation (MME).

The Ministry revised the scheme again in September 2006 with the following objectives:

- Improving the nutritional status of children in classes I-V in government, local body and government aided schools, and EGS and AIE centres;
- Encouraging poor children belonging to disadvantaged sections to attend school more regularly and help them concentrate on classroom activities; and
- Providing nutritional support to children of primary stage in drought-affected areas during summer vacation.

The nutritional value of the cooked mid day meal was increased from 300 to 450 calories and the protein content therein from 8-12 grams to 12 grams. The scheme of 2006 also provided for adequate quantities of micronutrients like iron, folic acid, vitamin-A etc.

1.3.4 Mid-Day Meal Rules, 2015 under National Food Security Act, 2013

The Central Government notified ‘Mid Day Meal Rules, 2015’ on September 30th, 2015. The National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA, 2013) contains provisions related to welfare schemes including Mid Day Meal Scheme. In accordance with the provisions of the Act, the Ministry of HRD has finalized the MDM Rules after consultation with the States and other related Central Ministries. The rules will be known as Mid Day Meal Rules, 2015 and will be in effect from the date of notification in the Gazette of India. The Rules inter alia provide for temporary utilization of other funds available with the school for MDM in case school exhausts MDM funds for any reason; Food Security Allowance to be paid to beneficiaries in case of non-supply of meals for specified reasons; and monthly testing of meals on a random basis by accredited Labs to check its quality. Further, the Rules also provide that concerned State Governments shall fix responsibility on the person or agency if meals are not provided on 3 consecutive school days or 5 days in a month. These rules and their effective compliance by implementing agencies in the States will ensure better regularity in serving mid day meals in schools and also improve quality of the meals.
as well as overall implementation of the Mid Day Meal Scheme in the country. The
salient provisions of the rules are as under:

- **Entitlements of children:** Every child within the age group of six to fourteen
  years studying in classes I to VIII who enroll and attend the school, shall be provided
  hot cooked meal having nutritional standards of 450 calories and 12 gm of protein for
  primary and 700 calories and 20 gm protein for upper primary free of charge every
  day except on school holidays. The place of serving meals to the children shall be
  school only.

- **Implementation of the Scheme:** Every school shall have the facility for cooking
  meal in hygienic manner. Schools in urban area may use the facility of centralised
  kitchens for cooking meals wherever required in accordance with the guidelines issued
  by the Central Government and the meal shall be served to children at respective
  school only.

- **Responsibility of School Management Committee:** The School Management
  Committee mandated under Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 shall
  also monitor implementation of the Mid-day meal Scheme and shall oversee quality of
  meals provided to the children, cleanliness of the place of cooking and maintenance
  of hygiene in implementation of mid day meal scheme.

- **Utilization of School Funds:** The Headmaster or Headmistress of the school
  shall be empowered to utilise any fund available in school for the purpose of
  continuation of Mid Day Meal Scheme in the school in case of temporary
  unavailability of food grains, cooking cost etc. in the school. The utilised fund shall be
  reimbursed to the school account immediately after receipt of mid day meal funds.

- **Testing of the meals by Accredited Labs to ensure nutritional standards:** Hot
  cooked meal provided to children shall be evaluated and certified by the Government
  Food Research Laboratory or any laboratory accredited or recognized by law, so as to
  ensure that the meal meets with the nutritional standards and quality.

- The Food and Drugs Administration Department of the State may collect samples
  to ensure the nutritive value and quality of the meals. The samples shall be collected at
  least once in a month from randomly selected schools or centralised kitchens and
  sent for examination to the accredited laboratories.

- **Food Security Allowance.** If the Mid-Day Meal is not provided in school on
  any school day due to non-availability of food grains, cooking cost, fuel or absence of
cook-cum-helper or any other reason, the State Government shall pay food security allowance by 15th of the succeeding month in the manner provided herein below:-

(a) Quantity of Food grains as per entitlement of the child; and

(b) Cooking cost prevailing in the State.

- In case of non-supply of meal by the Centralised Kitchen, the Food Security Allowance shall be realised from the Centralised Kitchen as stated above.
- Provided that in case a child has not taken food on offer for whatever reasons, no claim of food security allowance shall lie with the State Government or Centralised Kitchens:
- Provided further that no claim shall lie with State Government or Centralised Kitchen for reasons of quality of food grains and meal:
- The State Government shall take action to fix responsibility on the person or agency in accordance with the procedure laid down, if mid day meal is not provided in school on school days continuously for three days or at least for five days in a month.
- Wherever an agency of Central Government is involved, the State Government shall take up the matter with Central Government which shall resolve the matter within a month.

