Conclusions
and
Suggestions

Chapter - 6
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The Mid-day Meal Programme, otherwise known as school lunch programme, is aimed at providing one meal out of three meals, at least one third of the calories and half of the protein per child per day in the school. It involves provision of lunch/snacks/meal free of cost to school children on school working days. It helps starving children and the poor parents to overcome nutritional deficiency. It also encourages the school going children to attend schools at least in the morning session. This programme is considered as an effective method for achieving the goal of universalisation of primary education.

In India, most of the children enrolled in government schools come from poor sections of the society. They fail to get two square meals a day. The food they eat is not only lacks nutrition but also unbalanced. The condition of SC/ST children is still precarious. For all these, they show no interest in studies. Their attendance in school is poor. It is an incontrovertible fact that school meal programmes exert a positive influence on enrolment and attendance in schools. A hungry child is less likely to attend school regularly. Hunger drains them of their will and ability to learn. Chronic hunger can lead to malnutrition. It also delays or stops the physical and mental growth of children. Poor or insufficient nutrition means that children are too small for their age, and susceptible to diseases like measles or dysentery which can kill malnourished children.

To overcome this, the Mid-day Meal Programme has been launched to facilitate school participation among underprivileged children. It aims at providing nutritious meal to primary school children and increasing attendance, enrolment and reducing drop-out rates. Further, it is likely to reduce class inequalities, since lack of education is a major source of economic disadvantage and social marginalization. Education along with meals is very likely to accelerate the pace of development, making the children confident individuals with healthy minds and bodies.

Mid-day meal programme is not new in India. It existed in one form or the other even before independence. After independence, several steps have been taken by the
government, to give it a comprehensive form. These endeavors ultimately resulted into a National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) in 1995. Thus, with a view to enhancing enrollment, retention and attendance and simultaneously improving nutritional level among children this programme commonly known as Mid-Day Meal Scheme was launched as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on 15th August 1995. The programme envisaged provision of cooked meal/processed food of caloric value equivalent to 100g of wheat/rice for children studying in classes I-V in all government, local body and government-aided primary schools free of cost. However, the implementation of the programme was not in a uniform manner as only four states and one union territory have provided cooked meals while remaining ones have distributed dry ration supplied by FCI.

In April 2001, People's Union for Civil Liberties (Rajasthan) filed a petition 'right to food', in the Supreme Court of India mainly with a view to implement the Scheme in its true letter and spirit. The Apex Court had issued the directive making it mandatory for the state governments to provide cooked meals instead of 'dry rations' from February 28, 2002. 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. Further, it brought out uniformity in the implementation of this programme throughout the country. However, in actual practice, the directive could not be implemented by several states from the date stipulated by the Supreme Court. 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.

Further step was taken in this direction in May 2004 when a new coalition government was formed at the Centre, which promised universal provision of cooked meal fully funded by the Centre. This 'promise' was included in the Common Minimum Programme of the government and 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 of the children in primary schools in India, but still could not be universalized. The main reason attributed for this sorry state of affairs was that in the Scheme the cost of cooking was to be borne by the State Governments/ UT Administrations. Unable to provide adequate funding for meeting the
cooking costs, many State Governments/ UT Administrations resorted to distribution of food grains, rather than providing cooked mid day meals. So, to overcome the difficulties experienced by the States and UTs, in the implementation of the Scheme as well as some other factors its revision became imperative.

Accordingly, the Scheme was revised in September 2004 under which provision was made for cooked mid day meal with 300 calories and 8-12 grams of protein to all children studying in classes I-V in government and aided schools and Education Guarantee Scheme/ Alternative and Innovative Education (EGS/AIE) centres. Besides, the focus of the revised scheme was on the children of disadvantages sections of society. The benefit of the scheme was also extended to the drought affected areas during summer vacations. The hallmark feature of this Scheme was the provision of financial assistance of Rs.2.21 per child per school-day by Central Government. Further, for the effective implementation of the Scheme provision of nodal department at state level and nodal officer at district levels was mandated. Various bodies responsible for cooking food such as Women Self Help Groups, Parent Teacher Associations, Youth Clubs, etc. were identified. Moreover for the management, supervision and monitoring of the programme, a provision of setting up of Steering-Cum-Monitoring Committees was made at state, district and local levels. Undoubtedly, the revised scheme was an improvement upon the original Mid-Day Meal Scheme.

