

Mid Day Meal Scheme

Introduction :

Malnutrition was widely prevalent in India among growing children. Nutritional deficiencies and their incidences among children of school going age group cannot be neglected. Malnutrition not only gives rise to morbidity and mortality, but also prevents a child from developing in a fully functional adult. It adversely affects education in the following ways;

- i) A malnourished child is less likely to attend school regularly.
- ii) Even if such a child does attend school, he/she finds it difficult to concentrate on and participate in teaching-learning activities well enough. He/She therefore, tends to drop out inter alia, because of the inability to cope up with.
- iii) Even if the child does not actually drop out, his attainment levels tend to be low.

Programme of providing Mid-Day Meal in Schools is designed to help UEE in the following ways:

- i) By improving enrolment and regularity of attendance.
- ii) By reducing drop-out and
- iii) By improving children's level of learning and self-esteem.

National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (commonly known as the Mid-Day Meal Scheme) was launched as a Centrally-Sponsored Scheme on 15th August, 1995. Its objective was to boost Universalisation of Primary Education by increasing enrolment, retention and attendance and simultaneously impacting on nutrition of students in primary classes.

It is being implemented in Maharashtra since 1995-96 onwards. However, the nature of scheme was changed in the right decision of Hon. Supreme Court in Writ Petition No. 196/2001, wherein instead of dry rice the cooked meal was to be given to children on all school days. In 2002, the scheme was implemented in 15 tribal districts of Maharashtra; however, the scope of implementation was extended to all districts of Maharashtra in January, 2003. The scheme implemented for children in Std I to V in Government schools, schools run by local bodies, Government aided private schools and students enrolled in Education Guarantee Scheme Centre i.e. Vastishalas and Alternative and innovative Education Centre i.e. Mahatma Phule Education Guarantee Scheme Centers.

As per Government of India Guidelines, Mid-day Meal Scheme is extended by Govt. of Maharashtra to cover children in upper primary (VI-VIII) classes in 43 educationally backward blocks in 10 districts of Maharashtra State from 1st January 2008.

Now this scheme is being implemented all over Maharashtra state from September, 08 and onwards.