



EFFECT OF MID- DAY MEAL SCHEME ON ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION OF BOYS AND GIRLS AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL IN DISTRICT SRINAGAR

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Abstract

The present paper assesses the effect of a nationally authorized free mid-day meal scheme of India on school enrollment and retention with respect to gender. School panel data allows us to reflect over the strategy of progress in enrollment and retention rates of boys and girls. Researcher has used a descriptive method to conduct the study. A combination of quantitative and qualitative method was used where both the primary and secondary data were taken from the schools. Tool used for the study was information blank in a modified form supported by interviews with head teachers and students. A simple random sampling technique has been used by the researcher to carry out the study. A sample of 80 schools was drawn from a total population of 209 elementary schools of the district Srinagar. Analysis of data reveals that mid-day meal scheme has more positive effect on access of girls as compared to the boys at elementary school level in district Srinagar of Jammu and Kashmir.

Keywords: mid-day meal, enrollment, retention.



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Introduction: We can see a clear gender variation in non government schools where more boys (20.4%) were enrolled as compared to girls (16.8%). A large difference in the enrollment of boys and girls in age group of seven to ten were seen in states like Punjab (50% boys; 43% girls) and Haryana (51% boys and 39% girls). Likewise, the 61st Round NSS observed a considerable share of students attending private schools either aided or unaided (GoI, 2006b). Even with this large enhancement in the enrolments of private schools, the bulk of students still remain in public schools (Govinda and Bandyopadhyay, 2008). Access and equity go hand to hand and ensure Universal Elementary Education (UEE). Mostly all schemes and programs aim at bridging the social and gender gaps with respect to the enrollment, retention and educational outcomes at elementary level. Some extraordinary intercession approaches have been adopted for the inclusion of girls, Scheduled Caste/Scheduled. In recent years it was seen that there is a positive growth in education of girls of India. In the initial period of 1990s, enhancement in girl's enrollment was more as compared to boys (Govinda and Biswal, 2006). But it is also reported along with the

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improvement in girl enrolment during 1990s that gender disparity is still considerable, particularly when we compare access at elementary education level of boys and girls in dichotomous way from rural/urban perspective. Even a broad gap in participation rates could be seen among urban boys and rural girls in all age groups (Bandyopadhyay and Subrahmanian, 2008). Additionally, as the *Sachar Committee Report* has pointed out the situation of children from the Muslim minority community seems to be even worse than that of SCs and STs (GoI, 2006a). A number of steps were taken in the recent past years that aimed at bridging the gender gaps, ending the social caste inequalities and ending the contrast of rural and urban labeling among student. *Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya* (KGBV) a scheme which was launched in 2004 also involved in offering residential school facilities for female students at the elementary level, especially in those areas which are primarily under-privileged. 2,075 KGBVs have been approved in minority rich areas. 428 KGBVs were established in Muslim populated blocks and 441 in ST populated blocks according to the report of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). Bonds (2012), revealed that school meal programs was highly victorious in enhancing the enrollments particularly for the students coming from poor socio-economic backgrounds. Analysis of data under study highly indicates number of significant factors of program participation. The effect of scheme is found more positive on girls as compared to the boys, similarly the scheme has proven good for the rural students as compared to urban students. Hamid & Hamid (2012), conducted a study on effect of school meal scheme in district Anantnag of Jammu and Kashmir state, and reported that attendance rate has risen from 64.71% to 82.42% which clearly shows an optimistic effect on average attendance over a period of time. The mean dropout rate has reduced from 25.15% to 14.22% which means a decline of 10.93% as a sharp indicator of success of scheme. Kaur (2010), revealed that mid day meal scheme has a positive effect on enrolment of children belonging to any class, category and gender in government and government aided schools of Ferozpur. The more rise in enrollment were seen in case of reserved categories. Enrollment has showed more attention in case of girls. Narula (2009), revealed that in Jharkhand the meal programs is successful and attained an important place in the hearts of the people. It was found that girls joined the school more as compared to the boys. The attendance of girls and their retention level were increased over the period of time. No discrimination of caste was seen during the distribution of food.

Objectives

1. To assess the increase in enrollment of boys and girls at elementary level.
2. To assess the retention of boys and girls at elementary level.

Delimitation of the study

1. The study is delimited to the elementary schools.
2. The study is delimited to district Srinagar of Jammu and Kashmir.
3. The study is delimited to the 209 schools of district Srinagar.

Methodology

The present study aimed at assessing the effect of Mid Day Meal Scheme regarding enrollment with respect to gender at elementary level in district Srinagar was carried out through a quantitative approach followed by a qualitative component. The present study was conducted using a descriptive survey method of research. In addition to the figural data collected from the schools for the current study the research further more gives a qualitative touch to the study when some interviews of students and Head teachers were also added to the study for unveiling of some important factors, which a researcher was unable to do just with the quantitative data.

Population and Sample

The population of the study was all the government and government aided elementary schools as well as EGS/AIE Centers of district Srinagar of Jammu and Kashmir. In the present study simple random sampling procedure was followed. The total population of study was 209 Elementary schools in district Srinagar (DSEK, 2016). For having a representative and easy sampling procedure district Srinagar could be divided into eight educational zones, researcher then selected 10 schools from each educational zone using a simple random sampling method which comprises of total 80 schools. The source for the data used for the study is primary as well as secondary.

Tool used for study

The researcher has used the *Information Blank* in the modified form, which was earlier used by 'Kousar Jan' in her study "*Impact of Mid Day Meal Scheme on Enrollment of students at Upper Primary Level in Education*" administered on Headmasters/Principals and Teachers of the Elementary schools. The qualitative data was collected through the face-to-face interview

with the students and Head teachers. The data was analyzed using simple Mean and Percentage Analysis technique.