However certain modifications were felt necessary even in the revised programme in the wake of launching of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in the country and bottlenecks faced in the implementation of the programme. The main difficulties experienced in the implementation of NP-NSPE, 2004, were: (a) the existing rate of Rs.1 towards cooking cost was found to be inadequate, (b) absence of kitchen sheds in schools had emerged as a critical factor impacting the quality of the programme and (c) the existing nutritional norm of 300 calories and 8-12 grams of protein was felt to be inadequate to meet the growing needs of young children.

Therefore, in July 2006, the Scheme was further revised under which the quantity of calories in cooked meals to be provided was increased from 300 to 450. Likewise, the quantity of protein was fixed at 12 grams. Besides, under the NP-NSPE, 2006, micronutrients were to be provided which includes iron, folic acid and vitamin A.
Further, robust and dynamic management structure at various levels involving different agencies for implementing the Scheme was clearly delineated.

Again, a significant amendment in NP_NSPE, 2006 was effected in the very next year i.e. 2007. As per this amendment, the name of the Scheme was changed from NP_NSPE to **National Programme of Mid Day Meals in Schools**. Besides, it was decided to extend this programme to the upper Primary Stages of Education (classes 6 to 8) in Government (including local body) and Government-aided schools, and EGS/AIE Centre, covering children in 3439 Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) in 2007-08. It was also proposed to extend it all areas across the country from the session 2008-09. Further, caloric value of the mid day meal for upper primary was fixed at 700 calorie and 20 grams of protein.

At present Mid-day Meal scheme is serving primary and upper primary school children in the entire country. It is estimated that as many as 8.41 cr. Primary students and 3.36 cr. Upper Primary Students i.e. a total of 11.77 cr. students are to be benefited from MDM Scheme during 2009-10. As such it has become the world's largest school feeding programme in India.

Theoretically, the Mid-Day Meals Programme seems to be laudable but at the same time, it can hardly be denied that much depends upon its actual implementation. The present study deals with the implementation of the Programme in one of the smaller progressive states of the Indian Union i.e. Haryana.

Haryana, emerged on the political map of India as the 17th State of the Indian Union on November 1st 1966 as a result of bifurcation of bilingual State of Punjab under the Punjab State Reorganization Act, passed by the Indian Parliament. Geographically, the State is located in the north western part of India. It is one of the smaller States of India with an area of 44,212 sq. km. The population of the State constitutes 2 per cent of the total population of India. The climate of State is one of the sub-tropical continental monsoon types. Though agriculture is the main stay of the economy of the State yet it has also made rapid strides in the industrial sector. It is heartening to note that Haryana Government has provided good health facilities to its citizens. Further, all the villages in the State are well connected with metalled road and have the provision of electricity. It is note worthy that the literacy rate in the State both for males and females (79.25%) and
(56.31%) is comparatively higher than the national average for males (75.85%) and females (54.16%).

As regards the implementation of the Mid-day Meal Programme in the State is concerned, it has the distinction of being its launcher State in the country as it was launched from Ballour village; district Jhajjar of Haryana on 15th August, 1995 when the then prime minister P.V. Narshima Rao announced it at the national level. In the same year Haryana Government took a decision to implement Scheme in all Government/Government-aided primary schools of the State. Since then, the necessary modifications/amendments have been effected in the Programme from time to time in the light of the changes/revisions made at the national level. However, it is pertinent to mention that this Scheme/Programme has been extended to upper-Primary Stage of Education w.e.f 2007-08.