1.3.5 Public Private Participation in Mid Day Meal Programme

NGOs play an important role in the expansion of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme. The State Governments partner with NGOs like The Akshaya Patra Foundation to implement the Mid-Day Meal Programme in order to increase the number of children they reach out to. Thus many NGOs work towards countering hunger and malnutrition. This Public-Private Partnership (PPP) has proved instrumental in improving the quality and reach of the programme. There are many facets which the Government considers when selecting a non-profit to partner with. Such organisations must be transparent and 'of proven integrity'. Below are the NP-NSPE 2004 criteria for choosing an NGO:

- The voluntary agencies should not discriminate in any manner on the basis of religion, caste and creed, and should not use the programme for propagation of any religious practice.
- The voluntary agency should be a body that is registered under the Societies Registration Act or the Public Trust Act, and should have been in existence for a minimum period of two years.
Commitment to undertake supply responsibility on a no-profit basis.
Willingness to work with PRIs/ Municipal bodies in accordance with relevant guidelines of the State Government.
Financial and logistic capacity to supply the mid day meal on the requisite scale.
It will furnish to the body assigning the work to it an Annual Report along with audited statement of accounts in terms of all grants received from the State Government, both in cash and kind, duly certified by an approved Chartered Accountant.

Once chosen, an NGO must set up a kitchen, carry out the day to day operations of preparing meals and maintain its running costs. As the NP-NSPE, 2004 Guidelines state, 'In urban areas where a centralised kitchen setup is possible for a cluster of schools, cooking may wherever appropriate, be undertaken in a centralised kitchen and cooked hot meal may then be transported under hygienic conditions through a reliable transport system to various schools. There may be one or more such nodal kitchen(s) in an urban area, depending on the number of clusters which they serve.' In order to implement the programme effectively, therefore, an NGO must be well equipped to handle the logistics of the programme. A non-profit must have ‘financial and logistic capacity to supply the mid-day meal on the requisite scale'. The Government provides a solution as to how this may be attained. The Ministry of Human Resources Department states: “The state government shall be fully responsible in implementing the programme through NGOs support either for a cooked meal or pre cooked food variant in eligible schools. To this extent the State Government or the NGO concerned, may mobilize resources for conversion of food grains in to a cooked meal.”

This solution has allowed organisations such as Akshaya Patra, who have kitchens across the country, costing an average Rs. 80 million (8 crores), to set up their massive infrastructures and conduct the Scheme in line with Government’s guidelines. It gives NGOs a means to raise funds for the deficit incurred during programme implementation.

As the minutes of the 2008-2009 Programme Approval Board meeting state, “Other expenses such as cooks honorarium, vessels and kitchen construction, transportation are to be borne by NGOs.”

The Government has even made provisions for donations raised. For example in 2003, a committee, headed by the former Chief Justice of India (the National Committee for
Promotion of Social and Economic Welfare, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, Government of India) recommended Akshaya Patra as an eligible project that could raise donations up to Rs. 220 million (22 crores) with 100% tax benefits to the donors for 3 years.

In 2006 the committee reviewed Akshaya Patra’s programme once again and raised the amount for tax free donations to Rs. 1000 million (100 crores). Another review in 2009 increased that number to Rs. 2000 million (200 crores) for a period of 3 years.

There is a two-pronged strategy to the Government’s decision to encourage NGOs. By doing so, not only does it improve the quality of the programme, but also promote community involvement. According to the NP-NSPE, 2004 ‘processes should also be set in place to ensure vibrant community involvement so that the mid day meal programme becomes a peoples’ programme.’ NGOs promote community participation through active volunteering and fundraising. They involve all layers of society and help the Government make the mid-day meal scheme a ‘peoples’ programme’.

The question now arises as to the transparency of operations in a Public-Private partnership. A National level Steering-cum-Monitoring Committee (NSMC) oversees management and monitoring of the programme. As stated in NP-NSPE, 2004, the committee's duties include:

- ‘Mobilizing community support and promoting public-private partnership for the programme’
- ‘Monitoring programme implementation, assessing its impact, and taking corrective steps’

One of the conditions for eligibility is that ‘persons managing the affairs of the association or institution are persons of proven integrity’ (National Committee for Promotion of Social and Economic Welfare, Government of India). Another is that ‘the association or institution maintains regular accounts of its receipts and expenditure’. Reports must be submitted regularly by the voluntary organisation.

The involvement of a number of private bodies in the implementation of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme has resulted in visibly better performance.

- Nearly 120 million (12 crore) children are so far covered under the scheme, making this school lunch programme the largest in the world. The Government’s multi-faceted approach has therefore shown tremendous results.
By leveraging the unique resources of organisations such as Akshaya Patra to act as its implementing arm and making provisions for them to be as self-sufficient as possible, the Government has successfully involved the entire society in helping the children of our country. These foundations promote community participation through fundraising and volunteering.