Analysis:

Enrollment of Boys at Elementary Level in District Srinagar

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EB	2717	2784	3477	3080	3272	1805

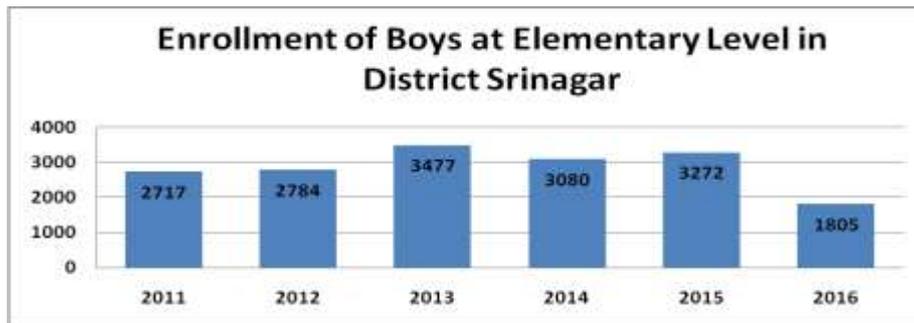


Table above reveals that there is an increase in enrollment of boys from the year 2011 to 2015, in government elementary schools of district Srinagar, with respect to the base year 2011 but a huge decrease in 2016. In 2011 the total number of boys enrolled was 2717 students and in 2012 the number increased to 2784 that is an increase of 2.4%. In the year 2013 the enrollment of boys reached to 3477, an increase of 27.17% with respect to the base year 2011. Similarly in 2014 the enrollment of boys was 3080 a decrease with respect to the previous year but an increase with respect to base year that is of 13%. 3272 boys were seen enrolled in the year 2015, which an increase of 20.42% with respect to the base year. But in 2016 just 1805 boys were enrolled, which is a decrease of 33% with respect to the base year.

Enrollment of Girls at Elementary Level in District Srinagar

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EG	2357	2655	3197	2748	3511	1764

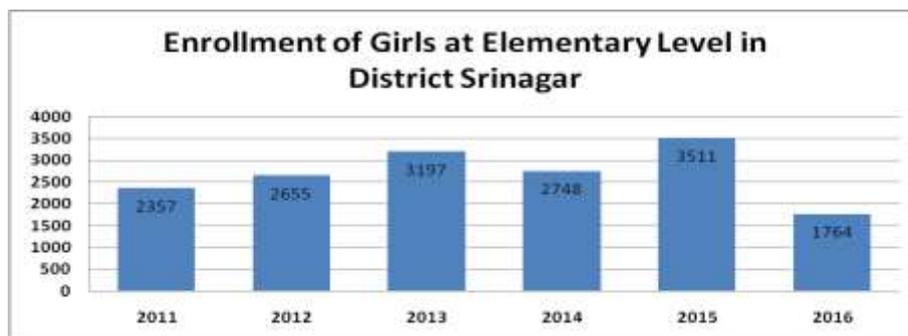


Table above reveals that there is an increase in enrollment of girls from the year 2011 to 2015, in government elementary schools of district Srinagar, with respect to the base year 2011 but a huge decrease in 2016. In 2011 the total number of girls enrolled was 2357 and in 2012 the number increased to 2655 that is an increase of 12.64%. In the year 2013 the enrollment of girls reached to 3197, an increase of 35.63% with respect to the base year 2011. Similarly in 2014 the enrollment of girls was 2748 a decrease with respect to the previous year but an increase with respect to base year that is of 16.58%. 3511 girls were seen enrolled in the year 2015, which is an increase of 48.9% with respect to the base year. But in 2016 just 1764 girls were enrolled, which is a decrease of 23.57% with respect to the base year.

Discussion:

The data taken from year 2011 to 2016 is showing an increase in enrollment and retention of both the boys and girls over a period of five years. Every year enrollment in boys and girls is increasing with respect to the base year except in 2016. The retention maintained in the schools up to 2015 is satisfactory but is disappointing in 2016. At the end of 2015 more girls are enrolled as compared to boys. Retention is also more in case of girls. The huge fall in the enrollment of boys and girls at elementary school level in district Srinagar can be attributed to the disturbance of 2016, where curfew was imposed in almost every district of Kashmir valley partially, but in District Srinagar the curfew was imposed completely. People were not been able to even come out of their homes and going of children to the schools was a distant deal. Valley came across a longest shutdown in the History of India (Dreze, 2016). The schools remained closed hence a very small amount of enrollment of girls was recorded at the end. There is also a small decrease in yearly enrollment of girls in 2014 which has a deliberate cause that district Srinagar was hit by a massive floods a largest ever in the history of Kashmir. The flood disturbed the educational system heavily, was worst flood in sixty years history of Jammu and Kashmir (Indian Express, 2014). District Srinagar was among the most affected districts. Schools submerged in water and remained closed till end of that session.

The above findings are in consistency with the findings of (Josephine & Raju, 2008; Narula, 2009) as they have stated that enrollment of girls has received more attention as compared to boys. Retention and enrollment of girls are more as compared to boys (Wizarat, 2009; Bonds, 2012). Panel data shows relative optimistic increase in girls as compare to boys (Afridi, 2007).

Conclusion

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The mid-day meal scheme has a positive effect on enrollment and retention of both boys and girls but its more impressive in case of girls. Girls have got more advantaged by the scheme as compared to boys.

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