For the implementation of MDMS in Haryana an elaborate organizational structure has been created which is formal and hierarchical with Commissioner Education and Language at the top followed by Director Elementary Education, Additional Director and Assistant Director. Further, for convenience sake, most of the work is carried out through various committees. The Mid Day Meal Committee is responsible for the supply of foodgrains and other articles. The State Government has made an all out effort to ensure regularity and continuity in the MDM Programme. Further, it has constituted a Menu Committee that prescribes weekly menu for all the schools. As far as the infrastructure is concerned, this is not up to the desired level.

However, for the effective implementation of MDMS, the State Government, with the help of Food & Nutrition Board, Ministry of Women and Child Development has conducted several capacity building programmes of teachers involved in mid-day-meal programme. Further, at the state level Management Information System (MIS) has been set up to keep record of all the information related to opening of new schools, Alternative and Education (AIE) centres, training and appointment of teachers, undertaking of civil works etc. Besides, proper arrangements have been made by the State Government for allocation of funds to each school covered under MDMP. So far as the supervision, monitoring and evaluation of MDMP in Haryana is concerned, it is monitored regularly by State/Head Quarter Officers. Further, Steering cum Monitoring Committee has been
formed at State level for monitoring this programme regularly. Moreover, for getting feedback regarding implementation of the mid-day-meal programme the State Government has made provision of evaluation from internal as well as external agencies.

Presentaly, Mid-day Meal Scheme is serving 9,634 primary and 873 upper primary schools children in the entire State. It is estimated that as many as 14, 66,600 primary (7,75,289 boys & 6,91,311 girls) and 7, 26,712 (3,67,543 boys & 3,58,869 girls) upper primary students i.e. a total of 21,93,312 students are to be benefited from MDM Scheme during 2009-10.

Thus, it becomes one of the largest welfare Schemes being implemented in the State and the Government has established a vast organizational set up for this purpose. Besides, it has made elaborate arrangements for its proper implementation. However it can not be denied that its successful operation depends, to a large extent, upon the functionaries at the grassroots level i.e. Head-teachers and Teachers’ In-charge. Moreover, best judges for evaluating its success are no other than the Student beneficiaries. Therefore, it becomes imperative to undertake an in-depth and empirical analysis of the views of various types of stakeholders with regard to the different aspects of the implementation of this Programme. Therefore, the present study has been focused upon the districts i.e. Rohtak of the State.

Rohtak District which consists of five blocks - Rohtak, Meham, Kalanaur, Sampla and Lakhan Majra. There are as many as 264 primary schools, both Government and Government-aided in which the Mid-day Meal Scheme is operational. Further, there are three categories of schools- for boys, girls and co-educational. A sample of 20 per cent of the schools has been selected which comes to 53. In order to make the sample of study representative one, stratified sampling method has been adopted. For this, strata have been formed both on the bases of administrative unit and category of schools. As many as 318 respondents (53 Head-teachers, one from each school; 53 Teachers In-charge, one from each school and 212 Students, 4 from each school) have been identified/selected. In order to ascertain their views, three different sets of Schedule have been prepared and administered to each category of respondents. The informations provided by the respondents have been classified, tabulated and analysed and on their basis conclusions have been drawn.
6.1) Findings of the Study:
The main findings of the study are as under:

6.1.1) Awareness level of the Respondents:
For any welfare scheme to be successful, it is highly important for all the stakeholders', specially the Teacher-in-charge, to be fully aware about the basics of that scheme. The desirable level of awareness results into maximum output. In this regard the study shows a very poor level of awareness of the in-charge respondents about the various aspects of Mid-Day Meal Programme. Data reveal that vast majority i.e. 80 per cent of them are not aware about the launching year of the Programme in Haryana. Likewise, three-fourth of respondents are unaware about the launching year of the programme in their respective schools. Though about two-third respondents are aware about the quantity of meals to be given to the school children under MDMP yet vast majority, i.e., about 90 per cent are not aware about the quantity of calories and protein to be given in meals. As regards micronutrients to be provided, the respondents are almost equally divided.