The private public partnerships it has encouraged have been instrumental in ensuring the success of the programme. With the aid of these organisations, the Government has managed to scale the scheme to massive proportions.

The scheme has impacted children in many ways. Attendance has increased, classroom hunger has reduced, malnutrition decreased and socialization among children of all castes improved.

On a global scale, the Indian Government has worked hard to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

1.4 State Profile of Tripura

Tripura, the north-eastern state of India is nestled in the far east of India, neighbouring the country of Bangladesh. The state headquarters is located at Agartala, which is also the capital of the state. Tripura is one of the eight states in the north eastern part of India. It is bounded on the north, west, south and south-east by Bangladesh. In the east part it has a common boundary with Assam and Mizoram.

Tripura was a princely state, before becoming integral part of the Republic of India. Monarchy in Tripura ended on 9th September 1947. It officially became part of India on October 15, 1949 and a Union Territory on 1st November 1956. It became a constituent state of the Indian Union on January 21, 1972.

As per details from Census 2011, Tripura has population of 36.74 Lakhs, an increase from figure of 32 Lakh in 2001 census. Total population of Tripura as per 2011 census is 3,673,917 of which male and female are 1,874,376 and 1,799,541 respectively. In 2001, total population was 3,199,203 in which males were 1,642,225 while females were 1,556,978. The total population growth in this decade was 14.84 percent while in previous decade it was 15.74 percent. The population of Tripura forms 0.30 percent of India in 2011. In 2001, the figure was 0.31 percent.

In January 2012, major changes were implemented in the administrative divisions of Tripura. Beforehand, there had been four districts – Dhalai (headquarters Ambassa), North Tripura (headquarters Kailashahar), South Tripura (headquarters Udaipur), and West Tripura (headquarters Agartala). Four new districts were carved out of the
existing four in January 2012 – Khowai, Unakoti, Sipahijala and Gomati. Six new subdivisions and five new blocks were also added. Each is governed by a district collector or a district magistrate, usually appointed by the Indian Administrative Service. The subdivisions of each district are governed by a sub-divisional magistrate and each subdivision is further divided into blocks. The blocks consist of Panchayats (village councils) and town municipalities. As of 2012, the state had eight districts, 23 subdivisions and 45 development blocks. National census and state statistical reports are not available for all the new administrative divisions, as of March 2013. Agartala, the capital of Tripura, is the most populous city. Other major towns with a population of 10,000 or more (as per 2015 census) are Badharghat, Dharmanagar, Jogendranagar, Kailashahar, Udaipur, Amarpur, Belonia, Kumarghat, Khowai, Ranirbazar, Sonamura, Bishalgarh, Teliamura, Mohanpur, Melaghar, Ambassa and Santirbazar.

1.4.1 Socio Demographic and Economic Characteristics of Tripura

Tripura is the 2nd smallest state in terms of area, but the 2nd most populous state in the North Eastern Region. Although the state is small with a population of only over three million, the social composition of the population of Tripura is diverse. In particular, around one-third of the population comprises people belonging to the Scheduled Tribes. Total number of Households increased from 664334 in 2001 to 855556 in 2011 (increased by 28.8%) whereas total Population increased from 3199203 in 2001 to 3673917 in 2011 (increased by 14.8%). Sex Ratio is 960 (in 2001 it was 948), all India it is 943. Population in the group 0-6 increased from 436446 in 2001 to 458014 in 2011 (increased by 5%). Schedule Cast Population is 17.8% of total population. Sex ratio was 962 in 2001 now in 2011 are 959. Schedule Tribe Population is 31.8% of total Population. Sex ratio was 970 in 2001 now in 2011 it is 983 (for rural 982 and urban 1017). Literacy rate is 87.22% (against 73.19% in 2001) 4th in India. Male-Female Literacy gap is decreased significantly. Female literacy increased from 64.9 in 2001 to 82.7 in 2011. 40 percent of total populations are workers. Total workers increases by 26.7% (1159561 in 2001 to 1469521 in 2011). Percentage of Main workers to total workers is 73.3. Percentage of Marginal workers to total workers is 26.7. Work may be defined as participation in any economically productive activity with or without compensation, wages or profit. Such participation may be physically and/or mental in nature. Work involves not only actual work but also includes effective supervision and direction of work. The important point is that the activity should be economically productive. 20.1 percent of the total workers are cultivators. Number of cultivators as main activity decreases by 2.2% (252343 in 2001 to 246707
in 2011). 24.1 percent of the total workers is agriculture labourers. Also number of Agriculture labourers as main activity increases by 19.8% (168519 in 2001 to 201863 in 2011). 2.8 percent of the total workers are household industry workers. Total Population with Household industry as main activity decreases by 3% (19896 in 2001 to 19296 in 2011). 53 percent of total workers are other workers. Population of workers engaged in other activity increases by 29.2% (471534 in 2001 to 609153 in 2011). They are mainly salaried personnel, self-employed & involved in non-agricultural activities etc. Population pattern and demography have always been sensitive issues in Tripura over the past century which saw an actual decline in indigenous tribal population in terms of percentage because of resettlement of non-tribals in the state, particularly in the aftermath of the partition of the country in 1947. In 1901 Tripura's population was 1.73 lakh, with tribals making up nearly 52.89 per cent of the whole. By 1941, the total population rose to 5.13 lakh with a barely 50.09 per cent tribal majority. But by 1981, the tribal population dipped to 28.44 per cent of a total population of 2.05 million. Evidently, the tribal people were reduced from over a half to barely more than a quarter of the state's population in a century. The demographic changes, the economic pressures created by the sudden influx of people and the spread of education through missionary influence among the Mizos, Kukis and other tribes, have generated new impulses and a mix of expectations and aspirations. A feature of note is that around 97.4 per cent of the tribal population is rural. Human development among tribal people is thus very closely tied to the evolution of the rural economy.

1.4.2 Educational Profile of Tripura

Education in Tripura, a state in Northeast India, is provided by both the public sector and the private sector. On September 8, 2013, the literacy rate of Tripura was declared to be 94.65%, which is the highest among all states of India. The Average Literacy Rate in India is 74.04% according to 2011 Census. Interestingly Tripura has achieved this feat in a very short time. In 2001 Census, it was at 7th Position in Literacy Rate, while during the 2011 census it was at 3rd position. The State aims to attain 100% Literacy through its various programme and initiatives. According to Economic Review of Tripura (2013-14) the State Government has been attached highest priority to education since it attained the statehood in 1972. The State has been spending 12-14 percent of its annual budget for school education subsector. The "Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act,2009" has come into effect from April 2010 to provide free and compulsory education to children in the age group of 6-14 years in a
neighbourhood school. Elementary education, consisting of primary (I-V) and upper primary or middle (VI-VIII) is the main basis of education, which is successfully covered under "Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan" and "Mid-day meal" schemes in the State. The secondary (IX-X) education is covered through "Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan" and higher secondary education (XI-XII) is also witnessed a phenomenal expansion in the State. The State's education system covering from pre-primary stage onwards including adult literacy programmes has been making efforts towards fulfilment of the commitment made by the State Government to achieve 100 percent literacy in Tripura. To achieve the goal, the State Government launched time bound "Saakshar Bharat Mission" in the Dhalai District in 2010-11 and special "Adult Literacy Programme" in the remaining seven districts. A survey conducted in 2012 reveals that there were about 1,31,634 illiterates in the age group of 15 and above in the State. About 8,152 teaching-learning centres were opened covering both rural and urban local bodies to cover these illiterates.

The status of school educational facilities in the State by existing eight districts in 2013-14 is presented in the following Table.

### Table 1.1: Number of Different types of Schools in Different Districts of Tripura

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>West</th>
<th>Sepahijala</th>
<th>Khawai</th>
<th>Gomati</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>Dhalai</th>
<th>Unakoti</th>
<th>North</th>
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Source: Economic Review of Tripura (2013-14)

The following Table depicts the district wise enrolment position during 2013-14 in the State.

### Table 1.2: District wise enrolment (2013-14)

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<th>District</th>
<th>Primary(I-V)</th>
<th>Middle(V-VIII)</th>
<th>Secondary(IX-X)</th>
<th>Higher Sec. (XI-XII)</th>
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Source: Economic Review of Tripura (2013-14)

Tripura schools are run by the state government or by private organisations, including religious institutions. Instruction is mainly in English or Bengali, though Kokborok and other tribal languages are also used. The schools are affiliated with the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), the Central Board for Secondary
Education (CBSE), the National Institute of Open School (NIOS) or the Tripura Board of Secondary Education.

1.4.3 Nutritional Status of Tripura

The Government of Tripura continues its effort to systematically enhance its investment in health in terms of improving the different health parameters, nutritional status of women and child, immunization status, etc. It is also actively seeking alternative and additional sources of support to strengthen its health system. The State is confident that these efforts will make a positive contribution to the lives of its citizens.

Table 1.3: Health Parameters of Tripura

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Tripura</th>
<th>National</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SRS-06</td>
<td>SRS-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Crude Birth Rate</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Death Rate</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Natural Growth Rate</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>IMR</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>TFR (NFHS 3 / SRS – 07)</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sex Ratio (Census 2001 &amp; 2011)</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>961</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher has collected data from National Family Health survey-4(2014-15) of West Tripura District as this is the area where the research work has been done. This fact sheet provides information on key indicators and trends for West Tripura. NFHS-4 fieldwork for Tripura was conducted from 2 February 2015 to 2 August 2015 by Development & Research Services Pvt. Ltd. (DRS). In West Tripura, information was gathered from 1,816 households, 1,938 women, and 318 men. The fact sheet shows information for urban and rural areas and the district as a whole because West Tripura has more than 30-70% urban households, which provides a sufficiently large sample to produce reliable estimates of most indicators for both urban and rural areas.