6.1.2) Interest of Respondents:
Along with awareness, interest of the respondents is also important for the successful implementation of MDMP. As regard the interest of Teacher in-charge in MDMP is concerned, the study makes it quite clear that only about one-third of respondents have shown their interest. Further, only one-fourth of respondents are keenly interested in tasting the meals before serving it to students which is one of the indicators of interest. So far as the interest of head teacher in various aspects of the programme is concerned, in-charge respondents viewed that though interest is shown by head teachers yet it leaves much to be desired. One of the reasons attributed for this is that they are not paid for this job.

6.1.3) Co-operation:
Though In-charge is responsible for cooking and distribution of meals in the schools yet co-operation of others such as head teachers, other teachers and students is
essential in this exercise. In this regard the study shows that the co-operation extended by 
the head teacher to teacher in-charge of MDMP is adequate while it is not so adequate on 
the part of other teachers. As far as the students are concerned, it is highly inadequate. It 
may be due to the fact that they are too small to extend any help. Further, it may lead to disturbance in their studies.

6.1.4) Infrastructure/Facilities:

A cooked mid day meal programme need cook/s and physical infrastructure like- 
kitchen-cum store, adequate water supply for drinking and other purpose, cooking device 
( LPG, stove, chullaha etc.) containers/jar for storage of foodgrains and other ingredients 
and utensils for cooking and serving. The State Government/local bodies are expected to 
provide the above infrastructure by utilizing their own funds along with those available 
under various Centrally-sponsored schemes. Needless to say that successful 
implementation of the scheme depends upon the availability of these facilities in the 
schools. The study in this regard shows that the overwhelming majority of schools have 
appointed female cooks which is in accordance with the rules/guidelines issued by the 
Government of India. However, the same is not true in case of category of cooks as 
preference has not been given to SC women in majority of cases. The study also reveals 
that none of the schools under study has the basic facility of kitchen-cum-store or the 
requisite funds for constructing the same. It is pertinent to note that there are few such 
schools which do not even have the crucial requirement of adequate water. However, 
overwhelming majority of schools have availability of containers and utensils in adequate 
quantity. The study also makes it clear that the overwhelming majority of schools have 
the facility of LPG. But at the same time Chulha is used due to shortage of LPG.

6.1.5) Supply of Meals and Micronutrients: Regularity, Variety, Quantity & Quality

It is provided under the MDMP that students covered under the programme in 
every eligible school will get a cooked meal of satisfactory quality, on every school-day, 
without any interruption. Thus, it is not only essential to provide regular meals to the 
eligible students but at the same time it should be adequate and full of variety. As per 
guidelines of the programme, menu of the mid-day meal should, as far as possible, vary
from day-to-day as it is possible to plan an economical yet varied and nutritious menu. Besides, adequate and nutritious food, the MDMP also envisaged administration of six monthly doses for de-worming and Vitamin-A supplementation as well as administration of weekly Iron and Folic-Acid supplement to all the children covered under the programme. In this connection the study shows at the very outset that mid-day meal is not compulsory for students. Further, beneficiaries are getting prescribed quantity of varied food in a regular manner. The study also points out that an overwhelming majority of respondents are given micronutrients and administered with de-worming medicine but not on regular basis.

As far as the quality of meals is concerned, the study reveals that more than two-thirds respondents perceived that the foodgrains supplied by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) are of prescribed quality, i.e. Fair Average Quality (FAQ). Further, the study reveals that the overwhelming majority of student respondents viewed that the meals being served is tasty. Moreover, Vegetable Pulao and Bakali (boiled foodgrains) are the most preferred meals of the beneficiaries.

6.1.6) Time Devoted by Respondents:

Any type of additional task definitely increases the responsibility of the concerned person and the MDMP is no exception to it. The in-charge has to engage himself in the preparation and distribution of meals. In this regard the study shows that the MDMP has increased the responsibility of the in-charge respondents as they have to devote a considerable time for this purpose and that too without any additional gains. Obviously, the vast majority of in-charge respondents expressed their desire to disassociate themselves from this duty.