Table 1.4: Nutritional Status of People(%) West Tripura District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutritional Status</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total children age 6-23 months receiving an adequate diet (%)</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children under 5 years who are stunted (height-for-age) (%)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children under 5 years who are wasted (height-for-height) (%)</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children under 5 years who are severely wasted (height-for- height) (%)</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children under 5 years who are underweight (height-for-age) (%)</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women whose Body Mass Index (BMI) is below normal (BMI &lt; 18.5 kg/m2) (%)</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men whose Body Mass Index (BMI) is below normal (BMI &lt; 18.5 kg/m2) (%)</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women who are overweight or obese (BMI ≥ 25.0 kg/m2) (%)</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men who are overweight or obese (BMI ≥ 25.0 kg/m2) (%)</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children age 6-59 months who are anaemic (&lt;11.0 g/dl) (%)</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.5 Mid Day Meal in Tripura

Instructions for the smooth and effective implementation of Mid-day-Meal Scheme have been issued from time to time, but it has been observed that these instructions are not being followed strictly in letter and spirit. Hence, keeping in view of the need to implement the MDM Scheme as per the NP-NSPE-2006 guidelines and as well as for the benefit of the children, it is once again reiterated that the following instructions shall be strictly followed and adhered to by the field functionaries of the State Government and TTAADC involved in implementation of MDM.

1.5.1 Factors Involved in Success of MDM Scheme

There are many groups, agencies and people who are actively involved in successful implementation of the MDM scheme in Tripura. They are discussed in details bellow:

1.5.1(a) Involvement of Self Help Groups

Willing suitable, active and dependable Self Help group (SHG), preferably women Self Help Group should be engaged, wherever available, by the Inspectors of School for running MDM programme under their respective jurisdiction.

While engaging SHG for a school, the Inspector of Schools must invariably consult with the concerned Goan Panchayat/Village Committee of TTAADC/AMC/ Nagar Panchayat. After selection of the SHG, the Inspector of Schools shall issue formal engagement order indicating detail terms and conditions under intimation to the District Education Officer and the Director of School Education.

The terms and conditions, inter alia, should specifically include the following:-

i) Lifting of rice from Fair Price Shops and purchase of eggs, vegetables, other condiments and firewood/ gas etc. will be done by the SHG.

ii) Rice, vegetable, salt, dal etc. will be stored in the Schools premises only after proper entry in the Stock Books to be maintained by both HM/Teacher-in-Charge. Delivery of required rice, vegetables, salt, dal etc. will be made by the HM/TC to the SHG on daily basis for cooking of Mid-Day-Meal.

iii) HM/TC of the School may take advance payment of cooking cost to the SHG on weekly basis after calculation of fund required for the week. The SHG will submit relevant vouchers to the HM/TC after incurring necessary expenditure required during the week indicating the balance fund.

iv) If any corrupt practice is detected in running the programme, the engagement order pertaining to the SHG should be cancelled by the Inspector of Schools forthwith. Alternative SHG should be selected within 10(ten) days.
1.5.1(b) Involvement of Mothers

2(two) mothers on rotation should remain present everyday during the preparation and serving of Mid-day-Meal in School and they shall also see whether:

1. The utensils are kept neat and clean.
2. Rice, dal, vegetables etc. are properly washed before cooking.
3. Rice and other condiments are used as per required proportion during the preparation of MDM.
4. Nails of the children are cut.
5. Before and after eating whether their hands and plants are properly washed.
6. Children are given full quantity of Mid-day-Meal.
7. Meal prepared is nutritious or not.

1.5.1(c) Hygiene

The kitchen and the dining places must be kept clean. All Cooks-Cum-Helpers must keep their heads covered with cloth or cap/scarf while cooking and shall maintain cleanliness strictly in the kitchen and the dining place to avoid any kind of pollution/ food poisoning etc.

1.5.1(d) Block level Training of Cooks

The DEOs/Zonal Development Officers/ Inspector of Schools should arrange training of cooks at Sub-Division level/Block level at least once in a year with the help of SDMOs of the Health Department.

1.5.1(e) Use of only Iodized Salt

All Head teachers looking after MDM and Self Help Groups should ensure use of only iodized salt of branded quality contained in sealed packets which may be procured either from the nearest Fair Price Shop or open market.

1.5.1(f) Display of Menu Chart

All schools must ensure display of the daily Menu Chart outside of the office room of the Head teacher or in any conspicuous place within the school premises so that the students and parents/ guardians are duly informed.

1.5.1(g) Display Board

All schools must ensure display of receipt & expenditure of MDM fund in the display board of SSA.
1.5.1(h) Role of Teachers
Teacher in charge of Mid-day-Meal schemes must verify the quantity and the quality of food grains to be cooked. He will also ensure that children while eating maintain discipline and sit in specific place. He will also ensure that no discrimination is allowed during the implementation of Mid-day-Meal based in religion, caste etc.

1.5.1(i) Role of Head Master
Head teachers will be responsible for keeping detail accounts of MDM fund & food grains and ensure implementation of the MDM programme in the school strictly according to guidelines of the Department.

1.5.1(j) Regular holding of District/Sub-Division Monitoring Committee meetings
The DEOs and the Inspector of schools should ensure holding meetings of the District level/Sub-Divisional level Steering-Cum-Monitoring regularly. They should also attend the meeting of Zilla Parishads/ Panchayat Samities/BACs regularly and ensure that MDM is discussed and reviewed duly in these forums.

1.5.2 History of Mid Day Meal in Tripura
The state Govt. of Tripura launched Mid-Day-Meal Scheme in the state w.e.f 1st March,1980 for children reading in classes I-V in Govt. and Govt. aided schools. Under the scheme, the school going children of primary stage were provided dried food like biscuit, chira, muri and locally available seasonal fruits for 200 days in a year. Subsequently, Govt. of India introduced Mid-Day-Meal programme under the scheme entitled “National Programme of Nutritional support to primary Education”(NP-NSPE) w.e.f. 15th August 1995 in the whole country as a centrally sponsored scheme. As per guideline of the scheme, each child from classes I-V having attendance in schools up to 80% was supplied 3 kg of rice per month. Government of India provided rice free of cost and Rs.50.00 per quintal as subsidy for transportation of food grains. Thereafter, in pursuance to the direction of the Hon’ble Supreme Court of India, the State Government began providing cooked meal (khichudi) to the eligible primary school children on all school day since 1st April 2003 under Mid-Day-Meal. The NP-NSPE Scheme was first revised in 2004 and again in 2006. Presently, Government of India is providing central assistance to all state Government @ 2.42 per child per school day in the Primary and @ 3.63 in the Upper Primary stage. Against the central assistance, the State contribution is `
Rs. 0.50 per child per school day both for the Primary and the Upper Primary stage. Mid-Day-Meal is run in 4564 Primary schools and 1946 Upper Primary schools. Till date, a total of 416608 children in the Primary stage and 201857 in the Upper Primary stage have opted for the Mid-Day meal in schools. Mid-day-Meal is also extended to all EGS & AIE centers established under SSA Scheme and also Madrassa/Muqtab institutions. The prime objective of this scheme is to enhance enrollment, retention and attendance and simultaneously improving nutritional levels among children.

1.5.3 System of Food Grain Collection and Distribution

In Tripura, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department is the Nodal Agency for lifting of food grains from FCI Godown and then storing it in the Sub-Divisional Godown of the State. Thereafter, the dealers of Fair Price shops lift food grains from Sub-Divisional food Godown and store it in their respective store house. The School authority arranges lifting of rice from F.P. Shop and keeps the lifted rice in safe storage in school. As per guidelines issued by the MHRD, GOI, the cost of lifting of food grains is paid directly to the Area Manager, FCI, Agartala after bills are received duly certified by the Department of Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (DFCS&CA). Bills are paid on a quarterly basis. So far as the quantity and quality of food grains are concerned under MDM programme, there is no complaint in the state. The quality supplied for MDM scheme is Fair average Quality (FAQ) which conforms to the guidelines of GOI. Whatever allocation received from GOI, these are sub-allocated and ensured in reaching the schools in due time.

Diagram: 1.1 Systems of Food Grain Collection and Distribution

```
FCI
         ↓
DFCS & CA/Food Department
         ↓ Food Godown
         ↓
Fair Prize Shop Fair Prize Shop Fair Prize Shop Fair Prize Shop
         ↓
School School School School School School School School School School
```
The Inspector of Schools submits monthly requisition of rice showing school-wise shortfall or surplus of rice of previous month to the Sub-Divisional Rationing Authority. On the basis of these requisitions, the rationing authority issues delivery order against each school authorizing the concerned Fair Price Shops to supply the required rice to different schools for MDM programme. The Inspector of Schools transfer fund of cooking cost to the Joint accounts of MTAs with Headmasters on monthly basis. The organizers of all schools receive fund from Head teachers as and when required for purchase of food ingredients and fire woods/ gas cylinder etc.