6.1.7) Disturbance in Study:

It is generally believed that the very process of cooking and distribution of mid-day meals creates disturbance in the studies of the students as it diverts their attention. The very place of cooking meals is crucial so far as disturbance in studies is concerned. Ideally speaking, it should be cooked in kitchen. In this regard the study makes it clear that MDM programme creates disturbance both in the studies of students and teaching
work of teachers. As regard the disturbance in the study of students is concerned, the study points out that when the food is cooked in open or in adjoining classroom, the very smell of cooking distracts the attention of the school children from studies and thereby causes serious disturbance. Evidently, lack of kitchen is the main factor responsible for creating disturbance in studies. Further, the distribution and consumption of Mid-Day Meals in schools consume a lot of time of both teachers and students. To overcome this problem, as the study points out that mid-day meal is served either during recess or after the studies are over. This makes one to believe that officials concerned with the MDMP are conscious about the saving of the precious time of students’ studies. Moreover, the findings of the study reveal that help in cooking and serving meals is sought from students but it is an occasional phenomenon and involves only selective students. As such, this aspect does not create much disturbance in their studies.

6.1.8) Ill-Effects of the MDMP:

As per the guidelines, the State Government is expected to ensure that the Mid-day Meal Programme is implemented with utmost regard to safety and hygiene. There can be no two opinions that unhygienic food adversely affects the health of the consumers causing various types of illness. In this regard the study reveals that about one-third of the respondents found the mid-day meals unhygienic as they lodged complaint of the existence of worms and stones in it, leaving the same unfit for human consumption. Undoubtedly, it is a matter of utmost concern so far as the health of children is concerned. Media reports also substantiate this contention.

6.1.9) Caste Discrimination:

The MDM Programme is also meant to be a vehicle for inculcating social equity among children. There should not be any discrimination and segregation of any sort-on community or other basis-in serving/consumption of meal. Rather it should be utilized as an opportunity to instill in children values of equality, co-operation and discipline. It is clearly stated in the MDMP guidelines that there will be no discrimination on the basis of religion, caste and creed in providing cooked meals to children. The findings of the study bring to the fore a very important fact that there is no feeling of caste discrimination
among children- a very healthy sign in a caste ridden society. It may partially be attributed to their adolescent age. At the same time, as the study reports, majority of in-charge respondents also have no feelings of caste discrimination so far as the implementation of MDMP is concerned.

6.1.10) Supervision and Monitoring:

An effective supervision and monitoring is essential for the successful implementation of any scheme like MDMS. Accordingly, it has been laid down in the MDMS that the concerned State Governments will assign responsibility for implementation and supervision of the programme at the local level to an appropriate body e.g. Gram Panchayat/Municipality (Local body), Village Education Committee (VEC), Parents Teachers Association (PTA) or School Management-cum-Development Committee (SMDC). The Haryana Government has assigned this responsibility to the above said bodies/agencies. But so far as the actual implementation of this aspect of the programme is concerned, the study shows that it is not up to the desired level. However, it is worth mentioning that the most effective role in this regard is being played by local bodies. Though government officials are also performing their role but it is more on papers. As regard other agencies/bodies such as Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), Village Education Committee (VEC), and School Management-cum-Development Committee (SMDC) it leaves much to be desired.

6.1.11) Enrolment, Attendance, Retention and Drop-out-Rate:

One of the significant objectives of the MDM Programme is to ensure increase in enrolment of children in primary classes. But merely enrolling name in the school is not sufficient for learning. For better learning, regular attendance in the class in necessary. Further, it is, absolutely essential not only to enroll children but to retain them for five years and also enable them to successfully complete primary education or its equivalent. Thus, the overall objective of MDMP is to increase enrolment, attendance and retention rate and at the same time to decrease drop-out rate. In this regard, the study highlights that in majority of schools under study, there has not been any increase in enrolment and attendance rate and the schools which have witnessed the increase; the level of increase is
insignificant. The scenario in case of retention-rate presents all the more gloomy picture because in overwhelming majority of schools, (more than four-fifth) there has not been any increase and wherever there is increase it is nominal. The situation is no better in the case of decrease in drop-out rate as about three-fourth schools have not exhibited any decrease. Further, in the remaining about one-fourth schools in which there has been decrease in drop-out rate fifty per cent falls in the 'very low' category. From this it can easily be inferred that the MDMP has failed in achieving its cardinal objective of increasing enrolment, attendance and retention rate and decreasing the drop-out rate.

6.1.12) Problems and Prospectus of MDMP:

Certain problems in the way of implementation of programme of vast magnitude are but natural and Mid-Day Meal Programme is no exception to it. In this regard, the main problems highlighted by the study are that of lack of kitchen, LPG, water and storage of foodgrains and lack of adequate staff for Implementation of MDMP. So, the vast majority of teacher in-charge expressed their dissatisfaction to the programme and therefore not favored its continuation. As against this, the beneficiaries of MDMP i.e. students have expressed their satisfaction to the programme and therefore favored its continuation.

6.2) Testing of Hypotheses:

The very first objective of the study was 'To examine whether the enrolment, attendance, retention and drop-out rate increased/decreased or not in the primary schools due to Mid-day Meal programme'. In this regard the findings of the study shows that in majority of schools under study, there has not been any increase in enrolment and attendance rate and the schools which have witnessed the increase; the level of increase is insignificant. The scenario in case of retention-rate presents all the more gloomy picture because in overwhelming majority of schools, (more than four-fifth) there has not been any increase wherever there is increase it is nominal. The situation is no better in the case of decrease in drop-out rate as about three-fourth schools have not exhibited any decrease. Further, in the remaining about one-fourth schools in which there has been decrease in drop-out rate fifty per cent falls in the 'very low' category of decrease rate.
From this it can easily be inferred that the MDMP performance has failed in achieving its cardinal objective of increasing enrolment, attendance and retention rate and decreasing the drop-out rate. Hence the first hypothesis- "The programme has increased attendance, enrolment, retention and decreased drop-out rate of children in the schools" stands disproved.

The second objective of the study was ‘To examine whether the students are getting qualitative meal.’ In this context the study highlights that about one-third of student respondents found the mid-day meals unhygienic as they complained of existence of worms and stones in it, leaving the same unfit for human consumption. Undoubtedly, it is a matter of utmost concerned so far as the health of children is concerned. Hence the second hypothesis- "The students are getting qualitative meal" stands disproved.

The third objective of the study was ‘To examine that the students are getting meals regularly’. In this regard the study shows that all the beneficiaries are getting prescribed quantity of varied food in a regular manner. Hence the third hypothesis- “The students are getting meals regularly” stands proved.

The fourth objective of the study was ‘To find out the interest and participation of the school staff (teachers and Head teachers) in the implementation of MDMP’. The study in this regard reveals that only about one-third of in-charge respondents have shown their interest in the MDMP. Further, only one-fourth of respondents are keenly interested in tasting the meals before serving it to students. As regard the interest of head teacher in MDMP is concerned, the study points out that though interest is shown by head teachers yet still it leaves much to be desired. At the same time the interest of head teacher in supervision and monitoring is sufficient but not up to the mark. Hence the fourth hypothesis- “School staff (teachers and head-teachers) has low interest towards the programme” stands proved.

The fifth objective of the study was ‘To find out whether the Mid-day Meal Programme creates disturbance in students study or not’. In this regard the study also
makes it clear that MDM programme creates disturbance both in the studies of students and teaching work. Hence the fifth hypothesis- "This programme puts hurdle in children’s study" stands proved.

The sixth objective of the study was ‘To examine the extent to which this programmes helps the children in breaking their caste prejudices’. The data of the study makes it quite clear that majority of respondents have no feelings of caste discrimination so far as the implementation of MDMP is concerned. Further, analysis confirms in no unequivocal term that there is no feeling of caste among students. Hence the sixth hypothesis- "The programme has helped the children in breaking their caste prejudices" has no relevance with the study.