1.5.4 System for Release of Funds Provided Under Cooking Costs

The finance department of the state government releases fund based on requisition of the School Education Department both against central assistance and state share. Then the School Education Department directly place fund with all Inspector of Schools and the Chief Executive officer for schools under TTAADC. The Inspector of Schools draw fund on submission of A.C. bills to the concerned Treasury / Sub-Treasury Officers and transfer the fund to joint MTAs Account of all schools under their respective jurisdiction through banks. In case of TTAADC, the School Education Department transfers the fund to the P.L. Account of TTAADC. Thereafter, the Chief Executive Officer transfers the fund to all Inspectors of School (TTAADC) through bank draft.

Diagram 1.2 Systems for Release of Funds Provided Under Cooking Costs

```
Finance Department

School Education Department

I/S

I/S

I/S

MTA

MTA

MTA

MTA

MTA

MTA

MTA

CEO

(TTAADC)

I/S

I/S

I/S

MTA

MTA

MTA

MTA

MTA

MTA
```
1.5.5 System for Payment of Honorarium to Cook-cum-Helpers and Implementing Agencies

11042 Cooks for Primary & Upper Primary have been engaged for running MDM programme in the State. Proposal for engagement of new cooks will be sent to the GOI in case of further requirement for 2011-12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. no</th>
<th>Enrolment</th>
<th>No. of Cooks eligible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>School having 1 - 50 Students</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Above 50 – 100 Students</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Every addition of 100 students</td>
<td>1 Additional beyond 100 above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At present the GOI and State Govt. are funding @ Rs.1000/- (Rs.900/- Central + Rs.100/- State) per cook per month as honorarium for Cooks cum Helpers. Every effort is made to release the honorarium of cooks-cum-helpers regularly so that payment can be made in time. The category wise and District wise engagement of cooks-cum-helpers is shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Nos. of Cooks engaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>4432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>2834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>2031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dhalai</td>
<td>1745</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.5.6 System for procuring cooking ingredients

Head teacher who is the convener of MTA is responsible for maintaining stock book of rice and other food ingredients and accounts of receipt and expenditure of MDM fund. He keeps all vouchers in his custody and submits utilization of rice and fund to the Inspector of Schools. MTA members hold meeting once in a month and take decision and corrective measures for effective implementation of the programme in each school. Cooks are engaged for each school by the Goan Panchayat / Ward Committee to run the programme. The organizer receives fund from the HM on weekly basis and make expenditure for purchase of dal, vegetable, oil and spices from local market, and draws rice from the fair price shop. After expenditure, he submits vouchers to the HM. In Tripura, the VECs headed by Pradhan of Goan Panchayat / Ward members supervise the implementation of the mid-
day meal in all schools located in their areas.

1.5.7 System for cooking, serving and supervising mid-day meals
The MTA along with the Head Teacher supervises daily to ensure that specified quantity of rice and other food ingredients are used in preparing mid-day-meal. Besides, two or three mothers attend school daily to supervise preparation and serving of mid-day-meal and ensure use of specified quantity of rice, dal and other seasonal vegetables etc as per school calendar prepared by each school authority. The mothers also put down their views / comments in the Mother’s MDM visit book regarding quality of food served on each day.

1.5.8 Procedure for getting Kitchen-Shed constructed
At present there is 6599 Govt. managed primary and upper primary schools as per DISE figure. Till date, 4136 schools have kitchen sheds constructed. Remaining 2463 schools requires kitchen-sheds to be constructed. Kitchen-sheds are constructed as per model estimate approved and communicated by the GOI. Fund toward this construction is placed with the school Authority who get it constructed with the knowledge of the School Development Management Committee who is also entrusted to supervise the works to ensure its quality. Construction of kitchen shed could not be converged with any other programmes in the State. Provisions of drinking water and toilet are being taken care of under SSA and Drinking Water & Sanitation Department of the state.

1.5.9 Procedure of procurement of kitchen devices
Kitchen devices have been provided to 5299 Primary and Upper Primary schools @ Rs.5000/- per school. These are procured from registered Cooperative Societies/local market in every Sub-Division from the fund provided by GOI. The State proposes for the remaining 1300 Nos. of schools which are yet to be provided with kitchen devices. The Department is also exploring the possibilities of providing these devices from its Plan fund.

1.6 Context of the Study
This study is confined to West Tripura District of Tripura. Tripura was a princely State. Maharaja Ratna Fa was the first king and Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya was the last King. After the death of Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya in May 1947, a council of regency under the leadership of his widowed wife Maharani Kanchanpura Devi took over charge of administration on behalf of the minor prince Kirit Bikram Kishore
Manikya. Monarchy came to its end on 9 September 1947. Tripura was taken as a Part-C state administered by Chief Commissioner. Tripura became a Union Territory on 1st November 1956. The Territorial Council was formed on August 15, 1959. The dissolution of Territorial Council and formation of Legislative Assembly and a Council of Ministers in July 1963 were notable events. Finally Tripura became a full-fledged State in January 1972. The district administration was run by one District Magistrate and Collector up to 31.8.1970. For better attention of problems of land and tenancies, for accelerating the pace of development in this backward area especially in the remote Tribal areas and for bringing the people closer to the administration Tripura was divided into three districts, viz., North Tripura District, West Tripura District and South Tripura District. Three district Magistrates and Collectors were appointed for the three districts from 1-9-1970. R Ghosh (IAS) from 5 November 1951 to 26 September 1954, During the period Tripura had only one district and formation of three district (West Tripura, North Tripura and South Tripura) in 1 September 1970, Magistrate was Omesh Saigal (IAS) (from 5 May 1967 to 21 May 1971). While it was one District Union Territory there were 10 sub-divisions. When it became a full-fledged State, the 10 sub-divisions remained the same. The West Tripura district comprises three sub-divisions viz., Khowai, Sadar and Sonamura while North Tripura District comprises Kailashhar, Dharmanagar and kamalpur and South Tripura District comprises remaining Udaipur, Amarpur, Belonia and Sabroom sub-divisions. Out of the six principal hills ranges namely Baramura and part of Athramura fall within the district.

1.6.1 Profile of West Tripura District

West Tripura is an administrative district in the state of Tripura in India. The district headquarters are located at Agartala. As of 2012 it is the most populous district of Tripura (out of 8). While Tripura as a whole lies approximately between the north latitude 22 degrees 56' and 24 degrees 32' and between longitude 91 degrees 0' and 92 degrees 20' east, the West Tripura district lies approximately between latitude 23 degrees 16' to 24 degrees 14' north and longitude 91 degrees 09' east to 91 degrees 47' east. The West Tripura District is bounded by Bangladesh in the north and west by Khowai district in the east and by Sepahijala district in the south. Total area of the district before 2012 was 3544 sq.km but with effect from 21 January 2012 four more new districts was divided making a total of 8 districts in the state and hence West
Tripura contracted to 983.63 sq.km. The district headquarters is located at Agartala, which is also the capital of the State.

Figure 1.1 Demographic Profile of West Tripura District

According to the 2011 census West Tripura district has a population of 1,724,619, roughly equal to the nation of The Gambia or the US state of Nebraska. This gives it a ranking of 281st in India (out of a total of 640). The district has a population density of 576 inhabitants per square kilometre (1,490/sq mi). Its population growth rate over the decade 2001-2011 was 12.5%. West Tripura has a sex ratio of 964 females for every 1000 males, and a literacy rate of 88.91%.

Table 1.7 Demographic Profile of West Tripura

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Urban Pop. % of total population</th>
<th>Sex ratio (♀ per 1000 ♂)</th>
<th>Density Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>15.29</td>
<td>941</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>24.29</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>42.00</td>
<td>964</td>
<td>1005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.6.2 Educational Profile of West Tripura District

Average literacy rate of West Tripura in 2011 were 88.69 compared to 77.26 of 2001. If things are looked out at gender wise, male and female literacy were 92.50 and 84.75 respectively. For 2001 census, same figures stood at 84.58 and 69.55 in West Tripura District. Total literate in West Tripura District were 1,361,354 of which male and
female were 722,998 and 638,356 respectively. In 2001, West Tripura District had 1,035,378 in its district.

1.7 Conclusion

The children of today are citizens of tomorrow. The Mid Day Meal Programme for the children is a part of making the school attractive so that they view the school as their second home. Initially, provision of mid-day meal was regarded as part of charity. Over a period of time, it came to be regarded as an aspect of child welfare. Still later, it came to be perceived as a component of child development programme and thereafter, the nutritional improvement approach began to receive more attention from the hands of planner. The objective of this scheme was to give boost to universalization of primary education and impact the nutrition of students in primary classes. The Mid-Day Meal scheme has been revised in 2004 and as per the Supreme Court directive; it envisages provision of cooked, nutritious Mid-Day Meal to primary and secondary school children. While there are broad central guidelines for the implementation of the scheme, there is nevertheless tremendous diversity at the state level. Not all the states were responsive to the Supreme Court’s order. By March 2004, 14 states were providing cooked mid day meals to all primary school children, 9 states were implementing the scheme partially and 4 states were distributing food grains. The most commonly used excuse was lack of resources. Hence huge expenditure on this programme was planned at Central and State level. For example, in 2003-04 the expenditure was Rs. 1400 crores and in 2007-08, budget of the Central Government has allocated about Rs. 7324 crores for the MDM scheme. Therefore, it became imperative that a comprehensive evaluation of the programme be undertaken to judge the efficacy of the scheme.