The seventh objective of the study was ‘To study the supervision and monitoring mechanism of the programme’. The findings of the study show that the supervision and monitoring of the implementation of MDMP is not up to the desired level. However the most effective role in this regard is being played by local bodies. Though government officials are also performing their role in this regard but it is more on papers. As regard other agencies/bodies such as Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), Village Education Committee (VEC), and School Management-cum-Development Committee (SMDC) it leaves much to be desired. Moreover, the interest of head teacher in supervision and monitoring is sufficient but not up to the mark. Hence the seventh hypothesis- “The supervision and monitoring mechanism of the Mid-day Meal programme is inadequate” stands proved.

The eighth objective of the study was ‘To know the perceptions of the beneficiaries towards the programme’. In this regard the study reveals that the overwhelming majority of student respondents found to be satisfied about the MDMP. The study also highlights the fact that the Programme has hailed praiseworthy by the vast majority of respondents. Hence the eighth hypothesis- “The beneficiaries are not satisfied with the programme” stands disproved.
The last objective of the study was 'To analyze the bottlenecks/problems faced in implementation of the Mid-day Meal'. From the data of the study it becomes quite clear that there are some problems in the implementation of MDMP. The main problems highlighted by the study are that of lack of kitchen, LPG, water and storage of foodgrains and lack of adequate staff for implementation of MDMP. Hence the ninth hypothesis—"There are major problems in the way of implementation of this programme" stands disproved.

6.3) Suggestions:
Following are the main suggestions for improving the operation of the Mid-Day Meals Programme:

- The study shows a very poor level of awareness of the (Head-teachers and teachers’ in-charge) respondents about the various aspects of Mid-Day Meal Programme. So, it is imperative to make the concerned persons of MDMP fully aware about this programme. For this awareness training programme should be conducted for teachers and head-teachers so that they can broaden their vision in this regard. Needless to mention that fully aware personnel can perform their job more efficiently.

- The study shows that vast majority of the respondents (Head-teachers and teachers’ in-charge) have not shown their interest in MDMP. So, to create their interest in the programme, some incentives should be given to the concerned persons. It is further suggested that In-charge should be appointed on rotational basis for a fixed term i.e. two or three years.

- The study highlights that the main factor responsible for creating disturbance in studies of students is the lack of kitchen for cooking meals in most of the schools. It is, therefore, suggested that kitchen should be constructed in every school. Once kitchen rooms are there, the problem of storage and cooking of meals will not arise. Alternatively there should be a centralized kitchen away from the school where the meals be prepared by an agency. A very good example of this is the
centralized kitchen by Naandi Foundation working in Hyderabad and Secunderabad, which has been set up jointly by four corporate organizations. Similarly, ISKCON, a spiritual organization in Bangalore city, has been distributing school meal under its Akshayapatra Programme through central kitchens. When the meal is supplied by a centralized kitchen, the cost of each meal would come enough to include the expenses incurred on transportation. If the readymade meals reach to all the schools, the problem of disturbance in studies of students will be minimized and at the same time lot of time of teacher in-charge would be saved.

- Students are the real beneficiaries and the most important stakeholders of the programme. The study reveals that Vegetable Pulao and Bakali (boiled foodgrains) are the most preferred meals and Dalia is less liked by most of the beneficiaries. So, due weightage should be given to their liking and disliking of food but not at the cost of nutrition. Therefore, preferred meals should be given to the children to sustain their interest in MDMP.

- There can be no two opinions that unhygienic food adversely affects the health of the consumers causing various types of illness. In this regard the study reveals that about one-third of the student respondents found the mid-day meals unhygienic. Hence, it is important that apart from nutritive value, hygienic quality of food should also be ensured. For this, it is suggested that school should have access to safe drinking water and clean toilet facilities on one hand and also that the personnel involved in cooking and serving food strictly observe personal hygiene habits.

- The study shows that the supervision and monitoring of the implementation of MDMP is not up to the desired level. So, it is suggested that specific responsibility of supervision and monitoring should be given to single agency at each level.

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• The study points out that the MDMP has failed in achieving its cardinal objective of increasing enrolment, attendance and retention rate and decreasing the drop-out rate. The main reason for this sorry state of affairs is the economic backwardness of the masses which, in turn, compels the parents to engage children to assist them in their work. It is therefore, necessary to raise the economic standard of the people by launching poverty alleviation programmes like ‘MNREGS’. This will help in making the parents to free children from engaging them in their work and ultimately helps in achieving this cherished objective. At the same time awareness programme should be launched from time to time to make aware the parents about the importance of education. Further, to increase enrolment, there is need to run enrolment drive. It is suggested that award should be given to those schools which are implementing the programme successfully and have increased their enrolment, attendance, retention and decreased drop-out rate due to mid day meal.

6.4) Policy Recommendations:
• For bringing effectiveness in the implementation of the programme, the basic infrastructural facilities required for the purpose need to be improved. An adequate infrastructure like separate kitchen or cooking area, storage space, proper utensils for cooking, serving and eating, provision of safe water for cooking, washing etc. should be provided to the schools to carry out the preparation of the meals Also each school should be provided clean toilets and safe drinking water. There should be an emphasis on hygienic practices and environmental sanitation. Based on a physical survey, and the gaps identified, the needs can be established and these can be filled in a time-bound manner by pooling funds from various development schemes.

• The foodgrains should be provided by Government of India (GOI) through buffer stocks, as this can be a very effective way of utilizing the buffer stocks. This can also be implemented in the form of a scheme that could be called as “Food for Learning”.

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• The present cost of meals per child per day seems to be inadequate in view of price inflation in food articles. So, it is recommended, that in addition to the foodgrains provided by Food Corporation of India (FCI), the Central Government should increase the amount of cooking and also other ingredients in the meals. Besides, additional funds should be given by the Government of India as transportation cost. Accordingly more funds should be given to the State Government by the Government of India for Mid-day Meal Programme. Also the State Government should utilize the funds fully and probity.

• For the programme to be effective and successful there should be active participation from the community including parents and teachers, Self Help Groups (SHGs) and the Panchayats. Parent Teacher Association (PTA) should work together in the betterment of the programme and also to sort out any problem, which may be faced while implementing the programme. Inclusion of the underprivileged women of the village would also provide them with employment opportunity and social security. Also there should be cooperation from Department of Women and Child Development, Government of India. Public sector undertakings should also be encouraged to participate. Best example in this regard is the “Rasoi Ghar” scheme of HPCL in A.P., where LPG for the purpose of cooking is provided at cost basis. Further, Experts help can also be sought from the food and nutrition institutes like Nutrition Foundation of India (NFI), and various Home Science Colleges across the Country/State in planning of recipes and monitoring of the food quality.

• There is lack of separate staff for implementation of MDMP in the school. Due to lack of separate staff, a lot of managerial problems are witnessed in the Mid-day Meal Scheme. It is therefore; recommended that there should be separate staff for the same.

• Periodical orientation programmes should be organized from time to time to sensitize the policy makers, implementers, teachers and the other staff as also
Village Education Committee (VEC), by dovetailing with the large-scale capacity building and orientation undertaken by the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) across the country towards the nutritional needs of the children. Teachers should be persuaded to stop viewing the MDM programme as a source of disruption and distraction of classroom teaching.

- There should be a system of monitoring the quality of raw materials used for meals, the hygienic quality of the cooked meal and feeding patterns at centers. For this it is recommended that feedback forms can be obtained periodically from the children and parents about quality, quantity and other parameters.

It is hoped that the suggestions and recommendations as mentioned above will be helpful, to a great extent, in minimizing the problems in the way of implementation of Mid-day Meal Programme in Haryana.